AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CIRCUMPOLAR HEALTH:
Jens Peder Hart Hansen Fellow finalists in 2003

Mission - To foster the ideals of Jens Peder Hart Hansen: Increase international cooperation in circumpolar health research and education by mentoring and encouragement of emerging researchers and workers in the field of circumpolar health.

Selection Process - The 2003 selection method was a deliberative process during which the ASCH sent out e-mail, website, and word of mouth announcements to all the representative education institutions, Native Corporations, and professional groups, etc., in our region. We also called for faculty, supervisor, and self-nominations.

We used Jens Peder Hart Hansen’s own approach of encouraging emerging health workers to publically present their research data. We held 2 Scientific Seminars and encouraged emerging health care workers to participate. A Subcommittee reviewed the Finalists and presented a ‘short list’ to the ASCH Board. We had some well thought out abstracts to choose from, so it was hard to make the final decision.

In 2003, the selection process actually focused a lot of our colleagues energy on promoting circumpolar health work. It gave our small organization a ‘cause celebre’, or a little sense of ‘creative tension’. The process created a little more visibility for our organization. This process also developed some fund-raising for a good cause.

The current JPHH Fund itself is alive and well taken care of. It is professionally managed in the Alaska Community Foundation (ACF). By placing the Fund in the ACF, we have also opened the JPHH Fund up to non-circumpolar kinds of donations, as well from those of involved in circumpolar health.

The following includes the Jens Peder Hart Hansen Fellow finalist of the American Society for Circumpolar Health. In addition to their abstracts, brief biographies are included. Despite difficulty of choosing between these excellent choices, the American Society for Circumpolar Health chose Roger Rothschild as its 2003 Fellow Nominee to the International Union for Circumpolar Health.
Tracey Kathleen Burke

Social service provision in rural Alaska: Exploring the "fit" between traditional and western approaches to helping

Objective: To inform the evolution of social service provision in rural Alaska, especially the engagement of formal service systems with village communities. Amidst serious social and behavioral health problems in Alaska Native villages, public, private, and tribal social service agencies have attempted to increase the "cultural competence" of their interventions. However, there has been little systematic investigation of what formal social work/social service means in the lives of rural, Native people on an everyday basis.

Study Design: Ethnography of social service provision in one Yup’ik Eskimo village.

Methods: Participant-observation and ethnographic interviews with various community members, especially the local, paraprofessional service providers and others involved with specific "cases" of problematic behavior. Adapted grounded theory and discourse analysis analytic techniques.

Results: A schema of how the community thinks about "social problems" and responses to them, with an emphasis on the roles of formal professional and paraprofessional service providers. Themes common to two cases ongoing during the fieldwork are used to elaborate the schema and discuss issues of fit between the service systems and local culture.

Conclusion: How local and outside service providers negotiate control and accountability has implications for community self-determination and service provision that warrant discussion among all parties.

Biography
Since graduating from college, I have worked in social work/social services in Alaska (Bethel and Fairbanks) or have been in school. I earned my MSW (Master of Social Work) from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in 1994 and will complete my PhD in Social Welfare at the University of Washington in autumn 2003. I will start as an Assistant Professor at the University of Alaska-Anchorage's School of Social Work. My research focus is on social services in rural Alaska and on social work with children and families. Among other things, I will be working with UAA's new child welfare research initiative.
Jeffrey A. Wilt

Anal Cancer In Alaska: A Retrospective Study of Incidence, Treatment and Outcomes

Objective publication:
Wilt JA, George JM, Chung RT, Cook RL, O'Malley JE. Anal cancer in Alaska; a retrospective study of incidence, treatment and outcomes. Alaska Med 2002; 44(3):56-9, 62. Review

Objectives. To determine the incidence, demographics, treatment and outcome of anal cancer in Alaska from 1996 to 2001.

Study Design. Retrospective Analysis

Methods. The medical records of all patients with anal cancer seen in two radiation therapy centers in Alaska from the period of 1996 to mid-2001 were reviewed for diagnosis, sex, age, staging, treatment and outcomes.

Results. Twenty-four patients were identified with squamous cell carcinoma of the anus. Average age at diagnosis was 53. Tumor size was predominantly 2-5 centimeters. Four patients had nodal involvement and three had distant metastasis. Twenty patients received radiation. Nineteen received fluorouracil and either cisplatin or mitomycin. Three patients underwent abdominoperineal resections. Ten were found to have no evidence of disease at an average of twenty-two months.

Conclusion. The incidence, demographics, treatment and outcome of patients with anal cancer in Alaska are consistent with those found elsewhere.

Biography
Jeffrey Wilt, MD graduated from the University of Minnesota Medical School and is about to complete his residency at the Alaska Family Practice Residency. He plans to begin practicing at the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center in the near future. This, his first publication, was presented to the 18th Annual Denali Oncology Group Conference in September 2001.
Andrew Hund

Generational transference of Yupik healing knowledge

Objectives. This research will investigate the transference of healthcare knowledge. This study will replicate Lantis (1959) research and use the information she collected as baseline data. Specifically, a re-sampling of the same six villages (e.g., Kasigluk, Nunapitchuk, Eek, Kwinhagak, Tununak, and Mekoryuk) in the Bethel triangle will be used to examine what folk medicine knowledge has been changed, altered, or been enhanced over the past 40 years. This issue is of importance because it focuses on the Yupik’s views of healthcare (i.e., an emic perspective). Therefore, gaining insight into the transference of traditional knowledge as well as the present health knowledge and experiences of the Yupik will foster a better appreciation of their culture. This in turn is fundamental in our understanding of the Yupik in relation to cultural evolution.

Methods. Two methods will be used in this study: ethnographic interviewing and direct observation. The ethnographic interview instrument consists of 42 open-ended questions divided into four sections (Medicines used, causes of ailments, practice, and technique for curing). Direct observations will be conducted at pre-selected sites within the community to observe health, healing, or remedy making ranging from a half-hour to several hours. Detailed notes will be taken during these direct observations. The sample of sixty respondents will be purposeful selected based on those who have knowledge of village health practices and folk medicine. In each village, an attempt will be made to interview five females and five males, all over 18 years of age. A qualitative analysis will be used to examine the transcripts from the tape-recorded interviews and direct observation field notes.

Results. It is anticipated that the results of this proposed research will stimulate a reappraisal of the Yupik health practices, traditional knowledge, and social interaction. This research will foster a better understand of the transference of healing knowledge over 40 years by updating information and enhancing our current knowledge about Yupik folk medicine.

Conclusion. This research will enhance respect for Yupik healing practices and techniques and preserve present knowledge for future generations of healers. The knowledge obtained will also be shared
with medical professions to foster a better understanding, means for communication, and provide health professionals with an appreciation of how Yupik view healing.

**Biography**

Andrew Hund is a PhD student in Medical Sociology at Case Western Reserve University. Andrew obtained an MA in Sociology at Humboldt State University and BA's in History and Sociology at the University of Alaska Anchorage. His research interests are the Alaska Medical System, health disparities in Alaska Native communities, mental health issues in circumpolar groups, and social epidemiology.

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**Janell Smith**

Rural Women Have Positive Lifestyle habits to Manage Body Weight

**Objectives.** A survey of 62 rural women living in predominately Native villages indicated many positive lifestyle habits could be recognized and supported as viable strategies to manage body weight.

**Study design.** This exploratory study sponsored by USDA and The Alaska WIC program used an orally administered survey, 24 hour dietary recall and modified Block food frequency form.

**Methods.** Anthropometrics measurements and fingerstick medical screens were used to assess health status. The survey was conducted in five rural, Alaska Native communities and an Alaska urban setting for comparison. Communities represented major geographical areas: arctic, coastal and interior; and major cultural groups: Aleut/Alutiiq, Athabaskan, Inupiat, Tlingit and Yup'ik.

**Results:** Few respondents reported health problems and the majority of finger stick screenings were within normal range. Boiling of meat was the most common method of food preparation. Few desserts were reported. Sodas, fruit juice beverages and Tang accounted for one third of the total calories consumed. Local fish, game and sea mammals and berries were reported by 94% of rural respondents, and 84% of urban respondents. A total of 89% rural respondents reported following Elder's advice to eat "Native" foods. Food costs ranged from 142% to 232% of similar food items priced in Anchorage perhaps explaining the 37% reported food insecurity, which was higher than
US populations. Although use of mechanized transportation is increasing, many individual continue to walk and partake in regular physical exercise. Mean BMI were 30.0 + 7.0 for rural women compared to 28.5 + 6.7 for the urban comparison group.

**Conclusion.** Further study is needed on food dynamics within rural communities to fully understand the complexities of body weight for this population.

**Biography**

Janell Smith is currently a research associate with the University of Alaska Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies. She is a master’s trained registered dietitian and a certified diabetes educator. She completed her dietetic internship at the University of Miami Medical School Mailman Center for Childhood Diseases and is in the final stages of completing a Ph.D in Nutrition from Florida International University. Janell worked in Unalaska/Dutch Harbor as the Regional WIC Coordinator and as the Clinic Operations Coordinator for the Alaska State WIC Program in Juneau. Her research interests are nutritional health of arctic populations.

**Raphaela Stimmelmayr**

Community Specific Assessments of Environmental Health Risks from Subsistence Lifestyle and Cultural Practices of Athabascan Indians in the Interior Alaska.

**Objectives.** Subsistence reliance, traditional lifestyle and cultural practices place many Athabascan tribes at increased health risks from environmental contaminants.

**Study Design.** A pilot study was initiated to identify and assess Interior-wide environmental health threats and associated exposure risks as perceived by local community members.

**Methods.** Information collection methods employed included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews (face to face; phone) of elders and local knowledge holders, and archival research of existing ethnographic information about Interior Athabascan tribes. The research was conducted consistent with Tanana Chiefs Conference human research ethics and protocols.

**Results.** Lifestyle practices such as wood stove heating, being inside for a long time in combination with poor air circulation practices, open bar-
rel garbage incineration, honey bucket sanitation methods, steam-bath, gasoline fueling (boat, snow-mobile, ATV, car), traditional drinking water resources and water storage, subsistence based activities (e.g. fishing, hunting, plant gathering, berry picking, wood gathering, skin tanning, boat making, sled and snowshoe making, food preparation and preservation methods) and locally important hazardous sites (chemical, debris) were identified. The latter included pre-1950 built housing (lead paint and asbestos tiles), fuel tanks and tank farms (fuel spillage), military debris (e.g. transportation vehicles, building structures, 55-gallon drums, lead batteries, unexploded ordinance, telegraph wiring), dust control with used oil products, Canol and Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline corridor (fuel spillage, herbicide use, pipeline debris), ubiquitous pesticide spraying on roads, railroads, and formerly used military defense sites (FUDS), unfenced industrial areas (chemical hazards), open landfills, sewage lagoons (spring flooding), mining sites (acid leaching, heavy metals), asphalt and tar residues (bitumen leaching). In addition, man-made and natural events such as climate change, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions were identified as potential forces that could lead to environmental health threats.

Conclusion. Community members are exposed to multiple contaminants through different pathways (air, skin contact, food, and drinking water). There is a urgent need for the development of subsistence-based exposure risk scenarios in the Interior that address tribally relevant environmental health threats.

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Biography
Raphaela Stimmelmayr is the research scientist and program manager for the Traditional Foods Contaminant Assessment Program at Tanana Chiefs Conference. Her current research interests have concentrated on ecosystem health research, in particular Arctic climate/pollution that address the coupled human and natural systems, on development of subsistence-based exposure risk scenarios, and on Traditional Ecological Knowledge systems research. She received her veterinary degree, from the Technical University of Berlin, West Germany, her M. Sc. in natural resources management and her Ph.D. in wildlife biology from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.