

From USU to CDC

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Lee with government officials and nurse-midwives in the state of Telangana, May 2018.

Chung-won Lee completed her PhD in 2000 with a focus in demography and public health. While at USU she worked closely with Dr. William Stinner and Dr. Michael B. Toney.

“Dr. Stinner’s comprehensive approach to data analysis,” she says, “how he posed a series of different questions based on preliminary data analysis results—that made a strong impression on me.” This period helped her learn various data management and analysis skills, and it taught her to think critically, question her own assumptions and be strategic with study designs. Later in her PhD program, Dr. Toney became a true mentor to her both academically and personally. “I had left USU for a few years and he was the main reason for my return to school to finish my PhD. His warm yet persistent encouragement truly motivated me. I learned tremendously from his gentle, patient, and encouraging teaching style, and from his sharp questions and comments on my papers.”

The combination of her studies in sociology, demography and public health naturally led her to seek employment opportunities at Utah Department of Health (UDOH). While there, she collaborated with the CDC to support the Salt Lake Winter Olympic Games in 2002, where she was part of the interdisciplinary team that worked on injury surveillance. She then took a post-doctoral fellowship at the Centers for Disease Control, and is now employed there as a Science, Policy and Research Coordinator in the Global Immunization Division. In this position, she helps conceive new research or non-research projects, provide consultations on study objectives and methods, and review presentations and manuscripts

for internal clearance. She also collaborates with other departments at the CDC and other global partners working on immunization to help ensure the alignment of our respective and collective endeavors.

Reflecting on her time at USU, and specifically about her time in the Yun Kim Population Lab, Lee says, “The Lab was my home at USU. I can remember how excited I was to have a desk in the Lab and to be a part of the group. It was a place of camaraderie and hard work, and I have such fond memories of it.”