

# ACME Newsletter



## Welcome from the Chair

Hello ACME members,  
As we head into the fall, lots of exciting things have been happening in the ACME community. Please join me in extending a warm welcome to our new Executive Council members, and a big thank you to those who will be rotating off. We are looking forward to coming together to share science and ideas at the ASTMH Annual Meeting in Seattle later this month. Please make plans to attend the ACME Symposia.

In this issue of the newsletter you can find more about the timings and plans for these. Safe travels and see you in Seattle —Dr. Cate Hill, Chair-Elect



## ACME @ ASTMH 2022

There will be two ACME Symposia in Seattle this year. Be sure to check out:

**American Committee of Medical Entomology (ACME) Symposium I: Annual Business Meeting, Awards and Hoogstraal Medal Presentations and Networking Reception, October 31st, 3 – 4:45 PM Pacific Time**

**Symposium: 45: American Committee of Medical Entomology (ACME) Symposium II: Preparing ACME Professionals for Science in a Warmer, Wetter, More Populated World, October 31st, 5:15 - 7:00 PM Pacific Time**

## ACME Executive Council

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**Pamela Pennington**  
**Zach Adelman**  
**Teresia Njorogne**  
**Jewelna Akorli**  
**Sarah Hamer**

**Trainee Representatives:**  
**Renee Ali**  
**Teresia Njoroge**

# New NIH Study Section to Cover Vector-Borne Diseases

A newly formed Transmission of Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases (TVZ) study section will begin for October/November 2022 National Institutes of Health grant application deadlines, with first review dates in February/March 2023. It was created as part of the NIH Center for Scientific Review's (CSR) Evaluating Panel Quality in Review (ENQUIRE) process, which functions to align NIH peer review study sections with advances in science.

CSR handles the first level of peer review, the assessment of scientific and technical merit, for approximately 76% of NIH grant applications. The Center recognizes the importance of study section scope in peer review outcomes. CSR evaluates 20% of its study sections each year, and every study section at least once every five years, via the ENQUIRE process. ENQUIRE integrates data with input from stakeholders to determine whether changes in study section scope are needed to facilitate the identification of high-impact science, with special consideration of emerging science.

As part of the ENQUIRE process, CSR forms an External Scientific Evaluation Panel. Members are senior scientists with expertise spanning multiple study sections under evaluation. The external panel is provided with sample abstracts and aims and data such as bibliometric data and application and success rates for early-stage investigators. The external panel is asked: How well does the scope of the study sections align with the current state of the science? An Internal Process Evaluation Panel is then formed of NIH extramural staff with a broad perspective. The internal panel is provided the recommendations of the external panel as well as information on the function of the study section, such as that from site visits. The internal panel is asked to consider whether the panels function in a way that supports the optimal identification of high-impact science. Recommendations are then presented to the CSR Advisory Council for their input and approval. Changes to study sections include sunsetting study sections, modifying guidelines of current study sections, and/or formation of new panels. Learn more about the ENQUIRE process here. The Vector Biology (VB) study section was recently evaluated as part of an ENQUIRE review of panels in the area of microbiology and infectious diseases. Topics that were included in VB will be reviewed in the newly formed Transmission of Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases (TVZ) study section. The major focus of TVZ is complex life-cycle transmission of vector-borne and other zoonotic diseases and includes the larger issues of community disease control strategies and the One Health approach.

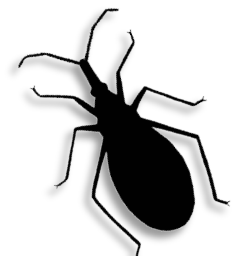
How will this affect the funding of science of interest to the American Committee of Medical Entomology? The changes affect peer review—which is the first of two levels of review at NIH. Funding decisions are made after a second level of review, performed by the advisory council of the assigned NIH funding institute or Center. Funding recommendations are made to the institute director based on the outcome of the first level of review, the funding institute's mission and priorities, and other factors such as early-stage investigator status. By establishing the TVZ study section, CSR has broadened the scope of VB to include additional topics of interest to ACME's members. It is expected that the broader scope of TVZ will allow for better peer review outcomes – more accurate identification of high-impact science. Questions related to ENQUIRE can be addressed to [communications@csr.nih.gov](mailto:communications@csr.nih.gov).

## Treasury Report

Net assets for all ACME funds totaled \$41,439 at the end of fiscal year 2022. Total revenue from membership dues last fiscal year was \$3,600, which is comparable to last year. We encourage you to remember to [renew your membership](#) and to recruit new members so that ACME can grow in the upcoming year! As always, we are very grateful to our donors and the parent Board for their continued support. We received \$16,760 in donations in fiscal year 2022, which is helping our council renew support for past initiatives and fund new medical entomology programs and awards. If you are aware of potential donors, have fundraising ideas, have interest in assisting with fundraising, or have suggestions about ways that ACME can support medical entomology training or mentoring endeavors, please contact Secretary/Treasurer-elect Berlin Londono ([blondono@tulane.edu](mailto:blondono@tulane.edu)).

### *We thank our recent ACME Donors:*

Kathryn S. Aultman, PhD	Carol D. Blair, PhD, FASTMH
Lauren Cator, PhD	Ellen M. Dotson, BS, MS, DSc
Tatiana Dragan, MD	Karen A. Goraleski, CEO, ASTMH
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Edward Walker, PhD	Andrew Douglas Haddow, PhD, MSc, BS



### Would **you** like to support ACME?

Visit ACME's [page](#) and click "Donate" to support activities like trainee awards and educational initiatives.

# Executive Council Elections and Departures

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Please welcome our newly elected Executive Council members! Many thanks to those who have finished their term!



**Zach N. Adelman, PhD**  
*Texas A&M University  
United States*



**Jewelna Akorli, PhD**  
*Noguchi Memorial Institute  
for Medical Research  
Ghana*



**Teresia Njoroge, PhD**  
*Indiana University School of  
Medicine  
United States*



**Sarah Hamer, PhD, DVM**  
*Texas A&M University  
United States*

## Trainee Corner

Welcome to the new ACME trainee representative **Teresia Njoroge**! And farewell to the outgoing trainee representative **Adeline Williams**!

**Upcoming events for trainees:** The 2022 ASTMH Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA will feature an **ASTMH Speed Networking session on Wednesday, November 2nd from 5-6:45 pm PT**. Each ASTMH subgroup, including ACME, will have professionals available to meet with trainees in a structured speed networking format. Look out for more information regarding registration on ASTMH-wide correspondences. For more information, please email Adeline Williams, [adeline.e.williams@gmail.com](mailto:adeline.e.williams@gmail.com), who will be co-chairing the event on behalf of ACME. This event will only be held in person at the Annual Meeting.

The ASTMH Annual Meeting will be offering a Pre-Meeting Course and several workshops that may be of interest to ACME trainees: a Metagenomics Pre-Meeting course, Using Metagenomics to Survey Vector-Based Pathogens (in-person only); a Clinical Pre-Meeting course, The Big Syndromes in Tropical Medicine: A Practical Clinical Update on the Diagnosis and Management of Tropical Diseases (virtual); Introduction to Spatial Analysis for Infectious Diseases Workshop (organized by the Malaria Atlas Project, MAP, in-person only); Introduction to Data Sharing and Data Exploration on the ClinEpiDB Platform Workshop (in-person only); Gender and Malaria Community of Practice: Working Session to Co-Create an Advocacy Agenda (in-person only); and Effectively Navigating Organizational Politics Workshop (Organized by WomenLift Health, in-person only).

Please check the ASTMH [Annual Meeting](#) website for more information.

**Trainees: want to get more involved in ACME?** ACME is committed to engaging the future leaders of our field and fostering supportive relationships across career stages and international boundaries. To further our mission, ACME is establishing the **ACME Trainee Leadership Subcommittee** so trainees can be more involved in event planning, networking, and everything ACME. Interested in learning more? Please email your ACME trainee reps for more information.

**We want to feature you!** We want to highlight the success of our ACME trainees! Shoot us an email so that we can tweet about your graduations, field work, or any and all accomplishments!

Congratulations to our ACME trainee representative, Renee Ali, for successfully defending her PhD from University of the West Indies, St. Augustine in Trinidad! How about our other trainees? Tweet us your successes @ACME\_ASTMH

**For more information, please email your ACME trainee representatives, Renee & Teresia, at [renee.ali@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:renee.ali@sta.uwi.edu) & [tenjorog@iu.edu](mailto:tenjorog@iu.edu)**



The ACME Charter was revised and approved by the ACME Council on March 31, 2022 and can be found on the [ACME website](#). The Charter had last been revised in 2015, and updates and clarifications to the subgroup objectives, subcommittees, and organization structure were needed. In concert with this updated Charter, ACME developed the first Strategic Plan which was approved during the same ACME Council Meeting in March and can also be found on the ACME website. The Strategic Plan outlines the ACME Mission and elaborates on the Objectives. We expect the ACME Charter and Strategic Plan to continue to evolve in future years.

## Events of Items of Interest

**6<sup>th</sup> Virtual Vector Biology (VBB) Seminar Series**- Virtual Vector Biology Seminar series was created to provide a sense of community and to promote ongoing research across a variety of arthropods of medical or veterinary importance. This series is designed to make recent scientific advances in the field of vector biology and vector-borne disease as open and accessible as possible. Sign up is free and open to anyone. For up-to-date information go visit their [website](#) or follow us on Twitter at [@VectorSeminar](#).

**PacVec Seminars**- The Pacific Southwest Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases holds monthly seminars that convene public health and vector control professionals and feature the work of the center's researchers that are relevant to the center's mission. Seminars are held monthly during the academic year from October through June and are available both in-person and via Zoom. For more information visit the [website](#).

**BEI Resources** can now provide live black flies in addition to several species of mosquito, tick, triatomes, sand flies, and snails. For more information [click here](#).

**The Arthropod Containment Guidelines**, a guidance document that outlines best practices for research laboratories to safely handle arthropods of public health importance, was recently updated by ACME with a special [addendum](#) focused on gene drive. ACME and the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) are holding a training webinar on October 13 from 11:00 to 12:30 ET to review the addendum. You can register [here](#) and be sure to notify representatives from your institutional review boards who may also benefit from this training session.

**Two NIAD-initiated joint Keystone meetings**- February 13-16, 2023 in Beaver Run, CO. "[Vector Biology: Emerging Concepts and Novel Technologies](#)" and "[Skin-Immune Crosstalk](#)"

**Transgenic Insects, 2nd edition** has recently been published. The book is co-edited by long-time ACME member Mark Benedict and contains input from ACME members. Chapters cover technologies and applications that are now possible and includes increased attention to associated challenges of risk assessment, regulation, and public engagement.

Connect with ACME! To keep up on all current announcements, please be sure to follow us on Twitter at [ACME@ACME\\_ASTMH](#). We currently have 770 followers! We are hoping to build this as a primary means of communication between newsletters and conferences and have used this platform to facilitate interactions with other entomological communities worldwide. Do you need to send a job ad, a webinar announcement, or other information out to the ACME community? You can direct message us on Twitter or email your tweet information to Molly Duman Scheel ([mscheel@nd.edu](mailto:mscheel@nd.edu)) and Berlin Londono ([blondono@tulane.edu](mailto:blondono@tulane.edu)). Please remember that you can still also post and receive announcements by subscribing to [My Communities](#). You can also provide items for the newsletter. Please send us any announcements, events, or items for the Spring newsletter by end of February 2023!





Incoming ACME trainee representative Teresia Njoroge, a postdoctoral fellow in the Scheel lab at Indiana University School of Medicine, works at the new semi-field mosquito research facility at the Ifakara Health Institute in Tanzania, where she is testing RNAi yeast pesticides in collaboration with Sarah Moore and Dickson Lawson Lwetoijera.



Researchers from Universidad Del Valle de Guatemala and Texas A&M University worked with the Jutiapa Health Area Vector Unit, Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance of Guatemala during the Summer of 2022 to conduct surveillance of kissing bugs, mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas in rural communities in Guatemala.



Trainee representative Renee Ali defending her thesis entitled: Characterizing the virome of the Haemagogus mosquito: Epidemiological insights of a Host-Virus system.

# ACME Thanks NIH Study Section SRO- Liangbiao Zheng

Due to a periodic review of standing NIH Microbiology and Infectious Diseases study sections by the Center for Scientific Review (<https://public.csr.nih.gov/StudySections/CSREnquire>), Vector Biology (VB) will become Transmission of Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases (TVZ). As of the October/November 2022 deadline, applications formerly assigned to VB will be evaluated by TVZ. Currently appointed VB study section members will continue in TVZ, but Liangbiao (Biao) Zheng, PhD, who has served as the Scientific Review Officer (SRO) for VB since 2008, has been reassigned. The SRO for TVZ is Haru Murata, MD PhD.

ACME wishes to relay our deepest thanks to Biao for his many years of service as the SRO for VB. His extensive experience as “one of us” prior to joining NIH ensured that applications were assigned to reviewers best qualified to evaluate them. Most people may not realize that Biao received his PhD (1990) in molecular biology in Richard Losick’s lab at Harvard, and then did a postdoc with Fotis Kafatos at EMBL where he contributed greatly to the development of detailed genetic maps of *Anopheles gambiae*, immune signaling pathways, and identification of parasite resistance loci. Biao joined the faculty at Yale in 1997 where he stayed for 10 years, leading a lab focused on immune signaling pathways that influenced malarial infection in *A. gambiae*. He joined NIH in 2008.

Those of us who served on VB were always impressed by Biao’s interest and knowledge of medical entomology. He was obviously highly enthusiastic about the science, and could provide significant expertise, but could not chime in on the review discussions due his position. However, we would see him at ASTMH meetings, and it was clear he was not just there to scope out possible reviewers, but to enjoy the presentations. Biao ran VB as a fellow scientist, unfailingly polite, and gentle if rebuke or reminder was needed for a wayward comment. As host for our VB meeting dinners (during COVID, these were replaced by Zoom socials), science was a rare topic. He was more interested in people and their lives. To the extent that he could be given his position, he was “one of us”.

Biao clearly influenced the direction of research and careers in medical entomology over the last 15 years. The field is stronger than ever. ACME greatly appreciates his impact and stewardship, and we all hope that we will see Biao at meetings; perhaps now that he no longer directs the VB study section, he can resume being our colleague and go out for a beer and discuss science.