

Optum Epidemiology biographical sketches

John D. Seeger, PharmD, DrPH **Chief Scientific Officer for Epidemiology**

Dr. Seeger joined Optum in 2001. In addition to this role, Dr. Seeger is adjunct faculty at both Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Dr. Seeger received a PharmD from the University of Arizona, an MPH from the University of Michigan and a DrPH from Harvard School of Public Health. Trained as a clinical pharmacist, Dr. Seeger spent three years on the faculty of the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he also completed a residency in pharmacy practice. He also spent five years on faculty at Harvard Medical School, Division of Pharmacoepidemiology. Dr. Seeger's research interests are predictors of drug therapy and the application of research methods that incorporate these predictors. He has worked extensively with propensity scores and related methods that seek to mitigate confounding by modeling drug therapy. He has applied these methods to research involving a wide range of therapeutic areas, including diabetes and rheumatologic, cardiovascular, neurologic and gastrointestinal disorders, as well as in vaccine safety and drug effects in pregnancy. Most of this work has involved the application of health insurance claims data as a foundation for studies of post-marketing drug safety. However, the availability of new data resources (particularly electronic health records) has expanded the range of questions that can be addressed through observational techniques and correspondingly expanded the scope of Dr. Seeger's work. He has authored or co-authored more than 100 articles in peer-reviewed medical literature and is a long-term member, past President, and Fellow of the International Society for Pharmacoepidemiology.

Florence T. Wang, ScD **Executive Director**

Dr. Wang joined Optum in 2007. She received a joint Doctor of Science in Epidemiology and Environmental Health in 2005 and a Master of Science in Epidemiology in 2001 from the Harvard School of Public Health. Her previous research focused on occupational surveillance, determinants of heavy metal burden, and environmental and genetic risk factors of cognitive decline,

hearing loss and other health outcomes related to aging. Prior to joining the Epidemiology group, she was a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Environmental Health at the Harvard School of Public Health. At Optum, Dr. Wang has led prospective and retrospective cohort studies, and nested case control studies, as well as studies for signal detection, comparative effectiveness and case algorithm development. Her work at Optum has been in the areas of vaccines, cancer, cardiovascular disease, hepatic outcomes and developmental disorders.

Cheryl Enger, PhD **Senior Scientist**

Dr. Enger is an epidemiologist and biostatistician with over 35 years' experience in clinical and pharmacoepidemiology research. Dr. Enger re-joined Optum in 2007, having been with the group from 1999 to 2003. She has managed several pharmacoepidemiology projects, including retrospective cohort studies and nested case-control studies, for a variety of products and diseases in the areas of cardiology, diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, multiple sclerosis, smoking cessation, immune thrombocytopenia purpura and psychoses. Dr. Enger has significant experience in designing and managing large-scale post-marketing drug safety studies using claims data. She also has extensive experience in the design and analytic conduct of epidemiological studies, especially in ophthalmology and HIV/AIDS. Her academic training includes a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from St. Olaf College, a master's degree in statistics (Iowa State University) and a PhD in epidemiology from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. Dr. Enger is the author or co-author of more than 100 peer-reviewed research articles and has published in journals that include *JAMA*, *American Journal of Cardiology*, *Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety*, *Archives of Ophthalmology* and *Ophthalmic Epidemiology*.

Nancy D. Lin, ScD

Senior Scientist

Dr. Lin joined Optum in 2010. She received a Master of Science and Doctor of Science in Epidemiology from Harvard School of Public Health. She completed a pre-doctoral fellowship with a focus on immunization safety and policy at the Department of Population Medicine (formerly the Department of Ambulatory Care and Prevention), Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute/Harvard Medical School and a post-doctoral fellowship in health care research and quality at the Center for Primary Care and Outcomes Research, Stanford University. A pharmacoepidemiologist, Dr. Lin's primary research interests include the development of applications for electronic health care data systems and data linkages to enhance surveillance and assessment of drug and biologics utilization, safety and effectiveness. At Optum, Dr. Lin has managed multiple large-scale studies that used enriched health care claims and/or electronic health records data in the areas of rheumatoid arthritis, depression, tardive dyskinesia and vaccines. She serves as site principal investigator for Optum for the FDA Sentinel project and related distributed research network initiatives. In addition to these roles, Dr. Lin serves as Chair of the Science Committee for the Biologics and Biosimilars Collective Intelligence Consortium, a non-profit, multi-stakeholder scientific initiative established to monitor biosimilars and corresponding novel biologics for effectiveness and safety.

Najat J. Ziyadeh, MPH

Director of Epidemiology

Ziyadeh joined Optum in 2001. She earned both her Master of Arts in Medical Science and Master of Public Health in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from Boston University in 2001. Prior to joining the Epidemiology group, she conducted clinical research on the effects of angiogenesis inhibitors on human tumor growth and metastasis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and described the smoking, drinking and dieting behaviors of adolescents based on sexual orientation. Ziyadeh has extensive experience in the analysis and reporting of large-scale post-marketing safety research studies for the pharmaceutical industry using a variety of health insurance claims databases. Her work at Optum has been in the areas of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, female health and antibiotic use.

Kandace L. Amend, PhD, MPH

Senior Epidemiologist

Dr. Amend joined Optum in 2007. She received a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in 1997 and a PhD in epidemiology from University of Michigan School of Public Health in 2004. Prior to joining the Epidemiology group, Dr. Amend was an assistant professor at Mount Sinai School of Medicine with an appointment in the Department of Oncological Sciences. Her research focused primarily on the molecular epidemiology of breast cancer to improve the understanding of racial disparities among African-American and Caucasian women with the disease. At Optum she has led retrospective studies using claims data focused on eye conditions, influenza, asthma, rhabdomyolysis, PML and vaccines.

Monica L. Bertoia, MPH, PhD

Senior Epidemiologist

Dr. Bertoia joined Optum in 2016. She received a Master of Public Health in 2007 from the Yale School of Public Health and a PhD in 2011 from the Brown University School of Public Health. Her previous research focused on nutrition and cardiovascular disease prevention, including cardiovascular disease-related biomarkers, dietary patterns, alcohol, caffeine, and weight change. Prior to joining the epidemiology group, she was a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, adjunct faculty at the Simmons School of Nursing and Health Sciences where she co-taught an introductory biostatistics and epidemiology class, and instructor in medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. She has published in top medical journals, including *BMJ*, *PLoS Medicine*, and *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

Veena Hoffman, MPH

Senior Epidemiologist

Hoffman has been with Optum since 2008. She earned her Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from the University of Michigan in 2005. Prior to joining Optum, she conducted clinical and epidemiological research in the area of hepatocellular carcinoma. She has served as a reviewer for *Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety*, *Vaccine*, and *Osteoporosis International*. At Optum, Hoffman has led multi-year prospective and retrospective cohort studies, nested case-control studies, and studies for exposure and case algorithm development. Her work at Optum has been in the areas of epilepsy, cardiovascular disease, biologic safety in rheumatoid arthritis patients, vaccines, and safety outcomes in migraine patients.

Caihua Liang, MD, PhD

Senior Epidemiologist

Dr. Liang joined Optum in 2011. She received an MD and MSc in biostatistics in China. She also earned a PhD in epidemiology at the Brown University School of Public Health. Her previous research focused on cancer and molecular epidemiology with emphasis on genetic and environmental factors and their interactions in the risk of head and neck cancer and prostate cancer. Prior to joining the Epidemiology group, Dr. Liang was a postdoctoral research fellow at the Institute for Technology Assessment at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School where her research focused on using modeling to improve understanding of the impact of lung and esophageal cancer interventions (e.g., prevention, screening and treatment) on population trends in incidence and mortality. Her current work at Optum is in the areas of cancer, diabetes, allergy and substance abuse using claims and EHR data.

Anita M. Loughlin, MS, PhD

Senior Epidemiologist

Dr. Loughlin joined Optum in 2013. She received a Doctor of Philosophy in Epidemiology from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in 2003. Her specialty was infectious disease epidemiology and she was sponsored by the NIH NEI Training Grant through the JHSPH Center for Clinical Trials. She received a Master of Science in Epidemiology from the University of Massachusetts School of Public Health in 1991. Prior to joining Optum, Dr. Loughlin was an assistant professor at Boston University, with appointments at the School of Medicine and School of Public Health. During her career she has conducted large clinical and epidemiological studies both nationally and internationally. Her work has focused on the vaccine preventable diseases (e.g., pertussis, *S. pneumoniae*, *N. meningitides* and *H. influenzae*), evaluation of vaccine effectiveness and vaccine safety. Additionally, she has conducted prevention research and treatment trials on HIV, tuberculosis, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Dr. Loughlin has published numerous peer-reviewed articles and serves as reviewer for journals such as *Vaccine*, *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, *AIDS Care Journal*, *Biomedical Central*, *JAIDS*, *Journal of General Internal Medicine* and *Medical Care*. At Optum, Dr. Loughlin is part of the Sentinel Team and has conducted both claims-based and EHR-based studies in areas of multiple sclerosis, lipodystrophy, diabetes, tardive dyskinesia and familial hyperchylomicronemia syndrome, endometriosis, and seasonal allergies. In addition, she has implemented a large FDA-sponsored provider and patient survey study.

Kelesitse Phiri, MS, ScD

Senior Epidemiologist

Dr. Phiri joined Optum in June 2016. She received her MS in 2007 and her ScD in 2012, both from the Department of Epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health where her research focused on pregnancy exposures and birth outcomes among HIV-infected women. She was a co-principal investigator of an NIH R21 grant on the development and application of novel methods to detect and correct for selection bias in perinatal epidemiologic studies. Her current work at Optum is in the areas of cancer and cardiovascular disease, and in methodologies for pregnancy and mother-baby cohort development.

Andrea K. Chomistek, MPH, ScD

Epidemiologist

Dr. Chomistek joined Optum in 2018. She earned a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from the University of Michigan in 2006 and a ScD in epidemiology from the Harvard School of Public Health in 2011. She completed her postdoctoral training in the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health. Prior to joining the Epidemiology group at Optum, Dr. Chomistek was an assistant professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the School of Public Health at Indiana University-Bloomington. Her prior research focused on the relationship between physical activity and cardiovascular disease as well as measurement of physical activity in epidemiological studies. She has published her work in top cardiology journals, including the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* and *Circulation*.

Katherine C. Hughes, ScD

Epidemiologist

Dr. Hughes joined Optum in October 2018. She received her ScD in epidemiology from the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health in 2016. Before joining the Epidemiology group, she completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health. Her previous work focused on the epidemiology of neurodegenerative diseases, particularly Parkinson's disease. Specifically, she conducted research on nutritional and genetic risk factors for Parkinson's disease, as well as projects related to identifying prodromal Parkinson's disease. Her work has been published in *Neurology*, *Journal of Neurology*, *Neurosurgery & Psychiatry*, and *Movement Disorders*.

Rachel P. Ogilvie, PhD, MPH

Epidemiologist

Dr. Ogilvie joined Optum in 2019. She received her PhD in Epidemiology from the University of Minnesota in 2017 and her MPH from Emory University in 2013. Prior to joining the epidemiology group, she was a Postdoctoral Scholar in Translational Sleep Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. Her previous work focused on the epidemiology of sleep and cardiometabolic disease. She has published her work in top journals including *JAMA*, *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, *Sleep*, and *Epidemiology*.

Ryan M. Seals, MS, ScD

Epidemiologist

Dr. Seals joined Optum in 2019. He received his Master of Science in Biostatistics and Doctor of Science in Epidemiology from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. His doctoral research focused on the incidence and etiology of neurodegenerative disease, with an emphasis on occupational and environmental risk factors. Prior to joining Optum, he was an NIH post-doctoral research fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in neurostatistics. He has published numerous peer-reviewed articles in top journals including *Epidemiology*, *The American Journal of Epidemiology*, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, and *Neurology*.

Lauren A.S. Stevens, MPH

Epidemiologist

Stevens joined Optum in 2013. She earned her Master of Public Health in Molecular Epidemiology from the University of Michigan in 2013. Prior to joining Optum, she conducted epidemiological research on the genetic predictors of glaucoma as well as clinical research on the in-vitro development of fetal B cell lines. At Optum, she is currently conducting two claims-based retrospective cohort studies looking at adverse events associated with osteoporosis treatments, as well as a claims-based study examining pregnancy outcomes among endometriosis patients.



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