

Welcome to the Master Class (Master's Thesis Proposal Course)

P9419

Judith S. Jacobson, DrPH, MBA
Nicole Schupf, PhD, DrPH

Randomly selected Mondays,
5:30-6:30 p.m.

Judith S. Jacobson, DrPH, MBA

- Jacobson JS, Mellins RB, Goldstein IF, Rundle AG, Williams CL, Canfield SM, Perzanowski M, Hazi Y, Milton DG, Northridge ME, Ashby-Thompson M. Factors associated with "asthma" in New York City Head Start programs. *Am J Resp Crit Care Med* 2004; 169 (suppl): A487.
- Grann VR, Jacobson JS, Hershman D, Li H, Troxel AB, Neugut AI. Breast biopsy and race/ethnicity among women without breast cancer. Submitted for publication.
- Mantel B, Meyers A, Tran Q, Rogers S, Jacobson JS. The use of nutritional supplements and complementary/alternative medicine among individuals with Tourette syndrome. *J Adolescent Child Psychopharmacol*. In press.

Nicole Schupf, PhD, DrPH

- N. Schupf, B. Patel, W. Silverman, W. Zigman, N. Zhong, B. Tycko, P. Mehta, R. Mayeux. Elevated Plasma Amyloid β -peptide 1-42 and onset of dementia in Down syndrome. *Neuroscience Letters* 2001 301:199-203.
- Schupf N, Pang D, Patel BN, Silverman W, Schubert R, Lai F, Kline JK, Stern Y, Ferin M, Tycko B, Mayeux R. Onset of dementia is associated with age at menopause in women with Down's syndrome. *Ann Neurol*. 2003 Oct;54(4):433-8.
- Patel BN, Pang D, Stern Y, Silverman W, Kline JK, Mayeux R, Schupf N. Obesity enhances verbal memory in postmenopausal women with Down syndrome. *Neurobiol Aging*. 2004 Feb;25(2):159-66.

Why are we here?

- Because other courses don't fully prepare you to develop your master's thesis proposal or to complete the thesis
- Because being in a class together can help you help one another
- Because we want to get you out the door with a master's degree in epi
- Because the master's degree in epi should mean that the bearer has had the experience of analyzing epidemiologic data and writing it up in the form of a scientific paper

This course is for students who

- Intend to graduate in 2005
- Do not yet have an approved master's thesis proposal
- Have completed $\geq 50\%$ of course requirements for MPH, MS, etc.

The syllabus is on CourseWorks

- 9/27 Abstract structure, especially
 - Research question
 - Hypotheses
 - 10/11+18 Background, lit review, EndNote*
 - 10/25 Epi methods and your dataset
 - 11/1+8 Substantive area discussion groups
 - 11/15+22 Data management (with SAS)*
 - 12/6 Finalizing the abstract and moving on
- *In HHSC media center, 2nd floor

31 students submitted surveys

- Practicum
 - 10 have completed
 - 2 have waived
 - 17 have identified
- Have you submitted your practicum form?
- 12-1/2 have found a thesis dataset
 - 5 have 2 readers
 - 2 have 1 reader
 - 1 who has no dataset has 1 reader
- Talk to us!!!

13/31 have used EndNote

- Eliminate one of two classes on EndNote?
- Eliminate the second session or
- Move up schedule, spend more class time on abstract

Human subjects/Patient protection

- 10 have GCP certification
- 12 have HIPAA certification

What does it take to do a master's thesis in epi?

- 1-3 hypotheses about exposure and health-related outcome, preferably in an area of interest to you
- Dataset in which you can test hypotheses
- 2 readers
 - one to supervise your work
 - the other to help supervise or just to read and comment on almost final drafts
 - One *must* be epi faculty; readers who are not epi faculty *must* submit their CV for approval

What else does it take?

- Familiarity with the relevant literature
- Competence in data analysis
- Familiarity with the format of a scientific paper
- Creativity and good judgment in the interpretation of findings

Writing a master's thesis in epi is more than an academic exercise.

- Studies are undertaken to address a public health problem.
- Data are collected from *human subjects* at great trouble and expense.
- We as epidemiologists have obligations
 - to our funders, subjects, and community
 - to analyze, interpret, and publish the results of our studies.

Welcome to the epi research
community!

- Benefits
 - Credentials, career advancement
 - Publications, 15 minutes of fame
- Responsibilities
 - Ethical (i.e., careful) data management
 - Honest reporting of results
 - Protection of research subjects

Guest lecturer: Joyce Pressley, PhD

- Practicum coordinator
- Contact information:
 - Mailman 17-12, but please email or call for an appointment.
 - 212-342-0421 voice
 - 212-342-0519 fax
 - jp376@columbia.edu