

Mekhala Dissanayake
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Education

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

August 2019- present
PhD Student in Epidemiology

Oregon Health and Science University

September 2014- June 2016
Master of Public Health in Epidemiology
GPA 3.97

Robert D. Clark Honors College at the University of Oregon

September 2010-June 2014
Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry
Minor in Spanish
GPA 3.59

Publications

1. Murray Horwitz M, Rodriguez M, **Dissanayake M**, Carmichael S, Snowden JM. Postpartum health risks among women with hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, California 2008–2012, *Journal of Hypertension*: May 2021 - Volume 39 - Issue 5 - p 1009-1017doi: 10.1097/HJH.0000000000002711
2. **Dissanayake MV**, Bovbjerg ML, Tilden EL, Snowden JM. The Association between Hospital Frequency of Labor after Cesarean and Outcomes in California. *Women's Health Issues*. 2020 Nov 1;30(6):453–61.
3. Tilden EL, Phillippi JC, Carlson N, **Dissanayake M**, Lee CS, Caughey AB, et al. The association between longer durations of the active phase of labor and subsequent perinatal processes and outcomes among midwifery patients. *Birth* [Internet]. [cited 2020 Aug 3];n/a(n/a). Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/birt.12494>
4. Rodriguez MI, **Dissanayake M**, Swartz JJ, Funkhouser S, Baldwin MK. Immediate postpartum, long-acting reversible contraceptive use among the Emergency Medicaid population: continuation rates and satisfaction. *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*. 2020 Apr 1;222(4):S913–4.
5. **Dissanayake MV**, Darney BG, Caughey AB, Horner-Johnson W. Miscarriage Occurrence and Prevention Efforts by Disability Status and Type in the United States. *Journal of Women's Health*. 2020 Mar 17;29(3):345–52.
6. Horner-Johnson W, **Dissanayake M**, Wu JP, Caughey AB, Darney BG. Pregnancy Intendedness by Maternal Disability Status and Type in the United States. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* [Internet]. [cited 2020 Feb 27]; 2020, 52(1)
7. Pilliod RA, **Dissanayake MV**, Cheng YW, Caughey AB. Association of Widespread Adoption of the 39-Week Rule With Overall Mortality Due to Stillbirth and Infant Death. *JAMA Pediatr*. 2019 Dec 1;173(12):1180.
8. Bovbjerg ML, **Dissanayake MV**, Cheyney M, Brown J, Snowden JM. Utility of the 5-Minute Apgar Score as a Research Endpoint. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2019 Sep 1;188(9):1695–704.
9. Snowden JM, Bovbjerg ML, **Dissanayake MV**, Basso O. The Curse of the Perinatal

Epidemiologist: Inferring Causation Amidst Selection. *Curr Epidemiol Rep*. 2018 Dec 1;5(4):379–87.

10. Tilden EL, Phillippi JC, Ahlberg M, King TL, **Dissanayake MV**, Lee CS, et al. Describing latent phase duration and associated characteristics among 1281 low-risk women in spontaneous labor. *Birth* [Internet]. [cited 2019 Sep 5];0(0). Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/birt.12428>
11. Sargent JA, Savitsky LM, **Dissanayake MV**, Lo JO, Cheng YW, Caughey AB. Gestational Weight Gain during Pregnancy as an Important Factor Influencing a Successful Trial of Labor following Two Previous Cesareans. *Am J Perinatol*. 2019 May;36(6):588–93.
12. Horner-Johnson W, Kulkarni-Rajasekhara S, Darney BG, **Dissanayake MV**, Caughey AB. Live birth, miscarriage, and abortion among U.S. women with and without disabilities. *Disability and Health Journal*. 2017 Jul 1;10(3):382–6.

Peer-reviewed Meetings

1. **Dissanayake MV**, Harmon Q, Baird D. 'Hormonal intrauterine device use and fibroid incidence in the Study of Environment, Lifestyle, and Fibroids.' Submitted abstract to 2022 Society for Epidemiologic Research conference.
2. **Dissanayake MV**, Robinson WR, Hummer B. 'Cesarean delivery among birthing people of minority race/ethnic groups in rural counties.' Poster presentation at the 2021 IAPHS Annual Meeting; October 18-21, 2021.
3. **Dissanayake MV**, Robinson WR, Hummer B. 'Cesarean delivery among birthing people of minority race/ethnic groups in rural counties.' Invited for Virtual Speed Poster presentation (Topic area: Obstetric Health) at the 2021 SPER Annual Meeting; June 10, 2021.
4. **Dissanayake MV**, Horwitz MM, Rodriguez MI, Carmichael SC, Snowden JS. 'Postpartum hospital encounters and complications among women with hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, California 2008-2012.' Invited for Virtual Speed Poster presentation (Topic area: Obstetric Health) at the 2020 SPER Annual Meeting; December 4, 2020.
5. **Dissanayake MV**, Horner-Johnson W, Darney BG, Caughey AB. 'Miscarriage occurrence and prevention efforts by disability status and type in the United States.' Poster presentation at the 2018 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting; Seattle, WA.
6. Bovbjerg ML, **Dissanayake MV**, Cheyney M, Brown J, Snowden JS. 'Utility of the 5-minute Apgar score as a research endpoint.' Plenary presentation at the 2018 SPER Annual Meeting; Baltimore, MD.
7. **Dissanayake MV**, Bovbjerg ML, Tilden E, Snowden JS. 'The association between hospital volume of labor after cesarean and outcomes in California.' Poster presentation at the 2018 SPER Annual Meeting; Baltimore, MD.
8. Tilden E, Phillippi J, Ahlberg M, King TL, **Dissanayake MV**, Lee CS, Snowden JS, Caughey AB. 'Describing latent phase duration and associated characteristics among 1281 low-risk women in spontaneous labor .' Poster presentation at the 2017 NIH BIRCWH conference, Bethesda, MD and the 2018 American College of Nurse Midwives Annual Conference, Savannah, GA (received 2018 ACNM Division of Research Best Research Poster Award).
9. Sargent JA, Savitsky LM, **Dissanayake MV**, Lo JO, Cheng YW, Caughey AB. 'Gestational Weight Gain During Pregnancy as an Important Factor Influencing a Successful Trial of Labor Following Two Previous Cesareans'. Poster presentation at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine; Las Vegas

10. Pilliod RA, **Dissanayake MV**, Cheng YW, Caughey AB. 'The 39 Week Rule: Impact on Stillbirth and Infant Death.' Plenary presentation at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine; Las Vegas.

Relevant Experience

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

Summer Internship Program

Graduate Summer Intern

June 2021-July 2021

I worked under the supervision of Dr. Quaker Harmon and Dr. Donna Baird on a project investigating the effect of hormonal IUD use on fibroid incidence and growth in the Study of Environment, Lifestyle & Fibroids (SELF), a prospective cohort study.

UNC Chapel Hill

Gillings School of Global Public Health

Teaching Assistant, SPHG 712: Methods and Measures

August 2021-December 2021

As a teaching assistant for the epidemiology course in the MPH core, I attend all class sessions and assist with answering questions during lecture, provide weekly office hours, lead two recitation sections, am responsible for the assistance and grading of 40-50 students, help identify points of concept and skill integration across MPH core courses, and attend and assist with note taking and action items in weekly TA meetings.

Department of Epidemiology

NICHD Reproductive, Perinatal and Pediatric Epidemiology (RPPE) T32 Predoctoral Trainee

August 2020-present

Pre-doctoral trainees are required to participate in 10-15 hours per week in a research apprenticeship in addition to attending various department-sponsored seminars and journal clubs related to reproductive, perinatal and pediatric epidemiology. The T32 traineeship provides tuition and a yearly stipend for the trainee. I coordinate the associated RPPE seminar series with another trainee for the 2021-2022 school year, which included recruiting speakers for the series, sending out reminder emails, and coordinating logistics of online/in-person seminar options.

Department of Epidemiology

Graduate Research Assistant

Supervisor: Dr. Whitney Robinson

August 2019-August 2021

GRA responsibilities include conducting literature reviews, management of bibliographic resources, manuscript writing and editing, preparation, and data analysis. I also have tasks related to project management, including administrative tasks and communication.

Carolina Population Center

Population Science Predoctoral Training Program Trainee

August 2020-present

Drawing from 11 departments across the university, the Population Science Training program prepares the next generation of population scientists through rigorous coursework, seminars, and workshops. Additionally, trainees are expected to participate in a research practicum 9-12 hours a week. Oregon Health and Science University

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Obstetric Outcomes

Research Programmer

October 2016- July 2019

I worked as a research associate for the various projects within the OB Outcomes group conducting epidemiologic analyses in both Stata and R, generating figures, and writing/formatting manuscripts for publication. I provided statistical support within the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology to faculty and fellows. I led workshops teaching Stata skills to various department members, including fellows, residents, and fellow analysts. I managed IRBs within the university and DUAs with various data-granting agencies. I oversaw the work of our lab's graduate research assistant. My time with this group led to extensive experience working with both administrative and survey data, including data management and analysis of these data.

OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

Graduate Research Assistant

January 2016- June 2016

I developed course materials for Intro to Survey Design, a graduate level biostatistics course, at OHSU. I conducted literature reviews of studies using the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), extracted data from BRFSS, and developed instructions for downloading and working with BRFSS. I made datasets from studies that used BRFSS for student use.

Graduate Teaching Assistant

September 2015-June 2016

As a teaching assistant for the Introduction to Biostatistics Series, three graduate level courses (Estimation/Hypothesis Testing, Linear Regression, and Categorical Data Analysis) in statistics at OHSU, I provided homework help for students during office hours, made homework solutions, graded homework, led review sessions, and collaborated with each professor on developing learning materials.

Intercommunity Health Exchange and Education (iCHEE) volunteer

March 2015-June 2015

iCHEE works with various populations in the Portland Metropolitan area that may have trouble accessing medical care. I helped conduct medical screenings and directed people to free medical services as necessary at Transition Projects (which supports houseless individuals as they transition to housing) and at Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO).

Multnomah County Health Department

Intern in Maternal and Child Health Section

March 2016- June 2016

I used vital statistics data and data collected from a study done by the U.S. Forest Service to conduct a cross-sectional study on the effect of potential heavy metal exposure on birth outcomes in North and Southeast Portland. I developed fundamental skills in SAS programming and ArcGIS. I provided support for existing data requests in the county by conducting descriptive analyses of vital statistics data.

Oregon Health Authority

Intern in Maternal and Child Health Section

June 2015-September 2015

I conducted literature reviews and developed issue briefs for areas on Title V Funding. I collaborated with members of different sections of OHA to present the most current information on best practices.

Honors and Awards

UNC Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Global Public Health

- 2020 1st place: North Carolina Well-Being Data Analysis Competition, UNC Center for Business of Health. Our team competed against 37 others from across the university. We leveraged the provided ShareCare social determinants of health and well-being datasets, as well as public-use datasets, to determine insights into disparities in economic indices, health care access, and well-being related to rurality and race in North Carolina
- 2019 James Imhotep Irving Public Service Scholarship. Given to one student in the Epidemiology department annually

OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

- 2016 School of Public Health Honors (given to graduates with a 3.8 GPA or higher)
- 2015 2nd place: Epi/Data research competition. "Association between maternal smoking and childhood asthma"

University of Oregon

- 2014 Departmental honors within the Department of Chemistry (given to graduates with a 3.5 GPA or higher with significant work in research and faculty recommendation)
- 2014 Centurion Award. Given to 100 students annually for dedication and outstanding service as a student leader
- 2010-2014 Presidential scholarship. Four-year, full-tuition scholarship to the University of Oregon, given to 50 Oregon residents annually

Community Service

COVID Vaccine Service

Flex volunteer

January 2021- March 2021

~5 hours/ week

I helped with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/ UNC Hospitals efforts to vaccinate North Carolinians. Duties include registering people for the state COVID vaccine system, data entry, and helping with general logistics of the vaccine clinic.

Professional Activities

2021-Present	Member, Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science
2021-Present	Member, Society for Epidemiologic Research
2020-Present	Member, Population Association of America
2019- Present	Ad Hoc Reviewer: American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Journal of Urban Health, BMJ Open, Birth, PLOS One, Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology
2018- Present	Member, Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research (SPER)