

Society for Risk Analysis New England Chapter

Co-Presidents' Message - September 2007

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NEWSLETTER

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Dear SRA-New England Members:

Welcome!

We are excited to begin a new year of SRA-New England events that are designed to keep our members informed and to advance the practice of risk assessment in our region. We welcome your participation and sincerely thank those of you who took time to complete a member survey last year. We appreciate your thoughtful responses and used them to develop this year's program. **Remember that SRA-New England is your organization. We welcome your thoughts on new initiatives and will work with you to make them happen.**

What is in store for 2007-2008?

Fewer, more extensive events: We are planning 4 meetings in addition to our annual joint meeting with the Licensed Site Professional Association (LSPA). Each event will include multiple, highly qualified speakers and respondents to ensure knowledgeable and lively discussion.

Timely, interesting themes: Here are the event dates and topics:

October 10, 2007: Assessing Health Risks: Role of Philosophy, Judgment and Uncertainty.

January 2008: How can environmental epidemiology research better support responsible risk management and public health messages?

March 2008: Panel discussion of the National Research Council report on "Improving Risk Analysis Approaches Used by the U.S. EPA." (The committee's report should be released in late 2007/early 2008)

April 2008: Joint LSPA/SRA-New England meeting

May 21, 2008: Kuwaiti Oil Fires: risk evaluation in support of the State of Kuwait's Public Health Claim.

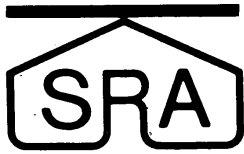
Please note that the **first event is scheduled for Wednesday, October 10th, 3:30-6:30pm at the Harvard School of Public Health's Landmark Center, Boston, MA.**

Finally, we thank Dr. Michael Hutcheson for his service as President last year and especially for creating and implementing the member survey that so strongly influenced this year's program.

We look forward to your participation in the coming year!

With best wishes,

Donna Vorhees and Sandy Baird



Society for Risk Analysis New England Chapter

2007-2008 Fall Seminar

October 10, 2007

Refreshments: 3:30 pm - 3:45 pm

Presentations: 3:45 pm – 6:30 pm

Assessing Health Risks: Role of Philosophy, Judgment and Uncertainty

Papers related to the presentations will be available on the SRA-New England web site (<http://www.sra-ne.org/>) on October 3rd. Read up then speak up on October 10th!

Presentations

Hypothesis-based weight of evidence and its bearing on uncertainty analysis in risk assessment

Lorenz Rhomberg, Ph.D., Gradient Corporation

and

Does risk exist, and if it does, where does it live and how do we find it?

Douglas Crawford-Brown, Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Respondents

Dale Hattis, Ph.D., Clark University

Harlee Strauss, Ph.D., H. Strauss & Associates, Inc.

Location

Location: Harvard School of Public Health

Landmark Center

401 Park Drive

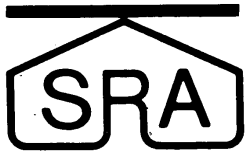
Room 414a West

Enter on the ground floor between Best Buy and REI, take the escalator or stairs to the upper lobby. The East Wing will be to your right, the West Wing to your left. Proceed to the 4th floor of the West Wing.

Directions: Directions to Landmark: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/landmark/location.html>

Parking: Available at the Landmark Center for \$15 maximum daily rate (possibly \$25 if the Red Sox are playing)

Space is limited. Please RSVP by Friday, September 28th to Sandra.baird@state.ma.us. Reserve your seat today!



Society for Risk Analysis New England Chapter

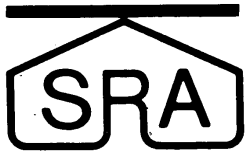
Abstracts of presentations

Lorenz Rhomberg. This talk proposes an approach to addressing two related problems: (a) the need for a more structured yet non-prescriptive approach to assessing weight of scientific evidence regarding human hazard, and (b) characterizing the nature of large, qualitative uncertainties in quantitative risk assessment, such as dependence on dataset and dose-response model, as well as factoring in questions about comparability of the observed toxicity in animals to the potential toxicity process in humans. The proposed approach is based on explicitly specifying alternative hypotheses about potential human relevance and then systematically evaluating these hypotheses against the array of all human, animal, and in-vitro evidence--positive and negative--to arrive at relative plausibility weights for each alternative. The weighting entails professional scientific judgment, but the aim is to make the basis for such judgments objective and transparent by setting out the scientific reasoning and evidence, for and against, in a way that fosters constructive scientific debate about particulars. Approaches from the philosophical field of epistemology for evaluating theories against evidence are considered, including notions of falsifiability, predictivity, risky predictions, and the penalties applied for ad hoc addenda to reconcile underdetermined theories with discordant observations. The approach draws on but tries to move beyond such existing evidence-evaluation processes as the Bradford Hill criteria for causality and the systematic mode-of-action analysis embodied in the current EPA cancer guidelines.

Douglas Crawford-Brown. Risk assessment has grown as a scientific discipline based largely on models of the natural sciences. It has been assumed that risk is some sort of property of the world that can therefore be measured much in the way we measure the mass of an electron or the incidence of disease in a population. This has been a useful model that has informed public decisions and, presumably, improved the public health. While this talk will not reject such thinking, it does raise a series of qualifying issues about the nature of risk, the methodologies used to study it, the relationship between risk and uncertainty, and the social structure of risk assessments and risk-based decisions needed to make them rational. The claim is that risk is a curious hybrid concept that lives both "in the world" around us and in our own rational minds, and therefore requires methodologies of both scientific and philosophical inquiry.

Biographical sketches of presenters

Dr. Rhomberg is a Principal at Gradient Corporation, a Cambridge MA environmental consulting firm, where he specializes in critical review of toxicological information, human health risk assessment, and science policy issues for environmental and consumer chemical exposures. Before joining Gradient he taught Regulatory Toxicology and conducted research as an Assistant Professor at the Center for Risk Analysis, Harvard School of Public Health. From 1984-1994 he was a risk assessor at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington. Dr. Rhomberg earned his Ph.D. in population biology from the Department of Ecology and Evolution at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and an Honours B.Sc. in biology from Queen's University in Ontario. His interests lie in methodology and science policy for quantitative risk analysis, including dose-response modeling, pharmacokinetic modeling and probabilistic methods with special emphasis on cross-species extrapolation, chlorinated solvents and endocrine active agents. Dr. Rhomberg has served on several FIFRA Scientific Advisory Panels, on National Academy of Sciences Committees, and numerous review and advisory panels sponsored by government, trade associations, and professional societies. He is author/editor of several books and more than 60 articles on risk analysis topics. He is a member of several scientific societies, including the Society of Toxicology and the Society for Risk Analysis, for which he is a past Councilor and a past President of the New England Chapter. (Email address: lrhomberg@gradientcorp.com)



Society for Risk Analysis

New England Chapter

Dr. Crawford-Brown is Professor in Environmental Sciences and Engineering and in Public Policy, and Director of the campus-wide Institute for the Environment, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He received his degrees in physics (BS, 1975; MS, 1977) and nuclear science (PhD, 1980) from the Georgia Institute of Technology. His activities focus on the modeling of human health risks, modeling of alternative policies to tackle a range of environmental problems, and development of tools of risk assessment for application in risk-cost-benefit assessments and uncertainty analyses. He is the author of 130 academic articles and 5 books on these topics and has served on a wide array of state, national and international commissions addressing environmental issues, including Federal Advisory Committees for the EPA on Endocrine Disruptors, the National Pollution Prevention and Toxics Advisory Committee, the National Drinking Water Advisory Committee (CCL subgroup) and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee. (Email address: douglas_crawford-brown@unc.edu)

Getting to the event

Directions to Landmark: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/landmark/location.html>

- **From the [MBTA](#) Subway (on foot)**

Take the Green Line “D” train to the Fenway Stop.

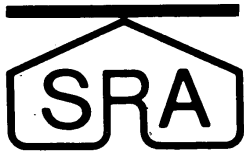
- **Driving directions**

From North or South of Boston - Take I-93 North/South to Exit 26 (Storrow Drive). Follow Storrow Drive approximately 2.5 miles to Kenmore Square/Fenway exit (on left). The exit ramp forks, stay to your right. Take right at first light into Kenmore Square. Take leftmost fork at second light onto Brookline Avenue. Once on Brookline Avenue, pass Fenway Park on your left and the movie theater, part of Landmark Center, on your right. Turn right onto Park Drive at first big intersection. Turn right again into the parking area.

From West of Boston - Take I-90 to exit 18. Follow Storrow Drive eastbound to Kenmore Square/Fenway exit. Follow directions above.

- **Parking**

Public parking is available at the Landmark Center. For questions, please call [Laz Parking](#) at 617-927-0398. Maximum daily rate is \$15 (possibly \$25 if the Red Sox are playing).



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Announcements

The SRA ballot for elections is web-based. Online voting is underway. To cast your vote, go to www.sra.org/sravote and sign in using your last name and ID number. If you need assistance or would rather vote using a paper ballot, call 703-790-1745 and one will be faxed to you. Only one vote will count.

Polls close October 5, 2007.

Candidates for President-Elect are Alison Cullen, William Farland and Igor Linkov. The Secretary candidates are Mitchell Small and Margaret Race. The Treasurer-Elect candidates are Jack Fowle and Seth Guikema. The Councilor candidates for Race 1 are James Lambert and Henry Willis. The Councilor candidates for Race 2 are Felicia Wu and Sharon Friedman. The Councilor candidates for Race 3 are David Hassenzahl and Richard Williams.

POSITIONS (none this month) *Please note that the job-posting fee for this newsletter is \$100 for recruiters/commercial and \$50 for government and nonprofit organizations. Please make your payment to Arlene Levin, NE-SRA Treasurer at Eastern Research Group, Inc. 110 Hartwell Street, Lexington, MA 02421*