

Public Health Practice



Stories from the Field

The University of Texas School of Public Health
Student Practicum Experiences
Spring 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 thirteenth-edition e-magazine showcases student practicum experiences throughout the Spring 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: 6

Hours per Week per Student	Approximately 12
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Divisions	2
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Student

Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences

Initiating Effective Collaboration	Adeboye Adeniyi
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E-Cigarette Use	Kathleen Case
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Management, Policy & Community Health

Community Asset Mapping	Titilola Balogun
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Aflatoxin Exposure in South Texas	Nicole Jaime
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Evaluation. Injury Prevention. Infants	Charles Shumate
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Tobacco Control	Richard Wettstein
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Initiating Effective Collaboration

Practicum Highlights

- Assist with participant recruitment for ISHKonnect bilateral HIV-prevention study
- STATA do file created to run models to test the study hypotheses
- Collaborate with colleagues at the University of Minnesota to prepare and submit manuscript for publication

Ready to work hard and to learn new skill

Think out of the box and be practical by looking for opportunity to practicalize, in real life, knowledge/skills gained in class



Cue to innovation
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Substance use and Sexual Harm Reduction Strategies of Methamphetamine-Using MSM and Inject Drugs Co-authored by Adeboye Adeniyi

Learnt basic and advanced STATA commands

Picked up skills on practical knowledge and its application on dataset management

Created clean STATA do-file for manuscript data analysis.

HIV Prevention among MSM

Quantitative and Qualitative Studies

Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

ISHKonnect is a bilateral HIV-prevention study

Manuscript, co-authored and submitted for publication

If you're able to share, what were the major findings or results?

methamphetamine-using MSM who inject drugs engaged in more substance-using harm reduction strategies than sexual harm reduction strategies

Strategizing effective innovative collaboration to re-initiate collaborative network of Baylor international Pediatric Aids Initiative (BIPAI) with a credible state Government in Nigeria in conjunction with identified Nigerian-based NGO and teaching hospitals. This is an opportunity to practicalize class room lesson learnt on effective collaboration BIPAI is not operating. BIPAI, through its network of clinical center of excellence could help mitigate the rising prevalence and transmission of HIV among pediatrics age group in Nigeria

E-Cigarette Use



Example of an e-cigarette. Source: <http://www.ldjackson.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/e-cigarettes.jpg>

Formative research to develop and evaluate messages about e-cigarettes.

By: Kathleen Case

For my practicum, I worked with Dr. Michael Mackert at the University of Texas School of Advertising and Public Relations to develop a grant for studying e-cigarette use in college students. Specifically, we are interested in identifying the determinants of e-cigarette use and creating health messages that address these determinants. In addition, I worked with Dr. Mackert and his research team on another study that will examine attitudes and perceptions regarding mammography screening in college students.

Highlights of my practicum

- Worked with a multi-disciplinary team to develop a study regarding attitudes toward mammography in college students.
- Developed a micro-grant to 1) identify determinants of e-cigarette use and 2) develop theory-based health messages to educate students about e-cigarettes.

Public Health Significance

Due to the rising popularity of e-cigarettes in youth and young adults^{1, 2}, and the lack of information regarding the long-term health consequences of e-cigarette use³, research is needed to identify determinants of use in college students. Given the lack of regulations regarding marketing of e-cigarettes, companies are currently advertising their products on television, radio and the Internet.⁴ E-cigarette companies also advertise on social media websites like Facebook and Twitter, which have a large number of young adult users.⁵ The heavy promotion of e-cigarettes is likely to increase the prevalence of e-cigarette use in young adults, as previous research indicates that advertising of tobacco products is causally associated with tobacco use in youth and young adults.⁶

My practicum relates to the Public Health Essential Services specified by APHA in that the goal of the micro-grant is to research determinants of e-cigarette use and to develop theory-based messages and materials that educate college students about e-cigarettes. Therefore, my practicum addresses the Public Health Essential Service of "Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems."

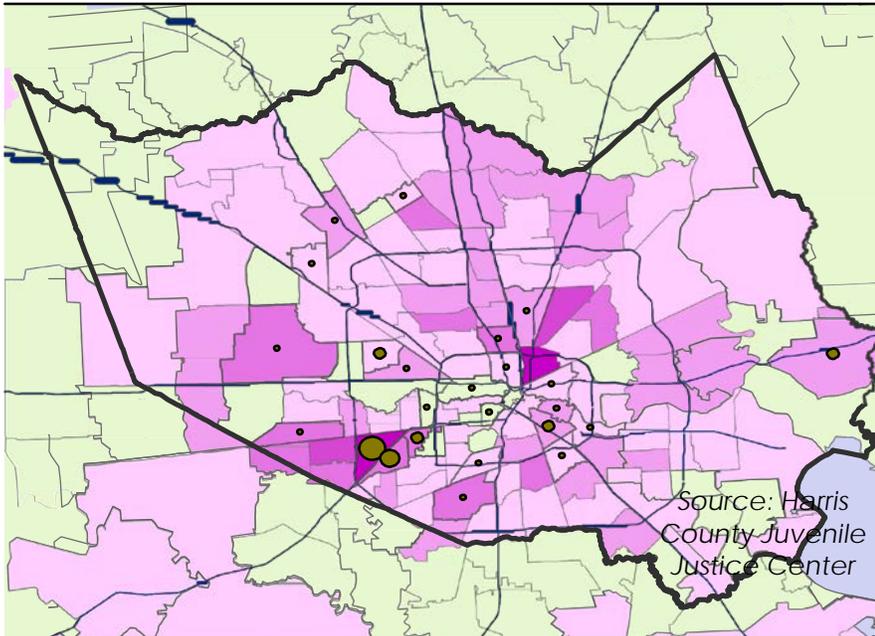
Lessons Learned

It's important to be flexible! The initial goal of my practicum was to work on a study that would promote mammography in low income populations. However, given recent research questioning the efficacy of mammograms, the study was cancelled. Ultimately, we worked to find a project that would interest both me and my practicum advisor.



Blu e-cigarette ad. Source: <http://i1.ytimg.com/vi/-3-Enr2qZmA/0.jpg>

COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING



MEDICAL HOMES FOR DETAINED YOUTH

By: Titilola Balogun

Many incarcerated youth have undiagnosed or poorly managed health conditions because they have no primary care physician.

The purpose of the medical homes for detained youth project is to link youth detained at the Harris County Juvenile Detention Center to medical

homes in their neighborhoods in order to enhance the continuity of their care outside the detention center.

I created a database of clinics in Houston that can serve as medical homes for youth; geo-mapped these clinics using GIS and matched them with the addresses where detained youth reside.

Public Health Significance

UT Physicians and the Harris County Juvenile Justice Center together provide these Essential Services of Public Health:

- Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
- Inform educate and empower people about health issues
- Link people to needed personal health services
- Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

Special duties during my practicum

- I interacted with detained youth inside the juvenile detention center
- I participated in the geocoding street level data

Advice for Future Students

Choose a practicum based on your interests, and one that will challenge you to learn new skills



Harris County Juvenile Justice Center
Source: www.google.com

Aflatoxin Exposure in South Texas



Chemical structure for Aflatoxin B₁, which is commonly found in foods like peanuts and corn.

Photo Source: <https://www.llnl.gov/news/newsreleases/2010/NR-10-01-03.html>

Special events/ duties during your practicum

- I had the opportunity to meet world-renowned experts in molecular toxicology and food safety.
- I applied statistical theory learned in the classroom.

Advice for Future Students

- Identify a shared goal amongst you and an institution, and work with someone who is willing to mentor you in developing certain skills. Both parties will benefit, and you will have gained competencies that will carry you throughout your career.



Aspergillus flavus is one type of fungus that produces aflatoxin.

Photo Source: <http://www.schoolproject2.myeweb site.com/photos/fungi/aspergillus-flavus.jpg.html>

Dietary sources of Aflatoxin Exposure in South Texas

By: Nicole Jaime

I analyzed data from a study conducted by the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics (DEB) at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, which investigated dietary correlates of aflatoxin exposure.

Aflatoxin is found in foods and is the most potent hepatocarcinogen known. With liver cancer rates on the rise, and Hispanics being

disproportionately affected, studying aflatoxin in the South Texas population can inform community interventions to potentially reduce exposure to this cancer-causing agent.

Working with my preceptor, I analyzed data and produced an abstract and a grant. Throughout my practicum he ensured I had access to the staff and resources required to complete my work and guided me through the data analysis process.

Public Health Significance

The results of this practicum provide information on the health status of the community. Identifying which dietary factors are associated with this liver cancer risk factor can inform the community of the severity of this health hazard.

By offering this practicum, the DEB is working to assure a competent workforce that is ready to solve the public health challenges facing the city, state, and nation. The skills I gained have given me confidence in

my abilities to investigate health problems, conduct independent analyses, and educate the community about health hazards.

Study outcomes will inform when, where and how to involve the community in preventing exposure. Given his experience with community engagement in research, the Principal Investigator can work with community partners to design interventions that reach the target populations across Bexar County.

Evaluation. Injury Prevention. Infants



Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is the leading cause of child abuse death in the U.S. among children <1 year.

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/sbs.html>

Honing Evaluation Consulting Skills

By: Charles Shumate

During this spring semester, I interned at Dell Children's Hospital Trauma Services in Austin, Texas. Since 2003, Dell Children's Medical Center has treated over 220 SBS cases. Research shows that approximately ¼ of these infants die of their injuries. Those that live suffer severe brain damage, blindness, and seizures. Lifetime treatment, rehabilitation, and custodial care costs of these infants can exceed \$1 million per case.

By incorporating lessons learned from the existing pilot programs and the relevance of expanding PURPLE to a younger Latina population, Trauma Research is poised to establish a manageable multi-stage

evaluation plan for the Period of PURPLE Crying expansion. The plan would include assessment of implementation process, knowledge, behaviors, and SBS incidence community-wide.

The final product of the experience was a draft IRB proposal, which Trauma is modifying to submit to their institutional review board to expand their existing pilot program.

Practicum Duties

- Participated in discovery and review of the existing PURPLE program
- Co-developed an evaluative research protocol

Public Health Significance

Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.

The Public Health Essential Service(s) (PHES) that most closely relates to my practicum experience is evaluation. I utilized this practicum experience as a way to practice evaluation-consulting skills in an environment that would provide me feedback without the possibility of a loss of revenue.

Dell Children's Medical Center (DCMC), Trauma Research Program, is seeking to establish a comprehensive evaluation plan and explore future evaluative research related to a Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) Prevention campaign – The Period of PURPLE Crying.

Specifically, Trauma Services wants to expand the intervention to sites in their network that serves young adult moms and teens/teen moms who are Latina. However, the original PURPLE program was not developed with this audience in mind. It is important to develop targeted a targeted evaluation plan including the examination of the acceptability and appropriateness of expanding the intervention to the population above before implementation.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

Chose a topic and site that is out of your comfort zone and be an active participant in designing your practicum experience.

FRUSTRATED
WITH YOUR BABY'S CRYING?



The National Center for Shaken Baby Syndrome developed The Period of PURPLE Crying, an SBS prevention program, based on 30 years of research and extensive evaluation. This evidence based program focuses on peak infant crying as the primary trigger for SBS perpetration. This program provides tools and messaging to educate new parents and normalize expectations around infant crying. *Image from <http://purplecrying.info/> accessed on 4/21/14*

Tobacco Control

Practicum Highlights

- Develop Range of Objectives for the new profession in Tobacco Regulatory Control Scientist
- Review and edit Survey for distribution to recognized leaders in Tobacco Control

Advice for Future Practicum Students

- Identify your practicum project early
- Establish timeline to complete all practicum preparation and setup well prior to the semester break.
- Systematically work through the practicum check lists



TCORS: Constructing a New Anti-Tobacco Workforce

By: Richard Wettstein

In 2013 the NIH provided a \$53 million dollar grant to establish fourteen Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science. A major goal of this project is to establish a new profession in Tobacco Regulatory Science. Dr. Kelder with the Tobacco Center of Regulatory Science on Youth and Young Adults, housed at the Austin Regional Campus of the UTSPH is charged with establishing the competencies for this profession that

relate to youth and young adults.

My practicum is focused on using the Surgeon General's 2012 report on Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults to establish a list of competencies relating to this topic.

These competencies are being placed in a Survey to be distributed among all 14 TCORS leaders. Those surveyed will vote on which competencies to include for new profession.

Public Health Significance

This practicum was really focused on the fifth of the ten Essential Services of Public Health. That is:

5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.

The establishment of a new profession that is focused on the regulating and reducing tobacco use, particularly among youth and young adults, will directly support the development of policies and plans that impact individual and community health efforts

Tobacco currently is the number one cause of death in America, hiding behind labels such as CVD, cancer, and COPD.

Given the role of tobacco in death and disability in America, the potential impact of establishing this new profession to combat tobacco could/should have an enormous public health impact.

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/>