

---

## Jagsi Selected as RWJF Scholar

**Reshma Jagsi**, MD, DPhil, has been selected for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Physician Faculty Scholars Program Class of 2012. Scholars in this program receive research and career development support for three years. Dr. Jagsi, who is an assistant professor in Radiation Oncology and a core faculty member at CBDSM, will be carrying out a mixed qualitative and quantitative investigation into the barriers facing junior physician faculty researchers. Heartiest congratulations to Dr. Jagsi on this honor from RWJF!



---

## Incoming Post-Doctoral Research Fellows

CBDSM's Director of Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Fellows, **Angie Fagerlin**, PhD, is delighted to announce the arrival of two new fellows in fall 2009.



**Holly Witteman** comes to us from the University of Toronto's Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, where she wrote a PhD dissertation entitled "A Recommender System for Prostate Cancer Websites: One Size Does Not Fit All." She holds a BScE in mathematics and engineering from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Holly has presented and published on health information processing models and interactive technologies for patient decision making.

**Andrea Fuhrel-Forbis** completed her PhD in social psychology at the University of Connecticut, with a dissertation titled "An Examination of Students in Health-Care Professions: Implicit and Explicit Attitudes, Service Learning, and Intentions to Work with Underserved Populations." Andrea holds an MA in social psychology from the University of Connecticut and a BA in psychology and sociology from the University of Nevada. She has presented and published on subjects including tailored public health interventions and on perceived risk related to HIV/AIDS.



---

## Grant News at CBDSM

o **Michael Volk**, MD, MSc, will be working with Shawn Pelletier, MD, from the UM Department of Surgery, on "Clinical Interventions to Increase Organ Procurement." This three-year grant was awarded by the Health Resources and Services Administration.

o "Bang for the Buck" is the title of a project assessing the impact of different features of a web-based decision aid to improve patient decision making for asymptomatic carotid disease. This project was recently funded by the Foundation for Informed Medical Decision Making. Ethan A. Halm, MD, MPH (University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center) will be collaborating with CBDSM's **Brian Zikmund-Fisher**, PhD, on research that will compare two decision aids related to surgery to prevent stroke.

o **Brian Zikmund-Fisher**, PhD, will also be working with Edith Parker, DPH (UM School of Public Health) on a two-year NIH grant, "Risk Communication for Environmental Exposure," funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 ("stimulus bill").

## Faculty Spotlight: An Interview with Sarah Tropman Hawley

Sarah Hawley is a Research Associate Professor in the General Medicine Division of the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Michigan and a faculty affiliate at CBDSM. She holds a BA from UM, an MPH from Yale, and a PhD from the University of North Carolina. She also completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Texas. Her research focuses on patient decision making related to breast cancer treatment and to colorectal cancer screening. Her recent publications on racial and ethnic disparities in breast cancer treatment, in particular, have gained wide media attention.

### *How did you get into your field?*

**SH:** I enjoyed science and math in high school, so I did pre-med in college, at UM. But when I got to organic chemistry, I veered over to political science and policy. After I got a degree in political science, my Dad suggested that I browse around at the UM School of Public Health. I discovered this whole area of health policy that combined my medical interests and my policy interests—it was one of those moments of epiphany. But I didn't want to stay in Ann Arbor, so I did an MPH at Yale. I realized at Yale that I enjoy the conceptualization of ideas, and I saw that I'd need a PhD so that I could lead projects. I finished my PhD in health policy and administration at Chapel Hill in 1998.

**What's your favorite project?** **SH:** I'm busy with several new projects, but I think my favorite project right now is one that I'm wrapping up, funded by an R21 [grant from NIH]. For this one, we developed a decision tool for patients with early-stage breast cancer. It was so rewarding when we showed this tool to some patients and got great feedback. We've also had great response on the deployment of the tool in clinical settings. With this project I can see that I'm bringing the effort right to the people it's intended for.



### *And what about your other projects?*

**SH:** One colon cancer study, funded by an R01 [grant from NIH], is closely related to my VA Merit Award project. For another R01, that I share with Steven Katz [Prof. of Internal Medicine at UM], we're surveying breast-cancer patients, following up on quality-of-life issues after four years. We're also going to link this research to a project that Jennifer Griggs [Assoc. Prof. of Internal Medicine at UM] has, which will enable us to add medical records and tissue samples from the women.

### *Can you comment on your work at the VA health system?*

**SH:** The VA is not only a great resource for veterans in our country but it's also a great resource for health outcomes researchers. I especially like the interplay between the VA group of researchers and the researchers in General Medicine [at UM]; for example, I work with Sandeep Vijan [Assoc. Prof. of Internal Medicine at UM]. In the interactions of my research team with the veterans, it's clear that we're doing something that they appreciate—we get a good response rate, and even those who can't participate say how sorry they are. Some of these guys get on the bus early in the morning to come in for our research study. Also, the data systems at the VA are rich, and you don't get this in a lot of places. Researchers have access to excellent medical records.

### *What direction do you see your career going?*

**SH:** This is an exciting time! I'm part of a group called the Cancer Surveillance and Outcomes Research Team ([www.cansort.org](http://www.cansort.org)), which is attracting many junior faculty members to its meetings. I see myself becoming a mentor to these faculty. All the new interest is from clinicians, so as a non-clinician I can give my public health and policy perspective. I know that CBDSM is also growing, and I want to remain a part of that group, too. I still do a lot of the number crunching for my studies, because then I have control over how the data appear. But I may have to start delegating!

### *And when you're not researching?*

**SH:** I like to spend time with my family and do outdoor activities. I just finished my first mini-triathlon in Brighton. It wasn't a full triathlon, but I'm doing some training now. I like reading for pleasure, but I don't have enough time for it. So Angie Fagerlin [Assoc. Prof. of Internal Medicine at UM] urged me to get a Kindle application for my iPhone. Now I can read a few pages while I'm waiting in lines.

## New Staff at CBDSM



**Rochelle DeCastro** is a Research Associate for **Reshma Jagsi**, studying gender issues among American physician-scientists. Rochelle has just completed her master's degree in clinical psychology at the University of Michigan. Her thesis focused on the effect of demographics, early childhood experience, and self-image on HIV sexual risk behavior among young women. Rochelle first became interested in health-related behavioral science research after contributing to a project at Ithaca College that examined the psychosocial variables influencing diabetes self-care management in the Native American community. She completed her clinical practicum at Henry Ford Hospital where she conducted neuropsychological assessments for a research study on quality of life and cognitive functioning among liver transplant patients. At Stanford, Rochelle earned a BA in American Studies with a specialization in race and ethnicity.



**Sonali S. Patel** joined CBDSM in August as a Research Associate in bioethics. Sonali holds an MPH in epidemiology and international health from Boston University and a BS in biochemistry from the University of Virginia. For **Scott Kim**, Sonali will be working on a new R01 on the ethics of potential therapeutic misconception in research for treatment of Parkinson's patients. For **Ray DeVries**, she'll be assisting with a history of bioethics. Sonali has extensive experience in project management, especially helping communities with HIV/AIDS education, services, and delivery. She has also worked on public health issues abroad (especially in Africa) and on a national campaign aimed at mobilizing communities to get tested for HIV.

**Mark Swanson** is the newest staff member in the Internet Survey Lab, directed by **Brian Zikmund-Fisher**. Mark is a Japanese studies major at the University of Michigan, has trained as a classical pianist, and runs his own web design business. His expertise in ActionScript programming and Flash applications is being used on a project funded by the American Cancer Society to see if interactive graphics help patients to use decision aids more effectively.

---

## Lab Meetings Resume

At the September 3 CBDSM Lab Meeting **Scott Kim**, MD, PhD, presented "Some Thoughts on Assessing Quality of Informed Consent." If you missed this one, mark your calendar for upcoming Thursdays:



October 1 and 15  
November 5 and 19  
December 3 and 17

We meet from 11:45 am to 1:00 pm, in the North Ingalls Building, Room 7C09. Researchers talk about issues ranging from risk communication to bioethics, from health disparities to health policy. Bring your lunch, tell us what you've been exploring lately, and get feedback from the Lab Meeting group. To be added to the presenters' list or to the general notification list for Lab Meetings, email [caitweb@med.umich.edu](mailto:caitweb@med.umich.edu).

### Best wishes to . . .

**Soumya Rangarajan**, outgoing Research Associate at CBDSM who is starting medical school at the University of Illinois.

**Teresa Gavaruzzi**, a doctoral fellow who spent a productive 18 months with CBDSM and who has now returned to the University of Padua (Italy) to complete her PhD.

**Chris DeVries**, CBDSM Financial Consultant, and Genevieve Ferraro DeVries, who were married on August 22.

## CBDSM Halloween Potluck

CBDSM will be holding its annual potluck for Halloween on Friday, October 30, at noon, in 7C09 North Ingalls Building, University of Michigan campus. Prizes for best costumes!

## Leaving the ER in a Fog



Check out the latest interactive Decision of the Month at [www.cbdsim.org/doms!](http://www.cbdsim.org/doms!)

Follow Alfred as he goes to his local Emergency Room. Does he understand his diagnosis and the care he receives? Does he know what to do when he gets home and what should alert him to return to the ER?

This Decision of the Month is based on a recent article: Engel KG, Heisler M, Smith DM, Robinson CH, Forman JH, Ubel PA, Patient comprehension of emergency department care and instructions: Are patients aware of when they do not understand? *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 53;4 (April 2009), 454-61.

## Southwest Oncology Group Young Investigator Training Course

CBDSM's Reshma Jagsi, MD, DPhil, was selected to attend the Southwest Oncology Group's intensive workshop on design and conduct of cancer clinical trials in September 2009. Jagsi has proposed a prospective study of the outcomes of breast reconstruction in patients who receive post-mastectomy radiation therapy. "Little high-quality evidence exists regarding the optimal sequencing of treatments, with some women offered immediate reconstruction at the time of mastectomy and others counseled to wait until after radiation is complete," comments Jagsi.

## Decision Consortium for Fall 2009



The theme for UM's Decision Consortium this fall is

### ***Storing, Spending, and Saving: The Evolution and Psychology of Decisions about Resources***

This interdisciplinary group meets on Thursdays, 3:00-4:30 pm, in 3048 East Hall on the University of Michigan campus. For a full schedule with details on the distinguished presenters, go to

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~prestos/Consumption/ConsumptionEvents2009-2010.pdf>

## Some Recent CBDSM Publications

How bad is depression? Preference score estimates from depressed patients and the general population. Pyne JM, Fortney JC, Tripathi S, Feeny D, Ubel PA, Brazier J. *Health Services Research* 2009;44:1406-1423.

Treatment decisions for complex patients: Differences between primary care physicians and mid-level providers. Subramanian U, Kerr EA, Klamerus ML, Zikmund-Fisher BJ, Holleman R, Hofer TP. *American Journal of Managed Care* 2009;15(6):373-380.

Animal Madness. Ubel PA. *Worth* 2009;18:24.

Surrogate consent for dementia research: A national survey of older Americans. Kim SY, Kim HM, Langa K, Karlawish JH, Knopman D, Appelbaum PS. *Neurology* 2009;72:149-155.