

Meleah Boyle

AY 2018-19 All-S.T.A.R. Fellow

School of Public Health

Maryland Institute of Environmental Health

2nd year Graduate Student, RA



I have been a graduate research assistant under Dr. Quiros-Alcala since 2016. This assistantship has greatly enhanced my educational experience, allowing me to apply the training received in the classroom to ongoing research studies in addition to acquiring new skills. For example, I helped develop a comprehensive occupational health survey for a Tier I-funded study on Latino workers. Developing this survey made me realize the importance of generating in-depth, culturally-appropriate study instruments to address important research questions in underrepresented and understudied populations in public health research. I have also been able to bolster my statistical skills by analyzing large datasets to examine the health effects of chemical exposures on the US general population. This work led to poster presentations at international conferences and a recent publication in an international journal, which I co-authored also enhancing my scientific writing skills. As study coordinator for a UMD Tier I study, I oversaw development of a REDCap database for study instruments, developed human subjects and biospecimen collection protocols, collected and processed biospecimens, trained staff, and managed data. My presentation and writing skills were further enhanced from presenting preliminary findings from this work at the UMD Public Health Research Day, and submitting an abstract to the American Public Health Association Conference. The opportunities to publish and to be part of a research study from conception to completion have been an incredible addition to my doctoral studies, elevating my graduate experience, enhancing my critical thinking skills and laying the foundation for my future research career.