



Spring 2023 Newsletter

The purpose of our Global Health Newsletter is to disseminate the global health research, education, and outreach of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

Faculty Spotlight

Theodoros Giannouchos, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Service Policy & Management



Tell us a bit about yourself, your career, and how it led you to USC.

I am originally from Greece, but I lived in Germany between the ages of 5 to 12. I studied Pharmacy at the University of Patras in Greece (integrated Master's degree – PharmD equivalent), but soon realized that I wanted to have an impact

on population health at a higher level beyond the narrow clinical setting that I was seeing myself practicing in. Upon graduation, I decided to pursue a Master's in Health Economics at the University of Piraeus in Greece and then a PhD in Health Services Research with a Health Economics concentration at the Department of Health Policy and Management, School of Public Health, Texas A&M University in College Station. My passion for research and teaching led to my decision to become an academic and I was fortunate to join the faculty at HSPM, Arnold School of Public Health at USC, after a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Utah.

How would you describe your current global health research?

What other global health activities are you involved in?

I am currently collaborating with various entities and institutions in Greece and Germany and actively participating in various topics that are interesting to me and have the potential to impact patients in these countries in various settings.

I am working with EODDY (the equivalent CDC) in Greece to provide timely and up-to-date evidence on COVID-19 vaccination effectiveness and associated outcomes. In other projects in collaboration with the Medical School at the University of Patras and the Laboratory for Health Policy, Technology, and Behavior Assessment School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Peloponnese, Greece - with which I am affiliated with as an external research associate- I contribute to research trying to explore parental and clinicians towards COVID-19 vaccination for young children. In other ongoing projects, we are currently trying to

understand individuals' perceptions of the need for reforms in the local healthcare system and to produce evidence on constituents' self-reported priorities to shape policy towards more equitable and efficient provision of medical care services. I have previously contributed to research studies exploring other facets and inefficiencies of the Greek healthcare system, such as informal out-of-pocket payments by patients to providers, a vexing issue in many EU countries.

I am also an active collaborator with the St Vinzenz hospital in Dusseldorf and the Department of Orthopaedics and Joint Replacement, University of Cologne in Germany to evaluate changes in patients' satisfaction and function after the uptake of robotic-assisted total knee arthroplasty surgery. This is a comparative effectiveness study of the use of a robot relative to conventional implanted knee total arthroplasty with potentially important implications in the use of robots for this procedure.

What advice would you give to current students interested in your field?

I would strongly encourage students to network, look out and be open to potential opportunities and collaborations with researchers and institutions globally in topics that they are interested in and passionate about. Working and contributing to global research is an eye-opening and knowledge-enhancing experience that enhances students' capacity to collaborate and diversify not only their research portfolio but also their viewpoints about the healthcare field in general.

Student Spotlight

Katie Lynn, MS, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics



What degree are you currently pursuing at USC?

Ph.D. in Epidemiology

Tell us a little bit about your current research and what you do in the field of global health.

My research interests lie in characterizing vector-borne and neglected tropical disease through a socioecological lens, in a global context. I have worked on projects surrounding neglected infections like Chagas disease, trichomoniasis, and gastrointestinal parasites in pediatric and

adult populations in the U.S. and El Salvador. This past year I also served as a graduate assistant for the Carter Center's Trachoma Control Program, performing disease modeling and investigating factors that lead to persistent trachoma in Amhara, Ethiopia. My current research, under P.I. Dr. Melissa Nolan, investigates infectious diseases that can be passed from mom to baby, and the impact of these infections on maternal and neonatal health outcomes. The project looks at the prevalence of Chagas disease, toxoplasmosis, zika virus, and dengue virus among pregnant women presenting for Labor and Delivery at a hospital in western El Salvador. Our project hopes to inform clinical guidelines and to assist in the capacity to test for infectious causes of maternal-child morbidity and mortality in El Salvador. In this way, we can also help to inform education and intervention campaigns to improve maternal child health in this region.

How has your time at USC prepared you for your future career path?

In my time at USC, I have been very fortunate to work with an amazing team in the Nolan lab and with our collaborators at the University of El Salvador, that have allowed me the opportunity to

further my skill set and broaden my research interests in the field of global health.

What do you recommend to current students at USC that are interested in global health?

I recommend finding an advisor or mentor with similar research interests and seeing what research opportunities are available with those faculty members. Helping with international projects and talking with a mentor about your career goals can help you understand the next steps to take to accomplish your goals. USC also has some really great undergraduate and graduate funding opportunities that allow you to begin developing your research repertoire and working on your own projects while at USC!

Highlighting Global Health Work at USC

As we continue to build our semester newsletters, it would be helpful to get your suggestions on individuals (faculty, staff, students, or alumni) that we should highlight. If you know of anyone at or affiliated with USC who is currently doing global health work that you recommend we reach out to, please email emkenney@email.sc.edu.

Global Health Events



THE ARNOLD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH GLOBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

PRESENTS

**LEADING A GLOBAL COMPETITIVE
GRANTS PROGRAM TO UNDERSTAND
DRIVERS OF FOOD CHOICE IN AFRICA
AND ASIA ON KNOWLEDGE,
ENGAGEMENT, AND CAPACITY**



Scan QR code
for Zoom link

Christine Blake, PhD, RD

Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior

FEBRUARY 3, 2023 | 2:00-3:00PM | DISC 140



**Arnold School of
Public Health**
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Dr. Christine Blake conducts research globally on food choice behaviors with an emphasis on the nexus where the individual meets the food environment. Her research program aims to improve the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs to achieve healthy sustainable diets, especially among families with children. This talk provided an overview of lessons learned from a recently completed program funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and UKFCDO that facilitated research on the drivers of food choice in Asia and Africa.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND GLOBAL HEALTH FORUM: PRESENTERS NEEDED



Each year, the ASPH enrolls around 100 international students who have diverse backgrounds, varied experiences, and come from a variety of countries. We want to hear from you! We are seeking international students who will volunteer to make 15–20-minute presentations on any aspect of public health improvements or challenges related to their home country.

If interested, please contact Victoria Adebisi (vadebiyi@email.sc.edu).



Each year, the ASPH enrolls around 100 international students who have diverse backgrounds, varied experiences, and come from a variety of countries. The International Student and Global Health Forum is a place for students to present their international interests and expertise in global health.

We want to hear from you! We are seeking international students who will volunteer to make 15–20-minute presentations on any aspect of the public health improvements or challenges of their home country. Please email Victoria Adebisi (vadebiyi@email.sc.edu) if you are interested in presenting. Also, join the Global Health Student listserv for updates on events, opportunities, and more.

Join the Student Listserv



Group Care Global's mission is to promote group health care for mothers, infants, partners, and their families to improve maternal and child health and well-being. The organization consults with international partners to integrate group care and its evaluation into their health system. Dr. Deborah Billings serves as Senior Advisor for Group Care Global. There are opportunities for students to get involved, so please contact Dr. Billings for more information.

Recent Publications

Acton RB, Rynard VL, Adams J, Bhawra J, Cameron AJ, Contreras-Manzano A, **Davis RE, Thrasher JF**, et al. Awareness, use and understanding of nutrition labels among adults from five countries: Findings from the 2018-2020 International Food Policy Study. *Appetite*. 2023. doi:10.17863/CAM.88538

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