



Georgian Implementation Science Fogarty Training (GIFT) Program Ilia State University & Yale University

Advancing Implementation Science & Biostatistics: Summer Training with Yale Experts

Meet Our Esteemed Summer Bootcamp Speakers

Prof Rick Altice, MD, MA



Rick Altice is a professor of Medicine, Epidemiology and Public Health and is a clinician, clinical epidemiologist, intervention and implementation science researcher at Yale University School of Medicine and School of Public Health. He is a MPI of the GIFT project. He is also serving as a Visiting Professor at University Malaya. His work has emerged primarily with a global health focus with funded research projects internationally in Malaysia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, and Indonesia. He is currently also collaborating on projects with the NIH, WHO, UNAIDS, USAID, PEPFAR and UNODC. He is currently the director for two International Implementation Science Research and Training Centers with collaborations between Yale University and the University of Malaya and Sichuan University. Prof Altice will conduct a live Nominal Group Technique session and share his real-world implementation experience during war and pandemic during GIFT Bootcamp 2025.

Prof Denise Esserman, PhD



Denise Esserman is a professor of biostatistics at Yale School of Public Health, US. She is a MPI of the GIFT project. As a member of the Yale Center for Analytical Sciences, she collaborates with a number of departments at the Yale School of Medicine, including the Clinical and Translational Science Award Program, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, and the Cancer Center. Denise Esserman will introduce the audience to methodological and statistical considerations in implementation research during GIFT Bootcamp. She will be available for 'Ask the Expert' session to offer consultation on projects and grants. In addition, Prof Esserman will lead Biostatistics workshop during GIFT Bootcamp 2025.

Prof Irma Kirtadze, MD, PhD



Irma Kirtadze is an Associate Professor of Addiction Studies at Ilia State University with over 20 years of experience researching drug use disorders and their linkage to blood-borne infections such as HIV, hepatitis B/C, and STIs. She is a MPI of the GIFT project. Prof. Kirtadze has served as a Principal Investigator and has expertise in both quantitative and qualitative research methods, including recruitment, interviewing, and delivering HIV prevention interventions for key populations. Prof. Kirtadze has led or been a member of numerous international cooperation projects, working as an expert on various donor-funded projects like 5% Initiative, PEPFAR, NIH/NIDA, Global Fund, USAID, UNAIDS, IOM, EUROPAID, and EMCDDA. Her focus is on HIV/AIDS prevention

programs among key populations, HIV/AIDS prevention and harm reduction program expenditure analysis and costing, and implementation research in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. During the GIFT Bootcamp, Prof. Kirtadze will share her real-world experience in adapting evidence-based interventions, such as syringe vending machines, to the Georgian context.



Prof Lynn Madden, PhD, MPA

Lynn Madden is a Chief Executive Officer at APT Foundation, a non-profit agency founded in 1970 by members of the Yale University Department of Psychiatry to promote health and recovery for those who live with substance use disorders and/or mental illness. Dr Madden holds a position as an assistant professor in the Yale School of Medicine AIDS program and as a faculty member in addiction medicine. Her interests and pursuits include large- and small-scale implementation projects that are focused on access to and quality in mental health care and substance abuse treatment services including integration with primary care, and integration of treatment for infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and HCV. Prof Madden will co-conduct a live Nominal Group Technique session and share her real-world implementation experience during war and pandemic during GIFT Bootcamp 2025.



Prof Luke Davis, MD

Luke Davis is an Associate Professor at the Yale School of Public Health and the Yale School of Medicine, Associate Director of Educational Programs at the Center for Methods in Implementation & Prevention Science (CMIPS), Director of International Programs at the Yale Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA), Co-Director of the Global HIV/AIDS Research Network (GARNER) at the Yale Institute for Global Health (YIGH), and Visiting Professor at the University of Malaya. His research focuses on finding, treating, and preventing tuberculosis (TB) among people living with HIV by designing and evaluating implementation strategies using rigorous randomized and quasi-experimental trials. He is actively involved in several research training grants, including the Yale Global Health Emerging Scholars (GHES) Program, which offers mentored one-year post-doctoral fellowships. At Yale, he teaches a popular introductory implementation science course and directs the Implementation Science Master's Track. Dr. Davis is excited to join the GIFT Bootcamp, sharing his perspective on using implementation science to help end the AIDS epidemic.



Dr. Assel Terlikbayeva

Dr. Terlikbayeva is a physician with more than 20 years of experience leading research in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. She serves as Regional Director of the Global Health Research Center of Central Asia (GHRCCA) and President of the Center for Scientific and Practical Initiatives in Almaty. Her work spans HIV prevention and care, HCV, tuberculosis, overdose prevention, mental health, and implementation science. She has led or co-investigated numerous NIH- and Fogarty-funded studies on HIV PrEP among MSM and PWID, couple-based HIV risk-reduction and ART-adherence interventions, and TB surveillance strategies. As site principal investigator on the Bridge implementation trial, she improved linkage to HIV care for people who use drugs across Kazakhstan. In addition, she served as site PI for implementation trials expanding methadone-assisted therapy, HIV self-testing, and PrEP in Kazakhstan. At the GIFT Summer Bootcamp, she will co-present a regional case study on applying implementation frameworks to optimize pre-implementation and implementation strategies in resource-limited settings.

Prof Tasos C. Kyriakides, PhD



Tassos C. Kyriakides is an Assistant Professor, Yale School of Public Health (YSPH) where he helps design and guide and collaborates on numerous clinical research projects. He consults on methodology, data processes and management, and statistical analysis for numerous research protocols; has served as an abstract mentor for researchers at the International AIDS Conferences, mentor's graduate students, and is a statistical reviewer for high-impact journals (Lancet Infectious Diseases; Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology). He currently teaches Fundamentals of Clinical Trials, a second year Spring Semester Master's course at the YSPH.

He is the Director at the US government's Department of Veterans' Affairs Cooperative Studies Program (VACSPCC-West Haven, CT), a clinical trials data coordinating center, where he has worked the last 25 years on pivotal trials in: HIV/AIDS treatment (The OPTIMA Trial); surgery (The OVER Trial); PTSD (The VIP-STAR Trial). In his capacity as Director, he currently coordinates and facilitates activities in five clinical trials and a Lung Precision Oncology Program in 112 Veterans' Affairs Medical Centers across the US.

He is the proponent for the establishment of a program/center at the Yale School of Public Health that will focus on the olive tree and its products, and their effects on human and planetary health. He is a certified olive oil sommelier and runs the Yale Oleoteca at the Schwartzmann Center. He frequently gives talks on the health benefits of olive oil, he is the principal investigator of a research project (funding pending) to assess the benefits of table olives on cardiovascular markers among college students and a co-investigator on three research studies assessing the benefits of olive oil on Alzheimer's disease, the gut microbiome and athletic performance.

Prof Lily Katsovich, MS, MBA



Lily Katsovich, MS, MBA is the Director of the Data Management Unit at the Yale Center for Analytical Sciences. With over 25 years of experience in managing complex research projects, she brings extensive expertise in data management, data analysis, and project coordination. Over the past decade, Lily has collaborated closely with Principal Investigators, site coordinators, and research teams to develop effective protocols, standard operating procedures, data management systems, and training materials for new and ongoing research projects. In her current role, Lily manages a team of data managers, overseeing multiple research projects and clinical trials. She is skilled in designing, developing, implementing, and monitoring complex data systems, ensuring successful project execution from start to finish. Lily is well-versed in managing multi-site clinical trials across various research institutions, both domestically and internationally. She communicates regularly with stakeholders worldwide, including universities and the VA Healthcare Systems, to plan and monitor project progress. Lily has co-authored over 40 scientific publications and is dedicated to advancing scientific research and ensuring the success of complex research initiatives.

Prof David Otiashvili MD, PhD



Dr. Otiashvili is an Associate Professor of Healthcare at the School of Natural Sciences and Medicine, Ilia State University. David graduated from Tbilisi State Medical University and received a qualification as a psychiatrist. He spent ten years in clinical work treating patients with substance use disorders. As a NIDA Hubert Humphrey Fellow, he studied substance use research at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA. In 2014, he received PhD in Health Psychology from Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. Over the last decade, David's primary focus has been on research and education programs related to substance use and HIV.

Prof Veriko Mirtskhulava, MD, MPH, PhD



Prof. Veriko Mirtskhulava is a medical doctor and epidemiologist with over two decades of experience in tuberculosis research, global health, and academic teaching. She is an Associate Professor at Ilia State University, where she teaches epidemiology and biostatistics and supervises graduate and doctoral research. Her previous roles include Global Fund TB Grant Manager at Georgia's NTP and Senior Epidemiologist at KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation, where she contributed to the introduction and evaluation of new TB treatment regimens in multiple countries. She has also served as a consultant to WHO, USAID, and ECDC, supporting TB surveillance, drug resistance surveys, and capacity building across Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. At the GIFT bootcamp, she will present TB surveillance data analyzed in her supervisory role for a PhD student at the National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases, illustrating how routine data can inform implementation efforts.

Kate Nyhan, MLS, IPI PMC



Kate Nyhan is the research and education librarian for public health at Yale's Cushing/Whitney Medical Library and a lecturer in environmental health sciences at Yale School of Public Health. Her research interests include the use of evidence in languages other than English in evidence synthesis, the information behavior of the public health workforce, and research waste. Kate co-founded the Librarian Peer Reviewer Database, which helps handling editors find librarians to peer review evidence synthesis manuscripts, and the not-for-profit organization Community Access to Ventilation Information, which helps public libraries empower community members to measure and improve indoor air quality.

Eteri Machavariani MD MPH PhD(c)



Eteri Machavariani is an epidemiologist with a background in clinical psychiatry. Her research focuses on optimizing integrated services for overlapping epidemics of infectious diseases and substance use disorders in high-burden settings. She will discuss IMPACT, a randomized, controlled trial integrating opioid agonist therapies within primary care centers in Ukraine.

Tamar Zurashvili, MD, MPH, PhD(c)



Tamar Zurashvili is a public health specialist with over 10 years of experience working in various international projects in the fields of HIV/AIDS and TB. She has a background in family medicine, public health and epidemiology, with specific training and expertise in epidemiological research, qualitative and quantitative techniques. Since 2014, she has been a researcher and project coordinator at the Partnership for Research and Action for Health. She will be presenting her doctoral research project focusing on HIV stigma and using the implementation science approach.



Mariam Pashalishvili, MSc, PhD(c)

Mariam Pashalishvili is a Chief Specialist at the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Division at the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Health from Tbilisi State Medical University and a Master's degree in Addiction Studies from Ilia State University. She is extensively trained in field epidemiology and emergency management. Currently pursuing her PhD, her research focuses on public health and epidemiology. Mariam is dedicated to applying her expertise to real-world public health challenges, striving to make a significant impact on public health policies and practices. In an upcoming session, she will be presenting her PhD research results, which has the potential to be developed into an implementation research grant.



Prof. Ekaterina Burduli, PhD

She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Community and Behavioral Health at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine at Washington State University. Her research focuses on improving maternal and infant outcomes among women with substance use disorders, with an emphasis on intervention development and implementation in perinatal care settings. She is currently supported by a NIDA-funded K01 award to develop a mobile caregiving support tool for women receiving opioid treatment during pregnancy. Dr. Burduli is also a fellow in the NIH-funded Center for Dissemination and Implementation at Stanford (C-DIAS), where she is advancing expertise in equitable, context-driven implementation strategies for addiction and maternal health care. Her current implementation work focuses on mapping implementation strategies to the Stages of Implementation Completion (SIC) to identify universal, adaptable processes to implementing evidence-based practices across diverse settings. Originally from Georgia, she brings a strong personal connection to the region and is committed to supporting capacity-building efforts in global implementation science.



Keti Meskhi, MPH, PhD (c)

Keti Meskhi is an early-career public health researcher with a focus on infectious diseases. She holds a Bachelor's degree in public health from Tbilisi State Medical University and a Master's degree in Public Health and Health Policy from Ilia State University. Currently pursuing PhD in Public Health. She will be presenting her doctoral research project focusing on Tuberculosis systematic screening and preventive treatment implementation among household contacts of people with infectious tuberculosis and PLHIV in Georgia.



Tamari Mgebrishvili, MA, PhD (c)

Tamari is a public health professional with a background in addiction studies and psychology. She is currently pursuing a PhD in public health at Ilia State University and was previously a PhD scholar at Yale University. She has extensive experience working with people who use drugs. Her PhD thesis explores the barriers and facilitators to Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) uptake among key populations in Georgia, including women who use drugs, female partners of men who inject drugs, men who have sex with men, and sex workers. Tamari will present the progress of her research findings during the GIFT Bootcamp.



Mariam Sherozia, PhD (c)

Mariam Sherozia is an early-career public health researcher with a BA in Psychology and an MA in Addiction Studies from Ilia State University. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Public Health and was a GIFT Project PhD scholar at Yale University. Mariam's work focuses on addiction, HIV prevention, and harm reduction. Her PhD project explores HIV self-testing among people who inject drugs, using HIV prevention vending machines in a mixed-methods implementation study. Her interests include implementation science and the development of public health interventions for underserved and high-risk populations.



Irakli Natsvlshvili, MD, PhD (c)

Irakli is a public health researcher with a background in medicine and addiction studies. He is currently enrolled in a PhD in Public Health at Ilia State University and recently participated in the Georgian Implementation Science Fogarty Training (GIFT) Program at Yale University. With over five years of experience at the National Drug Observatory of Georgia, he is actively involved in research, monitoring, and policy development related to drug use and public health. His doctoral research focuses on integrating the WHO-validated ASSIST screening tool into Georgia's prenatal healthcare system to improve the early identification of substance use among pregnant women. Irakli will present the progress of his research findings during the GIFT Bootcamp.



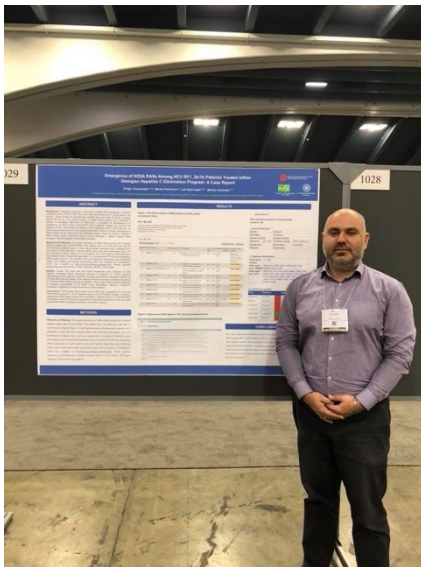
Anzor Tchavtchavadze PhD (c)

is public health researcher with experience in health policy, public health program implementation, and biomedical research. He has contributed to national efforts in reforming areas such as blood safety, transplantation, and digital health systems. He currently works at a public health research organization and teaches at Ilia State University while pursuing a PhD in Public Health.



Levan Salamadze MA, PhD (c)

Levan Salamadze is a public health professional with over twelve years of experience in the drug field. He serves as a researcher-coordinator at the National Drug Observatory in the Ministry of Justice of Georgia. In this role, he is responsible for monitoring the national drug situation, conducting relevant studies, preparing national annual drug reports, cooperating with national and international organizations, and contributing to the development of drug-related policy documents. Levan holds a master's degree in addiction studies and is currently pursuing a PhD in public health. His PhD research focuses on scaling up opioid agonist treatment for HIV prevention in the probation system in Georgia. As a GIFT PhD scholar, he will present the progress of his PhD research during the bootcamp.



Akaki Abutidze MD, MPH, PhD

Akaki Abutidze graduated from Tbilisi State Medical University in 2005 with MD degree. In 2010 he was awarded a U.S. National Institutes of Health Fogarty International Center scholarship and completed a two-year Master of Public Health degree program at the Emory University, Atlanta, USA. Dr. Abutidze received his PhD degree in Infectious Diseases at Tbilisi State University in 2016. Currently Dr. Abutidze holds the position of deputy director for research at the T. Tsertsvadze Infectious Diseases, AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center in Tbilisi, Georgia, which is country's leading institution in the field of HIV, viral hepatitis and other infectious diseases. He has been actively involved in the development and implementation of Georgia's national HIV/AIDS treatment and care program, national hepatitis C elimination program and hepatitis B treatment program and serves as a member of scientific committees of these initiatives. He is a member of the country coordinating mechanism for the Global Fund project to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Dr. Abutidze has over 20 years of experience in HIV, HCV and HBV research leading national cohort studies within several international collaborations. He has published extensively in peer-reviewed literature.



Mariana Buziashvili, BPharm, MPH, PhD(c)

Mariana is a clinical researcher and Head of the Pharmacokinetic Laboratory at the National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases in Georgia. She holds a Bachelor degree in Pharmacy and a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from Tbilisi State Medical University and completed a master's-equivalent clinical research fellowship at Emory University in Atlanta, GA, USA. Currently, she is pursuing a PhD in Public Health through a joint program between Tbilisi State University and State University of New York at Albany, NY, USA, supported by the NIH/Fogarty D43 training grant. Mari is an alumna and ongoing collaborator of the Emory-Georgia TB Research Training Program (EGTB-RTP), with extensive clinical research training and experience in independent funding through the NIH-funded TRAC program, as well as participation in NIH-funded R01 projects. Mariana also serves as a consultant for the WHO Regional Office for Europe, contributing to operational research protocol development and training. She is a previous participant of GIFT Bootcamp in 2024 and this year she will share the results of her doctoral research project.



Davit Baliashvili, MD, PhD, MPH, MSc

Davit Baliashvili received his MD and MPH degrees from Tbilisi State Medical University in the country of Georgia, followed by a Master of Science in Clinical Research degree at Emory University. He worked in the Department of Communicable Diseases at the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia from 2014 to 2017 and participated in preparing and launching the Georgian hepatitis C elimination program. He obtained a Ph.D. degree in Epidemiology at Emory University in 2021, with the dissertation project examining the overlap and relationship between hepatitis C infection and tuberculosis. After returning to Georgia in 2021, Davit Baliashvili worked as a TEPHINET contractor for CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis. He served as a Scientific Lead for viral hepatitis activities in Georgia and coordinated the scientific committee of the Georgian National Hepatitis C Elimination Program. Starting November 2023, Davit Baliashvili joined the CDC Georgia country office as a Senior Public Health Specialist. His portfolio is covering workforce development, health informatics, public health emergency management, viral hepatitis, and strengthening national public health.



Debbie Humphries, PhD, MPH, MA

Debbie Humphries, PhD, MPH, MA is co-director of the Rigorous, Rapid, and Relevant Evidence Adaptation and Implementation to Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) hub of the CHESHIRE network, and an assistant professor of public health (adjunct) in the Department of Chronic Disease Epidemiology at the Yale School of Public Health. Dr. Humphries has a broad background in public health research and practice and is experienced in using participatory pedagogical methods to strengthen applied public health research partnerships between MPH students and public health organizations. She has co-led multiple studies on Community Health Workers in the context of the Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative, as well as supporting capacity building efforts in HIV and implementation science. Dr. Humphries has led qualitative and quantitative research teams to address programmatic approaches to improving public health and interactions between nutrition and infectious disease. This work has taken her to Asia and Africa where she has studied environmental factors and intestinal helminth infections and their relationship to anemia as well as effectiveness of intervention programs. She is currently collaborating on a longitudinal study to characterize parasite and host factors affecting response to deworming in Ghana.



Nikoloz Chkhartishvili, MD, MS, PhD

Senior Public Health Specialist. Georgia Country Office, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Public Health

Nikoloz Chkhartishvili graduated Tbilisi Medical Institute with MD degree in 1998. He obtained MS degree in epidemiology from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany in 2008 and PhD degree in infectious diseases from Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU). Dr. Chkhartishvili currently serves as Senior Public Health Specialist at CDC Georgia Country Office, being responsible for implementation of cooperative agreement projects on communicable diseases surveillance and antimicrobial resistance in the country of Georgia. Dr. Chkhartishvili has extensive experience in infectious diseases research. He was responsible for overseeing research portfolio of Georgia's referral institution for infectious diseases treatment and care. He personally led or contributed to the execution of more than 20 research projects resulting in more than 60 peer-reviewed publications.