

# Meet CanUSACLEN's newest member - the CERTC at Michigan State University

The Michigan State University (MSU) Clinical Epidemiology Research and Training Center (CERTC) is located in the Department of Epidemiology and the Data Coordinating Center within the College of Human Medicine (CHM). Led by its Director, Dr MH Rahbar ([rahbar@msu.edu](mailto:rahbar@msu.edu)), the CERTC enjoys a strong environment of collaboration with the clinical departments of CHM including the Department of Family Practice. Further, CHM is committed to medical research, particularly that which benefits its patients and communities. This dedication, as well as the combined resources of the central campus and the community campuses, provides an excellent system in which to perform community-based clinical researches. Michigan State University College of Human Medicine is a community-based medical school utilizing a network of practice sites and hospitals across Michigan.

The Department of Epidemiology offers a doctoral program in Epidemiology, a Master of Science in Epidemiology and a Certificate in Epidemiology. To facilitate distance learning, the department is aiming to develop the capacity to broadcast all core courses by PictureTel to CHM's community campuses. The department also offers the TRECOS (Training Clinical Researchers in Community Settings) Program, a training program for medical doctors who are planning to become clinical investigators. Funded by the NIH, this two-year training program consists of a core of formal coursework in epidemiology, biostatistics and research ethics. It also includes a special research seminar series with nationally recognized clinical investigators and a mentorship arrangement for each trainee with an established clinical and/or laboratory investigator at MSU.

Aside from training, the Department of Epidemiology is also involved in research, which includes the conduct of cutting-edge epidemiological investigations relevant to public health, especially the public health of Michigan. The linkages of CHM with the medical facilities of six Michigan communities and the Michigan Department of Community Health create numerous opportunities for collaboration in community epidemiologic investigations. Community-based research is supported by both an electronic infrastructure, which links all six-campus sites, and a network of family practice groups that collaborate in research. The Department has a strong record of obtaining research grants from US federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), The Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It also has a strong record of publishing important scientific researches in major peer-reviewed journals. Current research projects include the etiology and preventability of reproductive and child health disorder, nutritional and cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and communicable diseases, occupational health and the assessment of medical care effectiveness. Some faculty members are developing methodological innovations in epidemiologic modeling, disease mapping, and biostatistical procedures.

The Department provides consultation services in epidemiology and biostatistics to MSU faculty, community health professionals, and public health agencies. It has a Biostatistics Division that handles the statistical consultations. Involvement in consultation depends on faculty interest, time commitments and available resources. Some of these consulting activities have led to on-going collaborative research projects within and outside the University.

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