

Public Health Practice



Stories from the Field

The University of Texas School of Public Health
Student Practicum Experiences
Fall 2014 – DrPH Students

Prevention diabetes safe kids clean water policy disaster response
cancer adolescent sexual health HIV/AIDS research obesity
alcohol empowerment vaccinations maternal & child health

The practicum experience is an integral part of the MPH and DrPH curricula. Public health students are provided with the opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge to real world settings through which they make a meaningful contribution to a public health organization.

Under the guidance of a community preceptor and faculty sponsor, students from all divisions gain a deeper understanding of public health practice, interact with professionals in the field, and expand their repertoire of professional skills.

This fifteenth-edition e-magazine showcases student practicum experiences throughout the Fall 2014 semester. (Prior semesters may be accessed through the e-book, a collection of student abstracts and e-magazines describing their experiences.)



Practicum Topics

Serving Size: 1 Practicum per Student

Servings per e-Magazine: 4

Hours per Week per Student	Approximately 12
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Divisions	2
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Student

Epidemiology

William Beaumont Army Medical Center

Winston Jackson

Management, Policy & Community Health

Cancer Related ER Visits in Harris County

Min Ji Kwak

An Interprofessional Education Project

Linda Hook

Medical Homes: Detained Adolescent Youth

Vanessa Nicholson

Public Health Practicum at William Beaumont Army Medical Center



Tracking Flu Vaccination Rates in Healthcare Workers

By: Winston Jackson, MPH

For my practicum, I worked at William Beaumont Army Medical Center, a U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) facility. I worked with the Occupational Health Clinic, assisting with the administration and management of the facility's seasonal influenza vaccination program and assisted with developing tools for medical surveillance. Each year the ACIP publishes recommendations for the use of the influenza vaccine for the prevention and control of seasonal influenza. I received an orientation on DoD and service-specific policies for influenza vaccination as well as an orientation on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations for the 2014-2015 influenza season.

My work was focused on tracking and documenting immunizations among civilian HCPs. We monitored implementation and compliance with influenza vaccination policies using information technology resources at the medical center. I helped to develop new analysis tools which provided command staff with real-time, up-to-the-minute reports on the vaccine status of HCPs. Tracking, reporting, and monitoring flu vaccine compliance helped the facility to increase overall vaccination coverage.

Did you know? William Beaumont Army Medical Center (WBAMC) serves Fort Bliss, home of the 1st Armored Division. WBAMC is one of the largest buildings in El Paso with over 1 million square feet of floor space dedicated to patient care.

Public Health Significance

This practicum experience addresses Essential Public Health Service #9: To evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services. Vaccination of HCP, both military and civilian, has been shown to reduce illness and absenteeism, reduce morbidity associated with influenza among patients in healthcare settings, and to reduce transmission of influenza to other HCP and their families. These efforts combined with the efforts of the many dedicated staff at William Beaumont helped to contribute to the facility reaching vaccinations targets for the 2014-15 influenza season.

Highlights

- Working with a multi-disciplinary healthcare team including professionals in management, occupational health, and preventive medicine.
- Gaining experience working in the military healthcare system.

Advice

- Problem solving is a collaborative process. If you're not sure where to start, ask questions and get clarification on key decisions early-on.

All images courtesy of www.wbamc.amedd



Cancer Related ER Visits in Harris County

Among all ER visits in Harris County in 2010, cancer related visit accounted 0.02%

The percentage of cancer related visit is minor, but they are more likely to be associated with 24 hour mortality and hospital admission.

The pattern of cancer related visits is not so much different from the one of non-cancer related visits to ER.

There could be racial disparity in cancer related ER visits, but we need more study on this issue.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

Be prepared for the practicum and try to contact as soon as possible.

Clearly identify your role in the project so that you can use your time and effort more efficiently.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
**MD Anderson
Cancer Center**
Making Cancer History®



Cancer related ER visits in Harris County Hospital Based Emergency Rooms in 2010. -Min Ji Kwak

For the Fall 2014 semester, I participated in a project in the department of emergency medicine at MD Anderson Cancer Center. My main role in this project was to conduct an analysis of a population based data from 26 hospital based emergency rooms and prepare for a manuscript for publication.

The purpose of the study is to take a snapshot of the cancer patients' emergency room visits.

Public Health Significance

The analysis showed that cancer related visits accounts 0.02 % of the total ER visits in Harris County. Despite the small portion of visits, cancer related ER visits need more attention, as they are more likely to be associated with 24 hour mortality and hospital admission. Considering their more chances of adverse health outcome or more utilization of

high cost health care resources, being aware of their basic characteristics is important.

It is also noteworthy that while the overall incidence of all cancer is higher among the African American population, actual cancer related visit among them was lower than Caucasian group. It could be another form of racial disparity, or it could be a reflection of mistrust in minor group. Definitely, this is an area that calls for more research in the future and may have significant public health impact.

Lessons Learned

While preparing for the manuscript, I had to do the analysis and clean the data, which taught me the ability to handle a large dataset and draw a result that has significant impact on public health

<http://www.mdanderson.org/education-and-research/departments-programs-and-labs/departments-and-divisions/emergency-medicine/mda-ec-small.jpg>
<http://www.lakewayregional.com/uploads/services/home-page-and-services-er-er-sign.jpg>
<http://www.harriscountytexas.gov/layout/menu/logo-b.png>
<http://www.mdanderson.org/resources/static/img/logo.gif>

An Interprofessional Education Project

UIW Team for Kids

- Power of health care professional students learning from each other
- Power of students helping communities
- Power of teaching parents and children

Lessons Learned

- *Prepare, prepare, prepare*
- *Stay organized*
- *Keep focused on the community needs*
- *Evidence-based practice works!*

Advice for Future Practicum Students

- Recruitment of participants requires diligence and time – keep trying and don't give up.
- Remember what you have learned!



UIW Pharmacy Student explaining an Asthma Action Plan to a young father.

Photo courtesy of UIW Ila Faye Miller School of Nursing & Health Professions.

Student teams make a difference in the community!

By: Linda Hook, MSN, RN

Childhood asthma rates in San Antonio are above the Healthy People 2020 goal (www.dshs.state.tx.us) and curbing obesity rates is also a major population challenge. At the same time, academic institutions are tasked with preparing health professionals that are ready to work together to solve complex health issues. University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) Team for Kids: Asthma and Obesity project, an interprofessional effort, was aimed at 30 families whose children have been diagnosed with asthma and attend a SA Promise Zone Head Start

In my role as the project manager, I was responsible for implementation, evaluation, including on-boarding students, initiating contracts, and recruiting families. United Way SA, the funder, required interim and final reports as well as a presentation to the community advisory committee. The student teams encountered issues of health literacy, health disparities, and environmental concerns. The UIW faculty demonstrated the value in creating an interprofessional practice opportunity outside of a typical clinical rotation.

Public Health Significance

Essential #8: Assure a competent public and personal health care workforce.

Future healthcare professionals must be prepared to work with individuals living in communities who strive for good health and manage a chronic disease. UIW Team for Kids provided an opportunity for students to work with other health professional students and practice population-based competencies. UIW Team for Kids consisted of students from UIW Nursing and Pharmacy Schools and University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Respiratory Care.

The project consisted of 4-weekly small-group asthma and obesity education sessions with pre-and-post environmental home assessment. The student teams led the small group sessions and performed environmental in-home assessments. The students used an evidence-based curriculum, *WeeBreathers* (www.aafa.org) and an in-home asthma checklist (www.epa.gov). In addition, the students developed teaching aids specific to the needs of the families. **A WIN-WIN!** Students and families learn. The community moves forward.

Medical Homes: Detained Adolescent Youth



Harris County Juvenile Justice Center (Downtown Houston)

Photo: <http://h-town-visually.blogspot.com/>

Special events/ duties during your practicum

- The chance to interact with youth was a very humbling experience.
- The opportunity to meet with various health providers and understand their concerns for youth was enlightening.

Lessons Learned [OR] Advice for Future Students

- Your ideas could lead to something phenomenal. Don't be afraid to share them!
- This is a wonderful opportunity to exercise your leadership skills and creativity. Go for it!

Implementation Plan for Detained Adolescent Youth

By: **Vanessa Nicholson**

During my time served at my practicum, I worked as the CATCH Implementation Grant Writer. The grant was a continuation project that involved linking detained adolescent youth to medical homes upon their release from the Harris County Juvenile Justice Center. Part of my job was to propose strategies for linkage to care and justify the need for this public health issue to be addressed. Detained adolescent youth were found to be at a higher risk of acquiring

negative health outcomes relating to substance abuse, mental health, and sexual health compared to their peers. Although previous efforts had been made to link the youth to care, these efforts were not found to be sustainable. In addition to the grant being completed, I also proposed a coalition board that would work on behalf of the youth to maintain collaboration between UT Medical School staff, medical home clinic organizations, and other partners after the six-month duration period of the project.

Public Health Significance

I had the opportunity to practice skills reflecting essential public health services through my practicum experience. For example, part of my duty was to establish partnerships between our team and community members, including health providers. To fulfill this task, I would set up meetings with health providers to educate and inform them of our goal of linking detained youth to medical homes. I would ask details about the services currently offered to the youth to identify and investigate existing barriers. To gain a deeper understanding, focus groups involving input from parents of the detained

youth took place. The information gathered from the meetings was included in the grant to justify the importance of assisting the target population. The establishment of the coalition proposed the goal of providing a friendly atmosphere for health providers, legal guardians, and youth to discuss and share observed challenges and barriers faced by the youth. Following their discussions, it is expected for the selected coalition members to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of their health services regarding their services as they relate to the youth's health outcomes.

"It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver."

~ Mahatma Gandhi

Photo: <http://impfashion.com/health-quotes/>

For more information regarding
The University of Texas School of Public Health,
Office of Public Health Practice
and the practicum program, please visit:
<https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/practicum/>