

Biomedical Genetics Section

Newsletter

Welcome to the new Biomedical Genetics Section Quarterly Newsletter!

Meet the People

We are pleased to welcome new Post-Doctoral Associate, Moonil Kang Ph.D., to the Biomedical Genetics Section! Dr. Kang has kindly given an introduction about himself and his background in the following message.



Moonil Kang, Ph.D.

My name is Moonil Kang, and I am a new postdoctoral associate working at the Biomedical Genetics, Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM). I arrived in Boston in early October 2020. Even though I had visited Boston several times when I was in New York City in 2009, it is a whole new experience to live in Boston for me. I think Boston is a beautiful place to live and research. I appreciate Dr. Farrer and his colleagues giving me an opportunity to work with their research group.

I had finished all my degrees in the Republic of Korea. I have a bachelor's degree in biomaterials engineering, which is applied science based on organic and polymer chemistry. During my undergraduate years, I had trained in dealing with the structure, composition, and reaction of carbon-containing compounds, such as deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and ribonucleic acid (RNA). I had changed my major to genetic epidemiology when I entered graduate school. I received my master's and Ph.D. degrees in public health at the Graduate School of Public Health, Seoul National University. I had focused on identifying genetic risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD) and CVD-related traits, including electrocardiogram (ECG), dyslipidemia, and hypertension, during my graduate research. I mainly conducted a genome-wide association study (GWAS), gene-environment interaction (GxE) study, and genome-wide interaction scan (GWIS) on these complex human traits.

As a genetic epidemiologist, I am interested in the genetic basis of human traits and complex diseases, especially disease susceptibility loci (DSL), environmental exposures, and their interactions. I am fascinated by this field because it uses multidisciplinary approaches, changes

rapidly, and has many unexplored areas. Most of all, it is the science directly affecting human beings.

During my postdoctoral research at the Biomedical Genetics, BUSM, I will continue to deepen my understanding of genetic factors, environmental exposures, and their interactions on human complex diseases. Mostly, I plan to focus on the genetic background of Alzheimer's Disease (AD). I believe it is one of the most critical and challenging research topics for the aging population, such as Koreans. Moreover, I want to experience various research approaches using next-generation sequencing (NGS), whole-exome sequencing (WES), whole-genome sequencing (WGS), and multi-omics data to clarify my future research topics. This position will allow me to facilitate the transition to an independent research career by acquiring new analytical approaches, publications, project managing skills, and funding grants. My final goal is to become an outstanding scholar in academia and contribute to the science of understanding the genetic background of human complex disease.



Fun Facts!

Did you know that Turkeys can fly up to 60 miles per hour?

Source: <https://www.audubon.org/news/9-fun-facts-about-turkeys>

Boston University News

Dr. Jean Morrison and the Office of the Provost have announced Holiday Travel Guidance and Compliance Expectations for Boston University Faculty & Staff

Earlier this month, Dr. Jean Morrison and the Office of the Provost sent an announcement regarding Travel Guidance and Compliance Expectations during the upcoming Holiday season. With Thanksgiving just around the corner, the Office of the Provost has encouraged all Faculty, Staff, and Students to avoid out-of-state travel and large gatherings. If faculty and staff do travel out of state during the holidays, you will be subject to current Massachusetts [travel orders](#), which require quarantining for 14 days or negative COVID-19 test results. The announcement also mentioned BU COVID-19 test collection site closures and how to stay within compliance. Dr. Morrison also stated that daily health screenings are not required during the year-end intersession (Wednesday, December 24 – Sunday, January 3) unless you are scheduled to work or return to campus for any reason. Lastly, in an effort to make it easier to comply with the testing requirements, those in categories 1-3 will now be able to schedule testing appointments up to one month in advance. If you have questions please reach out to BU COVID Support at covidhelp@bu.edu or 617-358-4990. [Read more here](#)

BU Students leaving for the Holiday are encouraged to stay home for the semester

In an article from BU Today, Boston University is urging students, who are leaving campus for the Holiday, to stay home for the rest of the semester. With the ever-present threat of COVID-19 looming, students have been encouraged either to stay on campus during the Thanksgiving Holiday, or to remain at home for the remainder of the semester. Students who choose to leave and return to campus will be required to isolate for seven days and to receive three negative COVID-19 tests. Once these requirements have been met, their stay-in-place requirements will be lifted. With the rising rates of COVID-19 in both the state and the country, these are precautions intended to keep the campus safe. [Read more here](#)

Are People still not wearing masks on Campus?

According to a report from BU Today, cases of people seen not wearing masks have risen from 4 to 14 in a single week. This news was revealed just after the CDC announced new research showing that masks are proven to protect the wearer from both spreading COVID-19 and from contracting it. The report also mentions a rising number of various other COVID-19 compliance violations throughout the University. [Read more here](#)

2020 Annual Evans Days Recap & Awards

The 35th Annual Department of Medicine Evans Days recap and awards have been announced. The yearly event celebrated the research efforts of the Department of Medicine faculty, trainees, and researchers. The Evans Days event, held virtually this year due to COVID-19, honored a number of recipients with the event's annual awards. [See results here](#)

Fun Facts!

Did you know that the coldest game in NFL history was the Championship game in 1967, which reached temperatures as low as -48 degrees? It is known as the 'ice bowl'!

Source: https://www.softschools.com/facts/sports/football_facts/577/



Biomedical Genetics Section Updates

New Framingham Heart Study Brain Aging Program will be established thanks to the help of a new grant awarded to Dr. Farrer and Dr. Au

Earlier this year, [Lindsay Farrer, Ph.D.](#) and [Rhoda Au, Ph.D.](#) were awarded a new grant from the NIH that will help to establish the new Framingham Heart Study Brain Aging Program (FHS-BAP). The FHS-BAP will concentrate on a number of functions, including continued study of FHS participants for dementia, revitalizing the brain donation program & brain bank, establishing a platform to promote Data Sharing, and more. The FHS-BAP will consist of 3 related projects. One project will focus on identifying factors associated to AD risk and resilience. Another project will look at the relationship in AD between genetic vulnerabilities and chronic inflammation. While the final project will research the variants of genes related to immune function and their impact on AD related cognitive changes and performance. [Read more here](#)

Dr. Jun receives new Subaward from the University of Southern California

[Dr. Gyungah Jun](#) has recently received a Subaward agreement from the University of Southern California for U01 award, titled “Ultrascale Machine Learning to Empower Discovery in Alzheimer’s Disease Biobanks.” For this grant, Dr. Jun will serve as a PI for the Genome Guided Drug Discovery Core and will contribute her expertise regarding aspects of human genomic guided drug discovery and biomarker development to this project linking to AD drug discovery. She will also be responsible for data interpretation and analysis, and general project and personnel management at the Core in BUMC, as well as participating in the large consortium related activities for this project.

Extra space in the office?

The BMC Iodine Lab will be moving out of the Biomedical Genetics space by the end of November. This should free up a large amount of space, so expect to have a new and larger workplace upon returning to campus!

New Hires

We are pleased to welcome to following New Hires to the Biomedical Genetics team!

We are happy to welcome Melanie Reeves, who will begin working with our team as the new Program Manager for the FHS-BAP Grant! We would also like to offer a warm welcome to Yueh-Ting Wang and Yibo Zhu, who will begin working as Data Analysts for our team! Congratulations!

Reminders

In an important message from the Office of the Provost, Dr. Jean Morrison announced the updated Staff Workplace Adjustment Process for Spring 2021

In a message from the Office of the Provost, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Jean Morrison addressed new details regarding the updated Workplace Adjustment Process for Boston University Staff. According to the message, all Workplace Adjustment requests are due by **November 30, 2020**, with some exceptions. Workplace Adjustments are available to individuals who suffer from or live with someone who suffers from a [COVID-19 high-risk medical condition](#). Age alone will be considered for individuals who are 65 or older by April 30, 2021. Anyone considering Workplace Adjustment for spring 2021 will need to submit a [Workplace Adjustment Request Form](#). If you were approved for Workplace Adjustment in the fall, you will still need to submit a form, but you do not need to submit medical documentation again unless specifically asked to. New applicants will still need to submit the form and medical documentation. [Read more here](#)

Human Resources has announced the official deadline for Open Enrollment for 2021 Benefits

Open Enrollment for 2021 Benefits closes on **Friday, November 20, 2020**. Changes go into effect **January 1, 2021**. If you have any questions, contact the Human Resources Service Center Team at hr@bu.edu or at 617-353-2380. [Read more here](#)

Holiday and Intercession Schedule – 2020 & 2021:

Thanksgiving Break: Thursday, November 26th – Friday, November 27th

Holiday Intercession: Thursday, December 24th – Thursday, December 31st

Christmas Holiday: Friday, December 25th

New Year's Day: Friday, January 1st

[Read more here](#)

Interested in joining the DOM Book Club?

The Department of Medicine Book Club is currently reading and discussing the New York Times Best Selling book “So you want to talk about race,” by Ijeoma Oluo. This book shares thoughts on the issues of race and racism and will have four separate meetings to discuss. The club will host virtual meetings through April 1st, 2021. Follow the [link](#) to see meeting dates and how to Register. If you have any questions, you can reach out to the Faculty of Development and Diversity at bumcfd@bu.edu.



Fun Facts!

Turkeys can see 3x better than 20/20 vision!

Source: <https://www.audubon.org/news/9-fun-facts-about-turkeys>

Submit an Announcement Request Form and share your news in the next issue of the Biomedical Genetics Section Newsletter!

Do you have exciting news that you want to share in the next issue of our quarterly Biomedical Genetics Section Newsletter? Submit an [Announcement Request Form](#), located on the *Resources* page of our [website](#)!