

# CAMmer in the Spotlight

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### Getting to know... Dina Borzekowski

**What are you currently working on?** My work involves three aspects. First, I do research and evaluate the impact of media on children and adolescents. Predominantly these are media initiatives in developing countries, where I conduct large scale projects using different methodologies.

Second, I teach and mentor at the University of Maryland. I am teaching the introductory and required biostatistics class for our Community Health undergraduates. I also teach a school-wide iSeries class called "Global Health Messages." This interdisciplinary and innovative class has students critique media as well as design and evaluate a media campaign in College Park. Lastly, I have graduate students who I am advising and pushing to do high-quality and important work.

Third, I create and produce videos for media advocacy. These videos have occurred around the world (Russia, Brazil, the Philippines, China, Argentina) and target health policies and endeavors that need to change.

**What has been your most memorable project so far, and why?** Hard to pin-point one.... I have such rich memories of traveling the globe to do health communication work.

I've met some of the world's most vulnerable children, from the slums of Dhaka to the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. It's always exciting to see these children's eyes light up when they are exposed to great media.

**Which achievement are you most proud of, and why?** Probably my study looking at the current reach of tobacco marketing on preschool



children. This study replicated the Mickey Mouse and Joe Camel study done by Fischer in the early 90s. Conducted in six low and middle-income countries with the highest numbers of smokers, we interviewed over 2400 children.

[This work](#) is having a great impact on tobacco policy and regulations in these and other countries.

**Sister Agnes Lucy Lando would like to know what you would say about how you have tried to bridge the research gap between the Global North and Global South? What is in your opinion the most striking “finding” or have you encountered a unique experience when studying the Global North and Global South (comparably) ?** I think the research gap between the Global North and South concerns mentorship and opportunities. Researchers in the Global South are great at offering viable approaches for collecting data in their countries and communities, but lack information on what is “necessary” for publishing in the top peer-reviewed journals (published through Global North institutions). Some of my most exciting professional experiences have been working with young researchers in developing countries. Much of the difference between the Global North and South has to do with the planning and support before a study occurs. Often I create workshops around ethical protocols and IRB

clearance, introducing research teams to these important steps. I think the best way to advance children and media research is to create collaborations between North and South researchers.

**What would be your work motto?** Actually it is from the fields of Ultimate Frisbee....

“Throw with Conviction”

Basically, it has to do with making your actions worthwhile and meaningful. A weak throw never goes far!



**Which of your publications is your favorite, and why?** I already mentioned work from the 6 Country study. That's a favorite.

Two papers from my Sesame work are very fun...: Borzekowski, D.L.G., Henry, H.K.M. (2011). [The impact of Jalan Sesama on the educational and healthy development of Indonesian preschool children: An experimental study.](#) *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 35, 169 – 179.; Borzekowski, D.L.G., Macha, J. (2010). [The impact of Kilimani Sesame on the healthy development of Tanzanian preschool children.](#) *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 31, 298-305.

I love ALL my papers with my mentor Dr. Tom Robinson. These papers represent very solid work. Robinson, T. N., Borzekowski, D. L.G., Matheson, D. M., Kraemer, H. C. (2007). [Effects of fast food branding on young children's taste preferences.](#) *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 161, 792-797. Borzekowski, D. L.G., Robinson, T.N. (2005). [The remote, the mouse, and the #2 pencil: Media and academic achievement among 3rd grade students.](#) *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 159, 607-613. Borzekowski, D. L.G., Robinson, Thomas N. (2001). [The 30-second effect: An experiment revealing the impact of television commercials](#)

[on food preferences of preschoolers.](#) *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 101, 42-46.

Lastly, I am very proud of the media advocacy videos I've produced with television producer Jonathan Meath. Links for these can be found on my [UMD website.](#)

**If you had unlimited resources, what kind of project would you want to do and why?** I really would love to build some multi-country studies where we explore similar questions across different populations. For example, I would love to study the impact of mobile technology on parent and child communication – but in several locales. How does texting “work” and impact relationships in Kolkata, New York City, Dar es Salaam, and Caracas. Inherent in this effort would be bringing together young researchers from the Global North and South, merging ideas, methodologies, measures, and analyses.

**If you had to give one piece of advice to young CAM scholars, what would it be?** Connect with mentors that care. CAM has MANY! Listen to their advice and learn from their experiences.

**Who would you like to put in the spotlight next, and why?** I nominate Dr. Michael Rich. I would love to know how his day-to-day experiences in the clinic impact his study of children and media.