

ISDS 2019 Conference Abstracts

Colleagues,

I am delighted to present to you the summary abstracts and presentations from the 2019 International Society of Disease Surveillance (ISDS) Conference which was held San Diego, CA from January 30th – February 2nd, 2019.

Over the past several years, the concept of investing in data science and data scientists has been touted as a transformational endeavor for governmental organizations, non-profits, as well as private sector and commercial markets. How “true” data science is harnessed to influence and improve public health surveillance and population health remains to be seen. Data science has great potential to provide a new lens to inform and improve public health surveillance and population health. However, this lens needs to focus upon more than just “Big Data” analytics and information technology. It must also focus on fostering organizational environments and multi-agency collaborations that invigorate curiosity and experimentation and development of cross-disciplinarian partnerships to address multifactorial and multidimensional health and disparity challenges. It also must hone in on producing evidence-based analytic results to improve measurable health outcomes. Analysis and summary results are not the end products for surveillance. The concept of data science needs to be leveraged across public health to better communicate the findings of disease surveillance through the “storytelling of illness and disease” to influence public health policy, and ultimately improve population health.

This year, with these ideas in mind, and with the support of a dynamic, engaged, and multi-disciplinary Scientific Planning Committee (SPC) - ISDS has expanded its conference scope beyond traditional tracks which historically focused on surveillance, informatics, and analysis, to include tracks related to:

- One Health
- Non – Human Health Surveillance
- Ecology
- Communications, Medical Rhetoric, Visualization, and Reporting
- Chronic Disease / Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Data Quality
- Injury Surveillance
- Substance Abuse – Opioid Surveillance

Recognizing that Public Health is a collaborative and multi-disciplinary team sport, we have expanded our outreach efforts to include new partners across academia, the private sector, state, local, and tribal partners, as well as federal agencies.

During the 2019 ISDS Conference, we had a significant increase in overall attendance (~375) and abstracts submissions compared to prior years; with 29 countries represented and 130 oral presentations and 95 poster presentations provided over the three-day conference. We held a number of sessions on Opioid Use and Prescribing Surveillance as well as Medical Rhetoric, Communications, and Visualization that were standing-room only and beyond.

Our keynote speakers on the intersection of Data Science and Public Health included:

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William J. Kassler, MD, MPH -

IBM Watson Health – Deputy Chief Health Officer

Wilma J. Wooten, MD, MPH

Public Health Officer for the County of San Diego

Michael Hogarth, MD, FACP, FACMI

Chief Clinical Research Information Officer for University of California San Diego Health

Some of the key take-aways from the presentations at the 2019 ISDS Conference were that data science and the act of data collections and analysis are NOT the end goals of public health surveillance; they are just the beginning. Data do NOT speak for themselves; they require context, curation, interpretation, and ultimately need to effectively communicating findings through the **story telling of illness and disease** to officials, policy makers, and the public with the objective to inform and influence public health policy, motivate health behavior change, drive public health action, and ultimately improve population health.

I encourage you to review the abstracts submitted here in the Online Journal of Public Health Informatics which were presented at the 2019 International Society for Disease Surveillance 2019 Conference and to engage multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary conversations (reach out directly to authors and presenters) around these important topics, expand your networks and opportunities in the public health community.

Regards,

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Scientific Program Chair

International Society for Disease Surveillance (ISDS) 2019

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*Information included in this statement are those of the author and do not represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)