Why do infectious diseases spread quickly in some groups and not others? How do your friends affect you and your behaviors? How can we learn about groups that are highly stigmatized and hidden? Social networks—representations of individuals and their relationships—have been used to tackle each of these questions, as well as many others. However, social networks also challenge many standard statistical assumptions and require novel statistical methodology. This talk will introduce social networks, and discuss how statistical methods can be leveraged to gain insight into phenomena encapsulated in these fascinating social structures.

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Miles Ott is a biostatistician with research interests in public health and the statistical analysis of social network data. He is particularly interested in network sampling methodology, the statistical implications of missingness in network data, and public health interventions that leverage the structure of social networks. His research application areas include substance use in emerging adults, HIV surveillance in hard-to-reach populations, and transgender health.

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