

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

Implementation Science & Biostatistics: Summer Training 2026 with Yale Experts

Meet Our Esteemed Summer Bootcamp Speakers

PROF RICK ALTICE, MD, MA



Rick Altice is Professor of Medicine and Public Health at Yale University and Director for the Yale Center for Clinical and Community Research. He is a clinician as well as a researcher focusing on clinical epidemiology, intervention and decision science, and implementation science. He co-directs both the Georgian Implementation Fellowship Training (GIFT) and the Malaysian Implementation Science Training programs. His work focuses on implementing evidence-based HIV, HCV, tuberculosis, addiction, and harm reduction interventions in complex real-world settings, including prisons, community health systems, mobile outreach, and conflict-affected regions. He is especially interested in digital support tools and mHealth to address implementation barriers. He has led or collaborated on funded research in Malaysia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, Indonesia, and other international settings, and works with NIH, WHO, UNAIDS, PEPFAR, UNODC, and national partners to translate evidence into scalable public health practice.

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 provide expertise in 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 Advanced Biostatistics workshop during GIFT Bootcamp 2026.

PROF IRMA KIRTADZE, MD, PhD



Irma Kirtadze is an Associate Professor of Addiction Studies at Ilia State University and Co-PI of the GIFT Program. She is a psychiatrist and public health researcher with more than 20 years of experience leading research and capacity-building initiatives in addiction medicine, HIV, viral hepatitis, and implementation science. Her research focuses on the implementation of evidence-based interventions for HIV prevention, harm reduction, viral hepatitis, and substance use disorders among key populations. She has extensive expertise in mixed-methods study design, epidemiology, health services research, and both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. She has served as PI and project director on numerous international projects funded by the NIH/NIDA, PEPFAR, Global Fund, USAID, UNAIDS, IOM, Expertise France (5% Initiative), EMCDDA, and other international partners. As Co-PI of the GIFT Program, she leads the development of implementation science training and mentorship activities at Ilia State University, supporting the next generation of public health researchers in Georgia. She is the author or co-author of several book chapters and more than 40 peer-reviewed publications.



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.



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. TASSOS 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.



LILY KATSOVICH, MS, MBA

Lily Katsovich 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. At the GIFT Bootcamp, Lily will lead R statistical software practice sessions during the Biostatistics workshop as well as share some practical approaches to data management.



PROF. DAVID OTIASVILI, MD, PhD

Dr. Otiasvili 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

Veriko is an Associate Professor of Public Health, Epidemiology, and Biostatistics at Ilia State University in Tbilisi, Georgia. She is a physician, clinical epidemiologist, and implementation scientist with over 20 years of experience in tuberculosis research, scientific protocol review, and operational research design across low- and middle-income countries. Dr. Mirtskhulava is a Fellow and current Faculty member of the GIFT program, and previously trained under the Emory–Georgia Research Training Program (also Fogarty/NIH-supported). Dr. Mirtskhulava's research has a strong global health focus, with completed and ongoing projects in Georgia, Vietnam, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Malawi, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Nigeria. As Senior Epidemiologist at the KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation (2017–2024), she led scientific design review and cross-country coordination of operational research on the BPAL regimen for drug-resistant tuberculosis across ten countries. She has also served as an external reviewer of national TB drug-resistance surveys and clinical/operational research protocols for WHO, the Global Fund, and USAID. Dr. Mirtskhulava serves as PhD advisor to a GIFT Fellow and co-developed an NIH-submitted implementation and dissemination research proposal, reflecting an ongoing collaborative research partnership.



ANZOR CHAVCHAVADZE MA, PhD (c)

Anzor is a 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.



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.



LEVAN SALAMADZE, MA, PhD(c)

Levan Salamadze is a public health professional with over twelve years of experience specializing in drug addiction. His expertise includes monitoring, analyzing, and reporting on the national drug situation, as well as contributing to the development of drug policy documents, including strategies and action plans. He has also been actively involved in providing HIV prevention services to people who inject drugs (PWID) for several years. Levan holds a master's degree in Addiction Studies and is currently pursuing a PhD in Public Health at Ilia State University. He previously studied at Yale University as a PhD scholar. His doctoral research focuses on scaling up Opioid Agonist Maintenance Treatment (OAMT) for HIV prevention within Georgia's probation system. As a GIFT PhD scholar, he will present an update on the progress of his doctoral research during the bootcamp.



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.



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.



MARIAM SHEROZIA, MA, 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.



MAKA GOGIA, MD, MPH, PhD(c)

Maka Gogia is a public health expert and researcher with over 20 years of experience in HIV, viral hepatitis, harm reduction, and health systems strengthening in Georgia and the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region. She is Program Director of the Georgian Harm Reduction Network and provides technical expertise to international organizations, including WHO, the Global Fund, FIND, EATG, EHRA, and UNFPA. She is a Fogarty International Center award recipient and a PhD candidate in Public Health at Tbilisi State University. Her research focuses on HIV and viral hepatitis epidemiology, behavioral studies among populations at increased risk of HIV, and implementation of evidence-based interventions to improve access to prevention, testing, and linkage-to-care services. At the GIFT Summer Bootcamp, she will present a case study on applying implementation science frameworks to identify barriers and facilitators to HIV testing among key populations in Georgia and inform implementation strategies.



IRAKLI NATSVLISHVILI, 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.



THEA SHENGELAIA, MD, MSc, PhD(c)

Thea is a public health physician and epidemiology researcher with a background in medicine, global health, and implementation science. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Epidemiology and Implementation Science at Tbilisi State University. She holds an MSc in Global Health, Law and Governance from Queen Mary University of London and an MD from Tbilisi State Medical University. Her research interests include infectious disease epidemiology, HIV prevention, harm reduction, evidence synthesis, and implementation of public health interventions. She is also an Assistant Professor at Caucasus University, where she teaches epidemiology and clinical communication. During the GIFT Bootcamp, Thea will present her doctoral research on trends in HIV testing and the impact of frequent alcohol use among people who inject drugs in Georgia, using Integrated Behavioral Surveillance Survey data from 2009–2022. Her presentation will frame the findings through the RE-AIM implementation science framework, focusing on how alcohol-related interventions can be integrated into HIV testing and harm reduction services in Georgia.



IRINE TSKHOMELIDZE SCHUMACHER, MPH, PhD

Irine Tskhomelidze Schumacher received her Bachelor's degree in Public Health and Master of Public Health Policy degree from Tbilisi State Medical University and earned her PhD in Public Health from Tbilisi State University. She has completed several international professional trainings, including health economics at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, cost-effectiveness analysis methods at the University of Oxford, and health-related quality of life valuation with the EuroQol Research Foundation. Irine is a public health specialist with extensive experience in viral hepatitis, epidemiological research, and public health program management. Since 2017, she has worked as a contractor for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, supporting hepatitis B and C prevention, diagnosis, treatment, research, and program development in Georgia. Previously, she worked as a Chief Specialist at the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.

She is a co-author of approximately 50 scientific publications, and her work combines experience in research, strategic planning, reporting, program implementation, and multisectoral collaboration



ILIA NADAREISHVILI, MD, PhD

Ilia is a physician-scientist affiliated with David Tvildiani Medical University in Tbilisi, Georgia. His work focuses on health workforce strengthening, health policy, postgraduate training, and substance use research. He is the Principal Investigator of NIH Fogarty International Center K43 Emerging Global Leader Award-funded project, which examines the implementation of screening and brief intervention for substance use in rural primary care settings. Dr. Nadareishvili conducts his K43 project under the mentorship of faculty from Boston University and Boston Medical Center (J.H. Samet, K. Lunze, D. Alford), David Tvildiani Medical University (N. Tabagari), and Ilia State University (I. Kirtadze, D. Otiashvili). Prior to this award, he completed a two-year NIDA INVEST Drug Use and Addiction Research Fellowship at Boston Medical Center (2023–2025). He has contributed to multiple international projects and has consulted on health workforce capacity building and retention for the World Health Organization and other institutions. He is a member of several international professional associations.



LIA GVINJILIA, MD, PhD, MSc

Lia is a Senior Technical Advisor, CDC Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office. Since March 2021, Dr. Lia Gvinjilia provides technical assistance to CDC EECA leadership to develop, coordinate and oversee regional strategies and activities. She provides regional coordination to strengthen the regional public health capacities in respiratory disease surveillance and response, workforce development and emergency preparedness and response. She provides technical expertise and consultation to national partners, international organizations throughout the region, other USG agencies in the development, implementation, and evaluation of public health regional activities. During 2015-2020 Dr. Gvinjilia served as a monitoring and evaluation manager within Georgia National Hepatitis C Elimination Program. While being mostly focused on Georgia program, she served as a temporary advisor to support the Ukraine strategic plan development for the elimination of viral hepatitis B and C. Dr. Lia Gvinjilia has been a health professional with over 15 years of work experience in the clinical sector and public health field. After graduation from the Russian State Medical University, Moscow, Russia (2000), she gained extensive clinical experience while working as an Ob/Gyn doctor. A part of her PhD work she made contribution to the scientific understanding in the management of pregnancy complications in women with inherited and acquired thrombophilia. Additionally, Dr. Lia Gvinjilia holds M.Sc. degree in Epidemiology from State University of New York at Albany within New York State International Training and Research Fellowship Program (2012). She worked as a Post abortion Care project manager and later in the positions of Reproductive Health/Family Planning Technical Expert and Quality Improvement Adviser at USAID-funded projects implemented by John Snow Inc. (JSI) in Georgia.



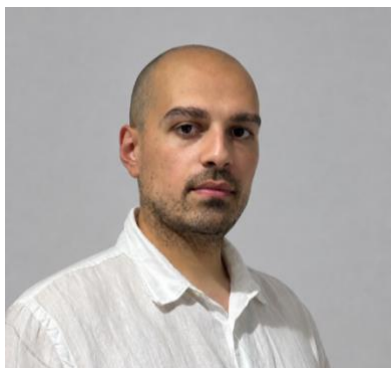
EMELI ANDERSON, PhD, MSPH

Emeli is a Professor of Public Health and Health Policy at BAU International University, Batumi. She earned her PhD and MSPH in Epidemiology from Emory University. Dr. Anderson's research focuses on infectious diseases, including HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and hepatitis C virus (HCV), with an emphasis on hard-to-reach and underserved populations such as men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, and female sex workers. Her methodological expertise includes mathematical modeling, statistical analysis, network analysis, and population size estimation. In addition to her research, Dr. Anderson has taught graduate- and professional-level courses in data analysis using R and network analysis. Her current research examines the healthcare needs of women who use drugs in Georgia, with the goal of informing evidence-based policies and interventions that improve health outcomes for this population.



MAIA BUTSASHVILI, MD MS PhD

Dr. Maia Butsashvili earned her PhD from the School of Public Health at the State University of New York (SUNY) in 2010. She previously received a master's degree in infectious disease epidemiology from SUNY in 2000 and her medical degree from Tbilisi State Medical University in 1993. Dr. Butsashvili is an infectious diseases physician, Director of the research NGO Health Research Union, and Head of the Clinical Department at NeoLab Clinic. She also serves as a member of Georgia's National Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C Committees. Previously, she served as Deputy Director of Georgia's National Center for Disease Control and Public Health and as a clinical consultant for the state program for hepatitis C treatment and prevention in correctional facilities. Dr. Butsashvili has led numerous research and public health projects as a principal investigator and project director. She is the author or co-author of several book chapters and more than 100 peer-reviewed publications.



GEORGE KANCHELASHVILI, MPH PhD

Giorgi Kanchelashvili is a public health researcher, epidemiologist, and Assistant Professor at Avicenna Batumi Medical University. He holds an MPH from Tbilisi State Medical University and a PhD in Public Health from the University of Georgia. His research focuses on tuberculosis, viral hepatitis, HIV, vaccination, and infectious diseases among high-risk populations. He has contributed to numerous national and international epidemiological studies as a project coordinator, researcher, statistician, and data analyst, collaborating with organizations including Emory University, CDC, NCDC, the Global Fund, and WHO-affiliated programs. He completed the Emory–Georgia TB Research Training Program and has authored and co-authored multiple peer-reviewed publications. During the GIFT Bootcamp, he will present findings from his study on HBV coinfection and prevention gaps among patients with active tuberculosis in Georgia, highlighting their potential implications for future implementation research.



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.



ROMAN IVASIY, MD, MPH

is an Associate Research Scientist at the Yale School of Medicine, Section of Infectious Diseases. He is a physician and epidemiologist whose research focuses on improving access to and outcomes of evidence-based treatment for opioid use disorder, HIV prevention, and health services for people who use drugs. His work leverages large-scale administrative data and international cohort studies to evaluate treatment effectiveness, healthcare delivery, and the impact of health policies in both the United States and Eastern Europe. Dr. Ivasiy earned his MD from Danylo Halytsky Lviv National Medical University and his MPH in Epidemiology from Georgia State University as a Fulbright Scholar.



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.