Research Committee Meeting

Date and Time: March 11, 2015, 11:00 AM EDT
Description: 2015 Research Committee Meeting
Attendees: Samath Dharmaratne, Shilpa Patel, Amy Ising, Richard Thomas, Sylvia Halasz, Flavie Vial, Teresa Hamby, Fernanda Dorea, Joseph Klembczyk, Judy Akkina, Alicia Livinski, Howard Burkom, Lauren Johnson

Notes:

• Announcements
  o Theme for 2015 ISDS conference is Harnessing Data to Advance Health Equity
    ▪ December 8th-10th
    ▪ Will take place in Denver Marriott Hotel
  o Rich Thomas is our new RC Public Health Epidemiology Co-chair

• Literature Review Update
  ▪ These changes come from the research committee survey as well as comments made during the in person meeting
  ▪ Directly in response to committee input
  ▪ Thanks to Yevgeniy Elbert for creating the blog post
  o New weekly ISDS blog entries: http://isdsnews.blogspot.com/
    ▪ Literature review group meets every Monday and selects articles of interest and puts them into a Zotero Database
    ▪ These article titles and abstracts are also being put into the ISDS Blog as well now
    ▪ Title of the article will be at the top and you can click on these to go down to the abstract of the article
  o New article highlights in ISDS Newsletter
    ▪ The co-chairs for the domains are choosing 1-3 articles that they feel are very important and of high interest to ISDS Members
    ▪ The Co-Chairs will write quick summaries which will be included in the Newsletter which goes out to all ISDS Members
  o Zotero database
    ▪ All of the abstracts exist in a new open Zotero Database, Linked on the ISDS blog (no username/password needed to access this database)
    ▪ Also a membership based Zotero database: to access this database you need to sign into the ISDS RC Zotero account
      • This database includes pdfs of the articles as well
      • Username is “ISDS” password is “syndromic”, go to ‘groups’ and ‘group library’

• Technical Conventions Committee Update
  o Howard Burkom talked about the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) project – ISDS received a 3 year funding award to convene consultancies to get people together to define use cases and get data sets
- Funded DTRA project is now underway
- The Technical Conventions Committee has received a 3 year funded grant from DoD to work on use-cases, develop users in the community, and work with public health community to create new use cases
- Advisory group has met twice and has selected an Asyndromic Surveillance Problem for detecting clusters as the first use case
  - Another under consideration is Extreme Weather Events and Mass Gathering Events
  - Public Health Departments and other users are working together on this
- Advisory group is currently pulling together a list of people who they would like to invite to the first Consultancy

**Webinar Update (Nanda)**
- Our first webinar for the year was February 18 – Syndromic Surveillance in Sweden
  - 56 Attendees
  - 65% said this topic was directly relevant to their work
  - 36% will change how they do something in response to the webinar
  - 75% stated that the webinar met their expectations
  - 68% said they learned new techniques
  - Good International Feedback on this webinar
- Future webinars
  - Potential Upcoming Webinar Topics:
    - Automated reports using R
    - Predictive Modeling
    - Volunteer Sentinel Systems
    - Orbit: an Information system in international labs, scalable machine learning for public health
    - Multivariate analysis for surveillance
  - Scheduling issues: looking for another literature review co-chair and hoping to have another large literature review call
    - Want to make sure that there are not too many activities going on at one time
    - Another webinar in the last week of April for Poisoning and Overdose
  - Are the webinars too advanced or too academic? Can we have webinars on Disease prevention and NCDs?
    - Topics of disease prevention or NCDs can be kept in mind. Topics are usually focused on disease surveillance
    - NCDs are a new topic for ISDS – with the recent creation of the non-communicable disease surveillance work group
  - Email Lauren Johnson: ljohnson@syndromic.org if you have any specific topics that you would like to see webinar topics on

**R-group Update (Howard or Nanda)**
- There is an R-Group Google Site: [https://sites.google.com/site/rapplicationforbiosurveillance](https://sites.google.com/site/rapplicationforbiosurveillance)
  - Need to sign up to be able to post on this site – open to everyone (ISDS members and not)
- Calls are only open to ISDS members
  - First Call Jan 29, 2015
  - Second Call: Feb 25: Shiny Apps
  - Next Call: March 31, 2015: R version of SaTScan, scan statistics for determining significant spatiotemporal clusters
• Will make cluster detection more accessible for all people
  o Notes and Recordings of All calls are available on R-Group Google Site
    ▪ Can also post any questions or some code on the website

• Research Priorities List
  o Should Research Committee create this list and how do we go about it?
    ▪ A description of the Research Committee in 2006: Research Committee will establish and publish a list of priorities in research in syndromic surveillance.
    ▪ Do people agree with this?
      • The aim of this list would be to channel the conference and guide the field in general. Help to focus and encourage research in general. Especially for students who are looking for research projects
      • Help to create a dialog with academics and public health research.
      • This could be updated every year. We would need to come up with how to do this and whether we would want to just have a top 5?
      • Committee member from Sri Lanka mentioned their institution publishes a research priority list every year
      • Make this domain specific?
        o Such as co-chair domains: public health/epi, informatics, statistics
      • Ideas could come from other professional meetings people attend like AMIA, ASTHO, etc.
      • This can be vetted by the ISDS Community to better inform researchers
      • General consensus that the list would be useful
      • May be quite an undertaking and may not be able to do this on a voluntary basis
        o May need to get funding
        o Practicum Project for student?
      • Will be difficult to maintain a manageable scope
        o Scope is something which will need to be taken into account

• Scopus search query
  o Does it need to be revised to include non-communicable disease
    ▪ Important to look at the Scopus query every year and make suggestions
      • Add some data mining terms? Mike Conway has already suggested some new informatics terms
      • Add NCD terms?
    ▪ Would some people be interested in volunteering to make edits to the query? Katie Suda is the main person who has been working on the current query.
      • Send an email to Lauren or Judy saying that you would like to help out!

• Discussion of Membership Requirement for ISDS Calls
  o The research committee is considering restricting ISDS webinars to Members
    ▪ Would this help us to gain members or loose attendance at webinars?
      • Discussion:
        • Currently webinars remain open
        • Based on comments, international attendees may not be able to listen into webinars if restricted
        • Laura Streichert – ISDS Executive Director: “I would rather secure CDC funding to make activities open then use ISDS resources and require membership. I do not want to twist people’s arms to become members.”
• Webinars should be open even though the recordings are made available online. People should recognize that some things are going to be a benefit of being a member and then see what may be of general interest and then try to get funding for these. We should go on a more case-by-case basis.

• Other business, topics or ideas

**Action Items:**

- Yevgeniy will work on some technical glitches on blog post
- Update Scopus query (after the meeting Alicia Livinski volunteered to help with this)
- Continue to discuss creation of research priorities list