

2013 International Society for Disease Surveillance Conference

Translating Research and Surveillance into Action

The International Society for Disease Surveillance (ISDS) will hold its twelfth annual conference in New Orleans on December 12th and 13th, 2013. Led by the Society's mission to improve population health by advancing the science and practice of disease surveillance, the conference brings together researchers and practitioners in public health, epidemiology, health policy, biostatistics and mathematical modeling, informatics, computer science, and related fields focused on biosurveillance and emerging challenges to public health practice. The theme of this year's conference, Translating Research and Surveillance into Action, promotes the activities that are making a difference in the public health community. With abstracts submitted by authors from 36 countries, the conference will highlight research and successes in practice from around the world.

Of the 211 abstracts submitted to the conference, 66 were chosen for oral presentation, 80 for posters, 4 for roundtable discussions, 4 for panels and 28 for a new presentation type, lightning talks. With 14 talks in 2 separate sessions, lightning talks will provide the audience with an information-packed series of 5 minute presentations. They will include themes like how to best use social media, what types of surveillance were performed during the 2013 Super Bowl, what algorithms work best for detection of outbreaks in resource-limited countries, and many other fantastic topics.

In keeping with the conference theme of action, and due to the increasing frequency of major events requiring public health response

(such as extreme weather and terrorist bombings), we are grateful to have Dr. David Abramson provide the opening keynote. Dr. Abramson is the deputy director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness and can offer insight into how public health surveillance can be used before, during, and after disasters.

We are also very pleased to have Dr. Gary Slutkin, the founder and executive director of the Cure Violence organization, speak at the conference. Dr. Slutkin will discuss his organization's fascinating use of epidemiologic techniques applied to the problem of reducing gang violence in inner cities. We look forward to hearing their experience and the challenge of thinking about epidemiology and surveillance in a new light.

I am looking forward to the 2013 ISDS Conference – it is one of the few places where public health practice, analytics, information technology, and policy seamlessly merge in a meaningful way. Every year I listen to inspiring success stories of surveillance practice, intriguing informatics techniques, brilliant analytical methods, and thoughtful policy discussions. And while all of those topics are remarkable by themselves, they are surpassed by the amazing people I meet and the connections that I make every year at ISDS!

Wayne Loschen

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 2013 ISDS Scientific Program Committee Chair

