



American Statistical Association

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February 13, 2010

Committee on Fellows
American Statistical Association

It is a pleasure to write in support of the nomination of Dr. Jon Smith for ASA Fellow. Dr. Smith joined our staff in May of 2005. He has directly impacted decisions made by the most senior leadership of the Department of Government Affairs through his work on inspection projects. Dr. Smith displays the wonderful combination of mastery of the science of mathematics, the personal drive to demand excellence from himself and others, and the interpersonal skills to help those seeking his consultation choose the better path for project design.

As the senior supervisor of the Department of Government Affairs, Dr. Smith directs and supervises all aspects of the use of statistical analysis for its oversight function. This includes developing strategies and protocols for study design and data collection, defining valid study outcomes measures and samples, designing questionnaires, overseeing data collection, taking appropriate data analysis approaches, presenting data effectively, interpreting study results properly, and putting statistical information into research and business contexts. Since his appointment with the Department of Government Affairs in May 2005, he has provided statistical leadership on more than 50 reviews and audits that provide oversight to improve and strengthen our programs.

Dr. Smith conducted a comprehensive statistical review of our quality improvement program. He made 16 specific recommendations for improvement in the review report published in January 2009. The Under Secretary for the Department of Government Affairs concurred with all recommendations and launched a workgroup in February 2009 to address the issues identified in his report. He briefed Senators, members of the House of Representatives, and Congressional staffers on the review and testified at a Congressional hearing. The report was recognized with "Awards for Excellence" by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency in 2009. Other programs on performance measure and quality improvement at the Department of Government Affairs have also used his recommendations to correct and improve their statistical methodology.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Jones".

Bob Jones

Senior Investigator
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February 10, 2010

Committee on Fellows
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I am pleased to have the opportunity to write a letter of support for Dr. Jane Smith's nomination for election as a Fellow of the American Statistical Association. I have known Dr. Smith for nearly ten years since she arrived at the National Disease Institute.

Dr. Smith has played a key role both in leading and collaborating on substantive studies in NDI's surveillance research program, and in developing and implementing new statistical methods in support of that program. I had the pleasure of working with her on one project to develop a method to put confidence intervals on estimates of disease prevalence derived from disease registry data. Dr. Smith formulated this problem, taking the intricacies for registry data into account. She developed a Poisson approximation that was computationally much more efficient than previously proposed bootstrap methods, and she showed in simulations that the new method had proper coverage. Because of its computational efficiency, Dr. Smith was able to incorporate this new method into SEER-STAT, a set of programs used worldwide for the analysis of descriptive epidemiologic data. It was satisfying to see this new method put into widespread use.

Another example of Dr. Smith's methodologic contributions to the Surveillance Program was her development of methods to correct for delays in reporting disease incidence information. These methods have also been incorporated to analysis of disease incidence trends. Without such corrections, reporting delays bias the recent incidence rates downward. Such corrections are therefore crucial for interpreting the most recent disease incidence rates.

Since assuming a leadership position as Director, Government Office of Health, Dr. Smith has collaborated on numerous significant studies for the Office of Health and Congress, and she has somehow managed to continue to publish peer reviewed work and to serve as a reviewer for peer reviewed work.

Thus, I am pleased to support Dr. Smith's nomination for ASA Fellow on the basis of her substantive studies of disease surveillance, her important improvements to statistical methods for cancer surveillance, and her recent leadership role in guiding the Office of Health and bringing statistical science to bear on important public health and policy issues.

Sincerely,

Sara Brown
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