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Welcome to the Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center Newsletter! This edition is packed with updates on new members, innovative pilot projects, award recipients, staff updates, research highlights, event recaps, and more! Join us on this journey as we share successes in environmental health research and its impact on the community.

New to the SWEHSC Team

Community Engagement Core (CEC)

Exciting news from the SWEHSC CEC! We're thrilled to extend a warm welcome to our new Program Coordinators, Jordania Livingston and Karla Bayless! To learn more about these fantastic team members and their roles, click the link below.



Karla (left) and Jordania (right) presenting at the Baboquivari Secondary School STEM Career Fair, March 2024

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New Center Members

Join us in welcoming the newest members of the center.

Their diverse expertise and dedication promise to enrich our collaborative efforts toward advancing environmental health research and practices. We're excited to see the contributions and impact they'll make. Welcome aboard!

- [Joe Hoover](#) - Assistant Professor, Environmental Science
- [Bernardo Lemos](#) - Professor, Pharmacology and Toxicology
- [Ashley Lowe](#) - Assistant Professor, Nursing
- [Mona Arora](#) - Assistant Research Professor, Community, Environment & Policy
- [Kacey Ernst](#) - Department Chair & Professor, Epidemiology and Biostatistics
- [Tara Carr](#) - Associate Professor, Medicine
- [Marc Verhougstraete](#) - Associate Professor, Community, Environment & Policy
- [Ladd Keith](#) - Assistant Professor of Planning and Sustainable Built Environments

Honors and Awards

Society of Toxicology awards 'Science Paper of the Year' to SWEHSC researchers

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The Society of Toxicology awarded the Science Paper of the Year to researchers from the R. Ken Coit College of Pharmacy. Center Members include Dr. Billheimer, Dr. Cherrington, and Dr. Schnellmann.

[Full Article](#)

Center Member Mónica Ramírez-Andreotta awarded 2023 Distinguished Scholar Award



Dr. Mónica Ramírez-Andreotta was recognized by The University of Arizona for her contributions to Environmental Science.

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Center Member Xinxin Ding was named 2023 American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET) Fellow



Dr. Ding was recognized by ASPET for being one of the society's most distinguished members. Dr. Ding has been an ASPET member since 1997.

[Full Article](#)

Research Highlights

SWEHSC Researchers' Findings Indicate Potential Asthma Treatment

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In a recent publication involving SWEHSC members Drs. Scott Boitano and Julie Ledford, researchers tested a compound, C781, to see how effective it is as a targeted approach that addresses allergen-induced symptoms in an animal model. C781 was developed through testing on human cells from the air passages that lead to and through the lungs (bronchial tubes) before being tested in mice for allergen-induced asthma. These tests indicate C781 is an effective treatment for allergen-induced asthma-like symptoms in the airway.

[Full Summary](#)

SWEHSC Researcher Monitors Air Pollution Using Date Palm Leaves



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Ramírez-Andreotta, PhD, researchers sampled date palm leaves from Ahvaz city, Iran, to test for potentially toxic elements (PTEs) in the environment. Plants are increasingly being used as bioindicators to detect environmental contaminants like heavy metals.

Date palms are becoming a popular candidate because their unique mesh-like structure is well suited for capturing heavy metal deposits.

[Full Summary](#)

Tox Spotlight: Effect of DBP Exposure on Reproductive Function



Toxicological Sciences has showcased a publication by center member Zeliann Craig, PhD, in their featured Tox Spotlight! Craig's study found that exposure to di-n-butyl phthalate (DBP) – a common ingredient in many personal care products and medications – disrupts follicular reproductive cycles by interfering with the hormone signaling in the ovary responsible for growth, development, and repair. For this reason, exposure to DBP could ultimately lead to reduced fertility and decreased egg number and quality in women.

[Full Summary](#)

Image Data Management Support at the University of Arizona

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As of January 2023, the NIH has required a Data Management and Sharing plan for all new grant submissions. Data from imaging devices, like microscopes, can be problematic for research labs to manage because of the many possible dimensions (xyz λ , etc.) of the data, the large file sizes (often many gigabytes per file), and the tendency of vendors to create proprietary file formats that are difficult to open except in specific software. As part of a UArizona strategic initiative to create a secure online environment (Soteria) for researchers to work with and analyze patient-related data, two additional resources for working with specific kinds of image data were also launched.

[Full Summary](#)

Past Events

[Using Slime to Demonstrate Epigenetics at the 2024 Tucson Festival of Books](#)

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The 15th annual Festival of Books brought together authors, presenters, volunteers, and visitors to celebrate literature and education at one of the largest book festivals in the United States. The interactive tables hosted by the Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center (SWEHSC) were a smashing — and squishy — success. Participants of all ages flocked to the SWEHSC tables in Science City to learn about exposure to toxic substances through an engaging slime-decoration activity and to play environmental health trivia in exchange for fun prizes.

[Full Summary](#)

SWEHSC Co-sponsors Southern Arizona Heat Planning Summit

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On Feb. 3, 2024, the University of Arizona hosted the Southern Arizona Heat Planning Summit, an event designed to bring together scientists, researchers, policy makers, local agencies and community members to discuss an issue pivotal to those of us in the desert Southwest: building heat resilience in arid lands like ours. The Summit was sponsored by the Pima County Health Department, City of Tucson, Tucson Resilient Together, and several University of Arizona groups, including the Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center (SWEHSC), Southwest Center on Resilience for Climate Change and Health, Center for Rural Health's AHEAD Arizona, Climate Assessment for the Southwest and the College of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture.

[Full Summary](#)

Other Publications

[Dr. Wondrak assists in research regarding cellular oxidative stress](#)

[Dr. Karletta Chief, Dr. Paloma Beamer, & Dr. Stephanie Carroll Russo publish an article exploring the impact of Indigenous-led research](#)

[Dr. Chorover aids in research regarding fugitive dust from mine tailings](#)

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[Dr. Furlong, Dr. Guerra, and Dr. Martinez assist in research regarding respiratory health](#)

Have an event, grant, publication, or highlight you'd like featured in our newsletter? Submit to:

swehsc-comms@pharmacy.arizona.edu

We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

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