

# SHELITA G. MERCHANT

## PERSONAL DATA

### Business Address:

Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics  
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## EDUCATION

2009 Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health – Baltimore, MD  
Doctor of Philosophy, Epidemiology

*Thesis: Neighborhood Poverty & Gender Inequality: The Context of Individual Sexual Risk Behaviors for Sexually Transmitted Infections*

2003 The George Washington University – Washington, D.C.  
Master of Public Health, Epidemiology

*Thesis: The Accuracy of the Denver Developmental Screening Test II (Denver-II) in Predicting Later Language Problems in a Population of 10-year-old Children*

2000 Spelman College – Atlanta, GA  
Bachelor of Arts, Psychology

## AREAS OF RESEARCH

Social Epidemiology, Racial/Ethnic Health Disparities, Sexually Transmitted Infections, including HIV/AIDS, Gender and Power, Adolescent Health and Development

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **Assistant Research Professor**

George Washington School of Public Health and Health Services,  
*Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics*

- Serves as Project Director for two clinical HIV prevention trials being conducted in Washington, DC.
  - HPTN 064: The Women's HIV SeroIncidence Study (ISIS)
  - HPTN 061: The BROTHERS Study

**Postdoctoral Fellow (2008-current)**

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, *Department of Pediatrics*

Primary Project: Perceived Risk for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (PRSTD) - a follow-up study of perceived risk for STDs, patterns of sexual partnerships, and sexual behaviors among adolescent females in Baltimore City.

- Performing data analyses, including cluster detection, multilevel modeling, and structural equation modeling, to examine the link between neighborhood-level characteristics and sexual risk behaviors for STDs.
- Writing manuscripts for publication and abstracts for conferences.
- Preparing Committee for Human Research (IRB) applications.
- Designing audio-computer assisted interviews (ACASI) for data collection.
- Developing and preparing grant proposals to submit to funding agencies, including National Institutes of Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

**Research Analyst (2007-2008)**

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, *Department of Health Behavior and Society*

Primary Project: SHIELD (Self-Help In Eliminating Life-Threatening Diseases) – a longitudinal peer education intervention designed to reduce HIV risk behaviors among drug users in Baltimore City.

- Conducted multilevel analyses to identify neighborhood characteristics associated with changes in drug use and sexual risk behaviors among drug users.
- Writing manuscripts for publication.

**Research Assistant (2005-2008)**

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, *Department of Pediatrics*

Primary Projects: (1) Drug Use and HIV Infected Female Adolescents' Care Use - a study examining the relationships between substance use, mental health disorders, and social networks on engagement in care for HIV-infected adolescent females. (2) PRSTD - a follow-up study of perceived risk for STDs, patterns of sexual partnerships, and sexual behaviors among adolescent females in Baltimore City.

- Conducted statistical analyses investigating the factors associated with appointment keeping in HIV infected adolescent females and examining the effect of condom use motivations in adolescent couples on sexual risk behaviors for STDs.
- Designed audio-computer assisted interviews (ACASI) for data collection in studies.
- Prepared manuscripts for publication.
- Presented posters at national and international conferences on study findings.

**Research Assistant (2004-2005)**

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, *Division of Infectious Diseases*

Primary Project: Douching Prevention Trial in Mother-Daughter Dyads - a reproductive health intervention study to stop douching in mother and adolescent daughter dyads from Baltimore City.

- Conducted formative focus groups in target study population to inform study questionnaire.
- Recruited and interviewed adolescent females and mothers for the intervention study.
- Conducted literature reviews on explanations of racial disparities in STD rates and models for interventions to change adolescent sexual risk behavior.

**Research Assistant (2004-2005)**

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, *Department of Epidemiology*

Primary Project: Opiate User Research (OUR) Study – a cross-sectional study of drug users attending drug detoxification centers in the Chiang Mai province of Thailand.

- Conducted statistical analyses.
- Conducted literature reviews on determinants of drug treatment seeking.

**Research Fellow (2001-2003)**

National Institute for Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)

- Analyzed data from a longitudinal study of language abilities in children.
- Conducted literature reviews on stuttering and other speech and language delays in children.

**Intern for the Community Health Educator (1999-2000)**

Planned Parenthood of Georgia – Atlanta, Georgia

- Planned, coordinated, and presented health seminars on sexually transmitted diseases to adolescents in the Atlanta Public School System and at adolescent programs throughout the city.
- Assisted in the planning, development, and implementation of a citywide teen conference on STDs.
- Organized, trained, and supervised the Teen Action Group (TAG); high school students who served as peer educators on STDs in the local community.
- Taught an STD prevention curriculum to TAG in preparation for their work as peer educators.
- Scheduled presentations for and accompanied TAG members to these presentations.

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE****Co-Instructor**

Tougaloo College – Jackson, MS

Introduction to Epidemiology (6-day course) (*July 2008*)

- Assisted in the planning and execution of a week-long overview of epidemiologic methods and study design for the Jackson Heart Study
- Conducted laboratory sessions
- Graded exams

**Instructor**

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
Fogarty African Bioethics Training Program

Quantitative Research Methods (*January 2007 -May 2007*)

- Planned and executed a weekly course on quantitative research methods
- Prepared and presented weekly lectures
- Designed and updated course materials and reviews
- Assisted students with learning important course concepts and methods
- Reviewed and advised training program participants in the creation of proposals for an independent research project to be completed in the fellows' home countries

## Teaching Assistant

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Infectious Disease Epidemiology (*October 2006 to December 2006*)

Observational Epidemiology (*October 2006 to December 2006*)

Introduction to Epidemiology (*July 2006 to October 2006*)

Graduate Summer Institute in Epidemiology (*June 2005 to July 2005*)

- Conducted laboratory sections
- Taught introductory- and intermediate-level epidemiological concepts and methods
- Graded course assignments and exams

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Submitted:

Merchant, SG, Ellen, JM, Gary, TL, Glass, TA. Gender-Based Power: The measurement of a social mechanism in urban neighborhoods. [Submitted to Social Science and Medicine]

Merchant, SG, Millstein, SG, Ellen, JM. Whose intention matters? A dyadic assessment of condom use motivations in adolescent couples. [Submitted to the Journal of Adolescence]

Merchant, SG, Glass, TG, Ellen, JM. Neighborhood Poverty, Gender-based Power, and Gonorrhea Incidence in Baltimore City, 2002-2005. [Submitted to the Journal Epidemiology and Community Health]

In Progress:

Merchant, SG, Ellen, JM, Jennings, JM. A comparison of the neighborhood contexts of adolescents and their sex partners.

## PRESENTATIONS

2008 Merchant, SG, Glass, TG, Ellen, JM. Poverty, gender inequality and STIs in Baltimore City neighborhoods. Accepted for Poster Presentation at the 136<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in San Diego, CA.

2008 Merchant, SG, Glass, TG, Ellen, JM. Developing a theoretically-based measure of gender-based power at the neighborhood-level. Accepted for Poster Presentation at the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting for the Society for Epidemiologic Research in Chicago, IL.

2008 Merchant, SG, Millstein, SG, Ellen, JM. A comparison of condom use desires in adolescents. Accepted for Poster Presentation at the 2008 National STD Prevention Conference in Chicago, IL.

- 2007 Merchant, SG, Jennings, JM, Ellen, JM. Adolescents and their sex partners: A comparison of neighborhood contexts. Accepted for Poster Presentation at the 17<sup>th</sup> International Society for Sexually Transmitted Diseases Research in Seattle, WA.
- 2007 Merchant, SG, Millstein, SG, Ellen, JM. Adolescent couples actual and perceived desires to use condoms. Accepted for Poster Presentation at the 17<sup>th</sup> International Society for Sexually Transmitted Diseases Research in Seattle, WA.
- 2002 Merchant, SG, Hoffman, HJ, Day, LS, Hillman, LS, Stockbauer, JW. Epidemiology of stuttering and other speech impairments at 10 years of age: The MMIHS Follow-up Study. Accepted for Oral Presentation at the 8th Annual Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Conference in Clearwater, FL

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

### **Camp DreamCatcher (2007-present)**

- Volunteered as a camp counselor at a therapeutic summer camp for children, ages 5-17, infected/affected by HIV/AIDS.

### **Baltimore Neighborhood Research Consortium (2005-present)**

- A member of a collaborative association dedicated to promoting and acquiring a better understanding of neighborhood effects in Baltimore City.
- Contributions include reviewing existing neighborhood studies to identify and/or evaluate new data collection methods and analytic techniques; assisting in the generation of ideas for grant proposals; helping to identify and secure existing administrative data sources for Baltimore City neighborhoods.

### **Interdisciplinary Student Community-Oriented Prevention Enhancement Service (ISCOPES) (2002-2003) Washington Free Clinic – Washington, DC**

- Participated as a team member for the Washington Free Clinic group, serving persons without medical insurance.
- Developed an intervention to improve medical service delivery to the clinic population.

## **SPECIAL SKILLS**

Computer: Proficient in SAS, Stata, SPSS, Epi Info, Microsoft Office, QDS: Questionnaire Development System, ArcView Geographical Information Systems

## **HONORS AND AWARDS**

Minority Health Pre-Doctoral Fellowship (2003-2005)  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health - Baltimore, MD

NIH Intramural Research Training Award Fellowship (2001-2003)  
National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, NIH

Academic Scholarship (2001)  
The George Washington University - Washington, D.C.

Academic Scholarship (1997-2001)  
Spelman College - Atlanta, GA

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND SOCIETIES**

American Public Health Association, *Member*  
Society for Epidemiologic Research, *Member*  
National Alumnae Association of Spelman College, *Member*