

Public Health & Epi News

NO. 1, 4TH VOLUME, SEPTEMBER 2017

Back to Basics

We strive for complexity - in interventions, in study designs, in analyses and in interpretation - which fits well with the complex world we are engaged in and aim to explore.

This constant push for 'more complex', 'more advanced' may, however, come at the cost of not fully understanding the basics underlying these models, designs or analyses. If we forget the basics, we might never succeed in understanding complexity.

Let's take statistical modeling as an example. We have the programs and computer power necessary to run advanced statistical models and many of us want to try out new advances in our research project. What we sometime forget is that the validity of these models are highly dependent on the quality of the underlying data and the model assumptions. If we do not know how our data is collected or understand the basic structure of our data it becomes very difficult to evaluate these assumptions.

Data collection and basic descriptive statistics are generally not highly evaluated among students (or supervisors), but I think that being involved in data collection and using time to fully understand the structure of your data is a very important investment and ought to be part of any research education.



Naja Hulvej Rod
Professor, Head of the
Graduate Program in
Public Health &
Epidemiology

Editorial info

Public Health & Epi News is distributed to PhD students and supervisors affiliated with the graduate program in Public Health and Epidemiology.

The newsletter is published four times a year and is meant to be a dynamic platform for exchanging information within the graduate program. Any inputs on events, new books, international courses, writing groups etc. are very welcome.

Please send your input in an e-mail to Lisbeth Lyng Hansen, llh@sund.ku.dk.

Editors: Naja Hulvej Rod, nahuro@sund.ku.dk and Lisbeth Lyng Hansen, llh@sund.ku.dk

Deadline for next issue of Public Health & Epi News is **20 November, 2017**.

Previous editions to be found at: <http://phd-pubhealthepi.ku.dk/>

Conference calendar

NordicEpi 2017

13-15 September, 2017, Lund, Sweden
http://www.malmokongressbyra.se/nordicepi/abstract_info

SLLS Annual Conference 2017

11-14 October, Stirling, Scotland
<http://www.slls.org.uk/conf>

6th International Conference of Epidemiology & Public Health, 23-25

October, 2017, Paris, France
<http://epidemiology.conferenceseries.com/>

10th European Public Health Conference, 1-4 November, 2017,

Stockholm, Sweden
**Sustaining resilient and healthy
communities**
<https://ephconference.eu/>

Nordic Doctoral Training in Health Sciences

In Helsinki, Finland in 2018
<https://www.nordochealth.net/nordic-phd-summit>

Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) annual meeting

19-22 June, 2018 in Baltimore, USA
<https://epiresearch.org/annual-meeting/2018-meeting/>

GRASPH Summer School 2018

23-24 May, 2018 at Comwell
Klarskovgaard (close to Korsør)
More information in the following issues
of Public Health & Epi News

PhDs of the Month

Beverley Lim Høeg, cand.psych

Psychological and Behavioral Aspects of Survivorship Group,
Unit of Survivorship,
Danish Cancer Society Research Center.



MyHealth: A randomized controlled trial of a nurse-led follow-up in women after completion of treatment for breast cancer.

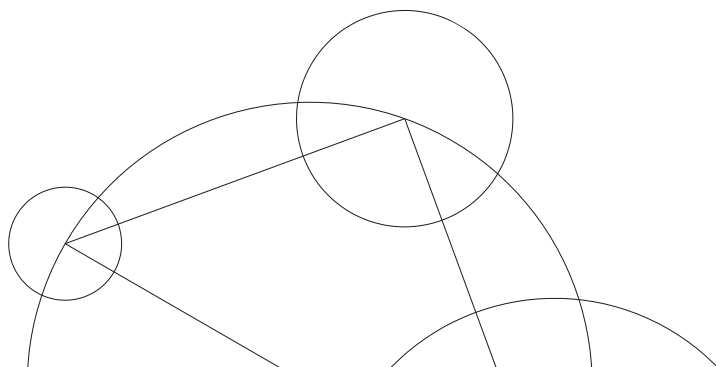
Cancer is a leading cause of disease worldwide, with over 14 million new cases of cancer currently occurring each year. Thanks to improved screening programs (which help detect cancers at earlier stages) and more effective treatment procedures, the population of cancer survivors continues to increase. Cancer survivors are often enrolled in follow-up programs, which traditionally consists of fixed appointments with an oncologist, sometimes for up to 10 years. Not surprisingly, this puts a heavy burden on the healthcare system. Furthermore, there is a lack of evidence that traditional follow-up detects recurrence early and improves survival. Cancer survivors also often suffer from side and late-effects of treatment that are not well-managed in traditional follow-up. Therefore, new models of follow-up are increasingly being developed and tested.

My PhD is nested in the MyHealth project, an RCT comparing a nurse-led symptom-based follow-up program with traditional oncologist-led follow-up in women who have completed breast cancer treatment. Patients are recruited from hospitals in Næstved and Roskilde, and is a collaboration between the Danish Cancer Society Research Center, Region Zealand and the Capital Region. In all, 494 patients need to be recruited and randomized. In the intervention arm, patients will be assigned a nurse and receive up to five one-to-one sessions based on Guided Self-Determination, an educational method

developed by Dr. Vibeke Zoffman to promote patient autonomy and build skills regarding symptom awareness and management. The patient's partner or closest relative is also invited to at least one session. After that, instead of fixed visits with an oncologist, patients fill out a screening instrument every 6 months where they report on symptoms and are able to call the nurse at any time. Patients will fill out outcome questionnaires at baseline, 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years and 5 years. Partners fill out questionnaires at baseline and 6 months.

As a psychologist who has worked with cancer patients and their relatives, I know that the cancer trajectory, from diagnosis to treatment to survival phase is incredibly stressful. Caregivers are also often forgotten in the process. In my PhD, I will get the opportunity to specifically look at how patients cope with health-related problems, the role of their partners (specifically levels of health literacy) and how this impacts depression and anxiety in survivors of breast cancer. Involving patients in the development of MyHealth has also led me to be interested in patient and public involvement (PPI) in research, a new area that I feel is both exciting and challenging!

Contact: bevlim@cancer.dk



Lea Arregui Nordahl Christoffersen

*MSc in Public Health,
Unit of Medical Psychology, Section of Environmental Health,
Department of Public Health, University of Copenhagen*

Cognitive Ability and Psychiatric Comorbidity in Men Seeking Outpatient Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorders



Alcohol use disorders (AUD), often defined as alcohol abuse or dependence, are associated with increased risk of several adverse outcomes including somatic diseases, psychiatric disorders, decreased quality of life, and impaired social relations. In Denmark, approximately 620,300 individuals have a harmful use of alcohol while app. 85,620 are dependent drinkers. Despite the well-established consequences of AUD and the extent of the disorder in the population, phenotypes related to development, withdrawal, and remission of AUD need further exploration.

In 2013, the multidisciplinary project, Phenotypes in Alcohol Use Disorders, was initiated to increase the understanding of AUD and improve interventions for individuals with the disorder. My PhD is a part of this project and will focus on examining the role of cognitive ability in relation to various aspects of AUD including age at onset, comorbid psychiatric disorders, and mortality. Overall, the hypothesis is that low premorbid cognitive ability is associated with early onset of AUD and increased risk of psychiatric comorbidity and mortality. Furthermore, we will characterise men who received outpatient treatment for an alcohol use disorder by matching them with individuals never diagnosed with AUD. The characterisation will focus on cognitive ability,

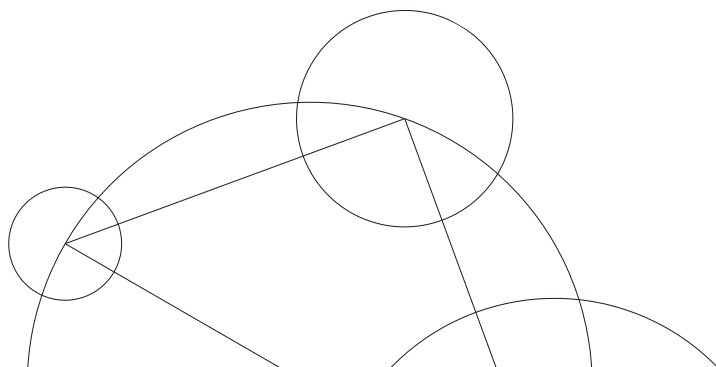
socioeconomic position, and psychiatric comorbidity.

My analyses are based on a sample of men identified from The Copenhagen Alcohol Cohort as diagnosed with AUD and receiving outpatient treatment for the disorder. Cognitive ability, measured as intelligence quotient (IQ), was obtained at draft board examination in early adulthood by the intelligence test, Børge Priens Prøve. In the project, I will use national Danish registers to obtain information on comorbidity, mortality, and factors relevant to adjustment of the analyses.

My background

I obtained my degree in science of public health from University of Copenhagen in 2016. For a short period, I worked with Steno Diabetes Center to publish the results from an effect assessment of a patient education programme for individuals with type 2 diabetes. In September 2016, I were employed as a research assistant at the Unit of Medical Psychology to prepare the PhD project and in January 2017, I enrolled as a PhD student.

Contact: Lea Arregui Nordahl Christoffersen,
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International PhD of the Month

Terese Sara Høj Jørgensen

Research stay at the Aging Research Center, Karolinska Institutet and Stockholm University, Sweden

One year into my PhD, I had a wonderful research stay of four months in the capital of our neighboring country, Sweden. When I initiated my PhD at the Section of Social Medicine, Department of Public Health, I quickly started thinking about the opportunity to have a research stay abroad. My PhD project is embodied in the large SIA (Social Inequality in Aging) project that focuses on ageing in the Nordic countries. It was therefore natural to start looking for opportunities of an international research stay within this already established collaboration. It became even more relevant when I discovered that our collaborators at the Ageing Research Center (ARC), Karolinska Institutet and Stockholm University, had unique data on socioeconomic resources of close family members of older people. This data would enable me to investigate a new angle in my PhD project that I had been very interested in, but which I would not have been able to pursue using my Danish data. Luckily they were also happy to welcome me for a research stay at ARC and my destination was thereby determined.

To initiate the preparations for the stay, I started out by seeking guidance from the International Staff Mobility Office at the University of Copenhagen, which provided a great help. The planning turned out to be rather uncomplicated. I had received funding for housing through the SIA project (supported by Nordforsk Foundation) and had my other expenses covered through funding from The Graduate Program in Public Health and Epidemiology and the Graduate School of Health and Medical Sciences. Finding an

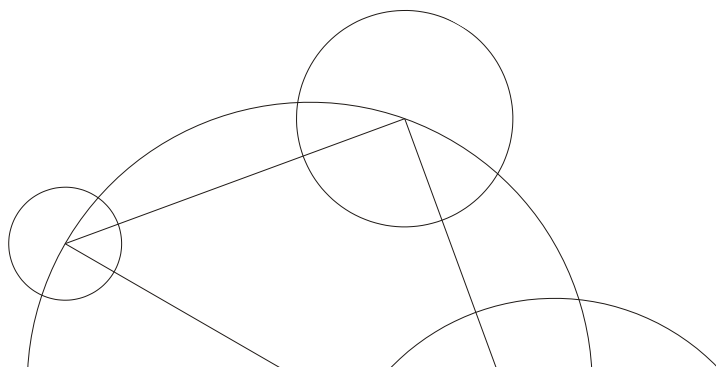
affordable apartment in Stockholm can however be a challenge, but I was again lucky. I

had applied for housing through Karolinska Institutet and got a studio apartment at Lidingö (A Island with a lot of nice nature next to Stockholm) offered a couple of months before my research stay started.

I had a really pleasant and very fruitful stay at ARC. The research center includes around 90 people divided in three research groups; the Medical, the Psychological and the Sociology group. I was part of the Sociology group, which did a great effort to make me feel as a part of the group from the very beginning. I attended weekly FIKA (Swedish concept that means “to have coffee” and often also something to eat) and seminars, which gave me a good insight into the new research environment at ARC. At the same time, I got the opportunity to explore beautiful Stockholm, the wonderful nature surrounding it and learn a bit of Swedish.... Also, the short distance to Denmark made it easy for me to convince family and friends to come visit during my stay. I would without a doubt encourage everyone who has the possibility to take advantage of the unique opportunity to explore another research environment and country while being a PhD student. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions ☺



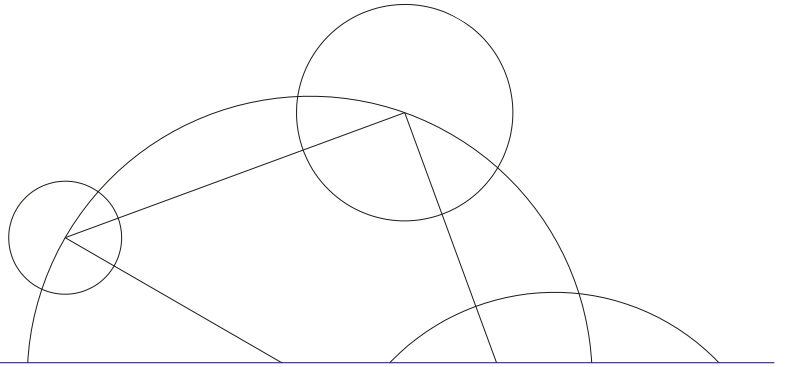
Contact: Terese Høj Jørgensen, Tshj@sund.ku.dk



Welcome to the new PhD students

9 new PhD students have been enrolled between 1st of June and 1st of September 2017

Name	Project	Supervisor
Camilla Marianne Hvidtfeldt	Not without my family - Consequences of Danish refugee policy for health and integration	Marie Louise Nørredam
Charlotte Lund Rasmussen	Do high physical work demands impede a physically active leisure?	Kirsten Nabe-Nielsen
Dorthe Pedersen	Impact of dynamic changes in body size throughout child and adult ages on women's reproductive health	Jennifer Lyn Baker
Helle Johnsen	Sub-project of the project MAMA ACT: An intervention study promoting equality in reproductive health in Denmark	Ulla Christensen
Jacob Mesot Liljehult	Health behaviour in patients with stroke and prevention of stroke recurrence	Thomas Christensen
Kristina Holmegaard Nørskov	Patient Ambassador Support for Newly Diagnosed Patients with Acute Leukemia during Treatment	Mary Jarden
Lærke Roulund Taudorf	Mortality and end-of-life in dementia	Gunhild Waldemar
Philip Andreas Schytz	Acute Kidney Injury in hospital and non-hospital settings - A retrospective, nationwide cohort study on the significance of acute kidney injury in hospital and non-hospital settings on cardiac, renal and socioeconomic outcomes	Gunnar Gislason
Trine Damsted Rasmussen	Sub-project of the project MAMA ACT: An intervention study promoting equality in reproductive health in Denmark	Anne-Marie Nybo Andersen



Up-coming PhD courses

Public Health courses at HEALTH-UCPH

Exercise as Medicine

Course director: Pernille Højman and Mathias Ried-Larsen
30 October-2nd of November, 2017

Introduction to Nvivo

Course director: Morten Skovdal
14-15 December, 2017

Pregnancy and programming and later risk of obesity

Course director: Berit L. Heitmann
22-26 January, 2018

Medical Ethics: Theory and Practice

Course director: Jeanette Bresson Ladegaard Knox
24-26 January 2018

Questionnaires in clinical and public health research: development, validation and evaluation

Course director: Mogens Grønvold
1st of February-7 February, 2018

Statistics courses at HEALTH-UCPH

Statistical analysis of survival data

Use of SAS statistical software

Programming and statistical modelling in R

Regression models

Introduction to Stata

Use of the statistical software R

Programming and statistical modelling in Stata

Introduction to scale validation

Modern scale validation and using IRT and Rasch models

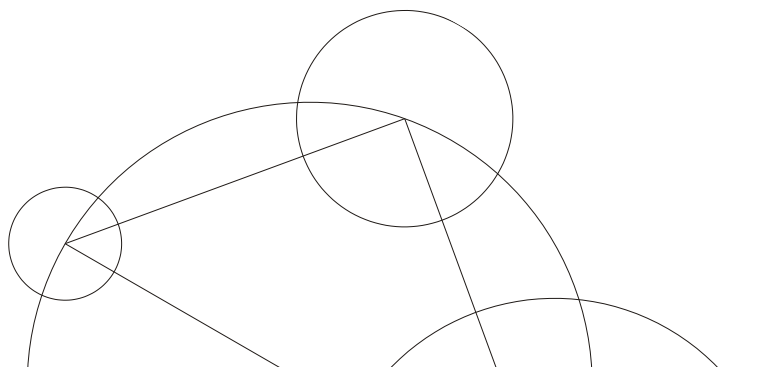
Analysis of correlated and repeated measurements

Read more at:

<https://phdcourses.ku.dk/Kursusliste.aspx?printPreview=1&TermId=337&KatId=53&OCatID=4300117&sitepath=SUND>

Applications for public health and statistics courses through the Graduate School:

<https://phdcourses.ku.dk/Default.aspx?sitepath=SUND>



PhD defenses

6 October 2017, 14:00-17:00

Maria Eiholm Frederiksen

Psychological effects and health care use as a consequence of cervical abnormalities » [Read more](#)

12 October 2017, 14:00-

Rune Aabenhus

Antibiotic prescribing in general practice » [Read more](#)

30 October 2017, 14:00-17:00

Caroline Asirvatham Gjørup

Health-related quality of life and surgical morbidity in melanoma patients DXA & melanoma-related limb lymphoedema
» [Read more](#)

You can always find an updated list of PhD defenses at <http://phd-pubhealthepi.ku.dk/phd-defenses/>

Funding opportunities for research stays abroad in 2017-18

The Graduate Program in Public Health and Epidemiology will provide up to 10.000 DKK in financial support to research stays abroad of *at least three months duration* in 2017 or 2018 in order to encourage internationalization.

Please send a brief description of your research stay abroad and a budget to Lisbeth Lyng Hansen (llh@sund.ku.dk) in order to apply for these funds. Everyone who meets the qualifications will be awarded funding up to a maximum of 10.000 DKK depending on their budget.

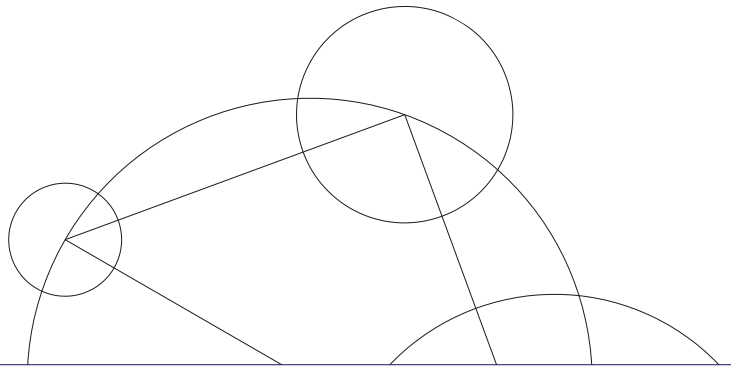
Please be aware that these funds are in addition to the funds you can apply for through the PhD School:

<http://healthsciences.ku.dk/phd/studyabroad/financial-support-for-studying-abroad/>

There is also an excellent 'PhD supervision service' for going abroad handled by International Staff Mobility (ISM) who assists PhD students with practical issues such as visa, insurance, de-registration, social security and funding. More information can be found at: <http://phd.ku.dk/english/abroad/>

Financial support for seminars

If you wish to organize a seminar, the graduate program in Public Health & Epidemiology has some means to support for instance travel and accommodation for guest lecturers. The only condition is that the seminar is open for PhD students in the program. Please contact Naja Hulvej Rod, nahuro@sund.ku.dk or Lisbeth Lyng Hansen, LLH@sund.ku.dk for more information.



Financial support for writing retreats



We offer a number of writing retreats of one week duration at Fuglsang Manor House, https://intranet.ku.dk/employeeguide/buildings_and_facilities/fuglsang-manor-house/Pages/default.aspx

Please send a short motivated application to Lisbeth, LLH@sund.ku.dk. Application deadline for stays in the Spring semester 2018: **20th of November, 2017.**

Coaching sessions

We offer coaching sessions to PhD students that experience challenges in their projects. We have contact to three coaches with specific experience in PhD coaching.

This is an **on-going offer**, so if you feel in need of this kind of support, please contact Lisbeth Lyng Hansen, llh@sund.ku.dk. She can mediate the contact to the coaches. All requests will be handled confidentially.

Courses on supervision for PhD supervisors

Supervision of PhD students

Department of Science Education, University of Copenhagen

This course aims to provide participants with the practical and theoretical basis supervising PhD students - both as principal or supplementary supervisor. The course is designed for new as well as experienced supervisors. For course dates, see http://www.ind.ku.dk/english/course_overview/teacher_training/phd_supervision/