



Clinic on Meaningful Modeling of Epidemiological Data

May 29 – June 9, 2017

African Institute of Mathematical Sciences, South Africa

Program Information

Overview

This 2-week modeling clinic will bring together graduate students, postdoctoral scientists, and researchers from North America and Africa, with the goal of engaging the participants in epidemiological modeling projects that use data to grapple with practical questions in a meaningful way.

The Clinic will consist of a series of interactive lectures and tutorials that will guide participants through the process of data-driven epidemiological modeling. Various modeling paradigms will be discussed, and participants will be given guidance regarding the appropriate use of models to address their own research questions. Computer exercises and group projects will reinforce and extend the concepts covered in lectures and discussions. ***All participants will work closely with Clinic faculty and other participants on a group project during the second week of the Clinic. Each group will be required to submit a written report by August 1, 2017.*** Participants are encouraged to continue these projects after receiving feedback on the written report and, depending on the progress made, to work closely with the Clinic faculty to publish the work.

Note that we place a heavy emphasis on evaluation of the program and feedback from participants. The schedule will include 2 group feedback sessions run by our program evaluator, Dr. Gavin Hitchcock. Dr. Hitchcock will attend the entire program and compile feedback from these sessions and individual interviews to help us improve the Clinic for future years.

The Clinic on Meaningful Modeling of Epidemiological Data (MMED) is part of the International Clinics on Infectious Disease Dynamics and Data (ICI3D) Program. ICI3D was launched with support from the National Institute of General Medical Science (NIGMS) of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) award R25GM102149 and is currently supported by NIGMS NIH award U54GM111274 and the South African Centre for Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis (SACEMA).



Ground rules

- All MMED participants are expected to engage fully in the clinic program. This includes attending all MMED sessions (other than those designated as optional).
- Please be aware that participants come from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures. This diversity adds greatly to the MMED experience, and all participants should strive to create a welcoming, respectful learning environment.
- Laptop use will not be allowed in the lecture hall during lectures or discussions.
- All MMED participants should follow the AIMS house rules (available through the MMED GitHub repository). Because all MMED students are guests of AIMS, these rules apply whether you are housed in AIMS accommodations or across the street at Whale Watchers/Surfers' Corner.

Preparation

All of the materials you will need to prepare for the Clinic will be made available through a GitHub repository. You will receive additional information on accessing the repository by May 1. Beginning in mid-April, you will also receive weekly emails with reminders to complete specific tasks as the Clinic approaches.

Schedule

The *preliminary* MMED 2017 schedule is available through the MMED website:

<http://www.ici3d.org/mmed/schedule/>

Note that the MMED 2017 program includes a number of parallel sessions. In the first week, these sessions are split into tracks for participants with different backgrounds. **Track A** is designed for those with a mathematical background, particularly those who have extensive training and/or experience with differential equation models of infectious disease dynamics. **Track B** is designed for those with a background in epidemiology and/or statistics, particularly those who are involved in data collection for infectious disease systems. We request that each participant choose a single track to follow for the whole week. Materials from both tracks will be available to all participants via the repository.

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Flight Arrangements

All flight arrangements must be approved by the Program Assistant, Sara Ervin (admin@ici3d.org with CC to steve.bellan@uga.edu) *prior to ticket purchase*, in order to ensure compliance with US Federal and University of Georgia policies. In particular, all travel must comply with the Fly America Act/Open Skies Agreement. Generally flights on South African Airways or European carriers will be fine as long as no flight legs *between cities within the USA* are on foreign carriers.

We will commit specific funding amounts to partially or fully support flights and ground transportation costs. Participants with partial support from ICI3D are encouraged to book their own tickets and submit receipts for reimbursement upon completion of the travel. If travel to MMED is combined with any personal travel, then participants will receive partial reimbursement up to the amount committed or the cost of a comparable direct itinerary (without personal travel), with quotes from the same booking date submitted along with the receipts. The total amount for reimbursement cannot exceed the cost of air and ground transportation for a direct itinerary less the amount of any other travel funds acquired for MMED (e.g. departmental scholarships, grants).

All US-based MMED participants receiving travel support are required to complete the vendor registration at <https://vendors.uga.edu>. In addition, to be eligible for reimbursement, all non-UGA employees must complete this form: [http://busfin.uga.edu/forms/Non emp payment.pdf](http://busfin.uga.edu/forms/Non_emp_payment.pdf). Please complete these forms at your earliest convenience and **no later than** June 12th and send to the Program Assistant (admin@ici3d.org). Missing this deadline may render you ineligible for reimbursement, as the available funds expire June 30th.

Travel preparation

You will be responsible for having an up-to-date passport with at least six months to go before expiration and at least two blank pages and for obtaining any visas that you need.

No visa is currently required for a US citizen to enter South Africa for a period of 90 days or less. *If you are not a US citizen, we advise that you check visa requirements for entry into South Africa and re-entry into the US or Canada immediately.* Please begin processing your visa applications as soon as possible, and do not hesitate to contact us if we can help in any way.

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You will be responsible for purchasing your own health and foreign travel insurance. Please note that while in South Africa it is strongly recommended that you purchase foreign health/travel insurance as well as major medical insurance and insurance that includes such things as helicopter evacuation for medical care. We recommend that you first check with your institution to determine whether you are already covered. **UGA students must register their travel with the International Center** and, upon doing so, will be automatically enrolled in the University's international travel insurance plan.

It may be the case that you are considering extending your stay while in South Africa to include some sightseeing either before or after the Clinic. Before doing so, please be sure to search the United States State Department travel advisory website at

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>

in advance of making your travel plans so that you are fully aware of any warnings or threats that may be present in the country. Should you visit any other African countries while on your trip, please be aware that entry into South Africa may require a certificate of yellow fever vaccination.

Questions about preparation and logistics prior to your departure from the US should be sent to Sara Ervin (ICI3D Program Assistant) at admin@ici3d.org.

Logistics upon arrival

Accommodations have been arranged for all participants. You will be housed either in the AIMS residence hall or an apartment complex across the street. Most apartments have 2 or 3 bedrooms, so you are likely to share an apartment with 1-2 other MMED participants. **Meals** for all participants will be served in the AIMS dining hall.

Airport transfers will be arranged in advance and participants arriving at a similar time may share a ride (so you may have a small amount of time to kill at the airport). Additional details regarding where to meet the drivers will be provided closer to the Clinic dates. If you have any trouble meeting up with the group, you can call AIMS – from within South Africa, dial 021 787 9320 (calling from abroad, you will need to dial the international dialing code + 27 21 787 9320). This is the AIMS main

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exchange, and you should ask to speak to Igsaan, who is the Facilities and Logistics Manager.

AIMS has a wonderful and hard-working **staff**, many of whom you will interact with during your stay. Please take the time to learn their names and to thank them for making AIMS such a great place to be. You can find pictures of the administrative staff here:

<https://aims.ac.za/en/about/about-aims/staff/administrative-staff>

Finally, we have created a **Google map of Muizenberg**

<http://goo.gl/maps/DN26j>

that shows the locations of AIMS, the Empire Building, and places to get essential items such as plug adapters and cash. Additional logistical information will be provided before your arrival.

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