Public Health Practice

Stories from the Field
The University of Texas School of Public Health
Student Practicum Experiences
Summer 2012 – International
The practicum experience is an integral part of the MPH curriculum. 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 eighth-edition e-magazine showcases student practicum experiences throughout the Summer 2012 semester. (Prior semesters may be accessed through the Practicum e-Mag link, on the Office of Public Health Practice website.)
# Practicum Topics

Serving Size: 1 Practicum per Student  
Servings per e-Magazine: 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continents/Regions</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countries</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## International Practicum Experiences

### AFRICA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Sanitation &amp; Hygiene</td>
<td>Kelsey Bryant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Andrea Antwi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Sarah Njue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Maternal &amp; Child Health</td>
<td>Hitomi Hayashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Maternal &amp; Child Health</td>
<td>Divina Oweis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Maternal &amp; Child Health</td>
<td>Serena Rodriguez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Maternal &amp; Child Health</td>
<td>Dara Schmidt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Maternal &amp; Child Health</td>
<td>Paul Tumbu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ASIA/MIDDLE EAST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Congenital Heart Defects</td>
<td>Alicia Lay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Audrie Chavez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Erline Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Thai Health Care System</td>
<td>Nicole Nicksic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EUROPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Pay for Performance &amp; Physician Burn-Out</td>
<td>Morgan Parrish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NORTH AMERICA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Angelii Gomez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Arsenic Methylation Efficiency</td>
<td>Mónica Siañez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Katie Powell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCEANIA</td>
<td>New Zealand: Questionnaire Development</td>
<td>Amanda Waclawczyk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH AMERICA</td>
<td>Ecuador: Women’s Health</td>
<td>Stephanie Garrett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venezuela: Breastfeeding Course</td>
<td>Silvia Brandt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Health Significance

This survey falls into the “Assessment” category of the 3 essential services of public health. Before policy can be developed or change can be observed and insured, an assessment must be conducted. With a problem as broad as poor water, sanitation, and hygiene, measures must be taken to best understand the factors influencing the problem to best address it. In any effort, efficiency and well-planned uses of resources are extremely important. We live in a world filled with inequalities with massive potentials for change. However, any lasting change requires careful research, planning, and implementation. No one plan, project, or intervention functions the same in different communities. Because of this, the assessment phase of any sort of public health endeavor is incredibly important. Defining and reporting a problem is only the first step. Understanding the community and cultural factors is just as important. From there, interventions can be developed, and health improvements can happen.

WASH in Aleta Wondo, Ethiopia

By: Kelsey Bryant

Aleta Wondo is a community of coffee farmers in the Sidama region of Ethiopia. Like many developing nations, Ethiopia lacks consistent access to clean water. Because of this, many preventable diseases have increased prevalence. Furthermore, the population lacks an understanding of basic hand hygiene. The combination of poor knowledge, and little access to clean water results in a community with a huge potential for change with carefully planned interventions. I conducted a baseline survey on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices concerning water, sanitation, and hygiene. Very few responders had a working knowledge of the transmission of water-borne diseases, when it is important to wash hands, or the ingredients for oral-rehydration therapy. The community would likely benefit from a health-education project.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Aleta Wondo, Ethiopia

Visit individual homes in the community

• Spent 30-45 minutes with each head of household discussing the community, their perceptions, and WASH knowledge.
• Learned a great deal about Ethiopian culture from the home visits and speaking with translators who were university students.

Drink the coffee!

• Culture is a huge part of international public health, and coffee is a huge part of Ethiopian culture. It is prepared in a ceremony each day, at least twice a day, and it brings family and friends together.

Visitors Huts, Common River. Photo courtesy of Kelsey Bryant

Visited individual homes in the community

• Spent 30-45 minutes with each head of household discussing the community, their perceptions, and WASH knowledge.
• Learned a great deal about Ethiopian culture from the home visits and speaking with translators who were university students.

Typical Latrine in Aleta Wondo. Photo Courtesy of Kelsey Bryant

Summer 2012 • Kelsey Bryant • Ethiopia • Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
HIV/AIDS Prevention

HIV/AIDS Testing & Counseling in Pregnant Women and Community Outreach among Female Commercial Sex Workers and their partners in Ghana

By: Andrea Antwi

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV/AIDS continues to affect individuals worldwide; however, Sub-Saharan Africa bears the greatest burden. It is reported that approximately 68% of the world’s people living with HIV (PLHIV) reside in Sub-Saharan Africa a region with only 12% of the world’s population.

Due to the fact that HIV/AIDS continues to plague Africa the Central Regional Hospital as well as the Ghana-West Africa Program to Combat AIDS and STI work tirelessly to control and reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS and STIs in Ghana through (1) testing and counseling of pregnant women as well as the general population (2) health education on the topic of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (3) community outreach programs and events and (4) condom promotion and sales.

I spent this summer working with the Central Regional Hospital, in which I provided testing and counseling to pregnant women in the hopes of preventing mother to child transmission of HIV and other STIs such as Hepatitis B and Syphilis. During, this time I also provided support to women who were greatly affected by the stigma and discrimination they encountered for either being HIV infected or simply suspected of being HIV infected.

I also interned with WAPCAS in Tema and Accra Ghana. Here I spent most of my time in the community interacting with female sex workers, their non-paying customers, indirect female sex workers and the community at large due to the fact that FSWS along with their clients and non-paying customers contribute greatly to the HIV epidemic in Ghana. I spent each day venturing out into the “field” with the peer educators that were assigned to the Tema Team and the Accra Team. We delivered messages of STIs, ABCS, and testing and counseling as well as promoted and sold condoms to female sex workers and their non-paying customers. Moreover, I wrote weekly reports on the progress of the teams as well as assisted the Project Officer with reporting. Furthermore, I inspected the peer educators daily logs and notebooks for accuracy and discrepancies. Lastly, I conducted research on workplace risks and dangers faced by female sex workers.

Public Health Significance

Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.

- At the Central Regional Hospital we informed clients of their HIV status among other STIs. In addition, to educating clients on prevention, transmission, healthy behaviors and life after being infected with HIV or other STIs.
- At WAPCAS we educated our target population on HIV and other STIs, as well as the importance of correctly and consistently using condoms; which empowered clients to take control of not only their sex lives but their health as well.

Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.

- Peer educators continuously linked members of the target population to clinics and drop in centers where they were able to get testing, counseling, and treatment among other services.

“Be open-minded. Accept others for who they are regardless of occupation, HIV status, disease status, etc. for stigma and discrimination scars”.

Special events/ duties/highlights during your practicum

- Attended a three training workshop on HIV/AIDS with the Bank of Ghana employees.
- Interacted with Female Sex Workers, their non-paying partners and indirect female sex workers.
- Accompanied peer educators on a night activity to provide educational information, condoms and lubricants to female sex workers.
HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

PHARMACY MAPPING IN TANZANIA

By: SARAH NJUE

I had the privilege of working as a research assistant for the Tanzania Aids Prevention Program (TAPP). The Tanzania Aids Prevention Program (TAPP) is an organization geared towards reducing HIV/AIDS transmission among people who inject drugs (PWID).

My main duty as a research assistant was pharmacy mapping. My main focus was on syringes sold in pharmacies. I visited pharmacies in Dar es Salaam in order to find out the types of syringes sold, their prices, who buys them, among those who buy them do they encounter People who Inject drugs (PWID), is a prescription needed to buy a syringe and finally are the employees open to education concerning safe syringe practices and the idea of a Needle exchange Program (NEP). My final product includes a spreadsheet of the data collected during research.

Special events/duties/highlights during your practicum
- I had the opportunity of participating in World Drugs Day during my practicum experience.
- I also had the privilege of working with an outstanding team that truly dedicated to helping those who struggle with injecting drugs.

Public Health Significance

My practicum was aimed at determining the role pharmacists play in supporting HIV Prevention among people who inject drugs (PWID) and identify possible future collaborative functions they are interested in, especially in regards to a syringe exchange program.

The Public Health Essential Service (PHES) that is most closely related to my practicum experience is; mobilizing community partnerships in order to identify and solve health problems.

The core functions of public health represented by TAPP include: Assessment; TAPP consistently monitors areas known for high drug use through mapping. The health of those individuals who inject drugs is also monitored at the methadone clinic. Policy development; Community outreach workers at TAPP inform, educate and empower PWID on the disadvantages of drug use and the dangers involved in sharing syringes such as the transmission of blood borne disease such as HIV and hepatitis C. Mobilizing community partnerships is an important ingredient to TAPP’s success. Assurance; Link to/ provide care - TAPP provides mobile clinics which provide HIV testing and counseling for those in the community, as well as the methadone clinic that provides Methadone-Based Medication Assisted Therapy exclusively for those struggling with heroine use.

Lessons Learned

I have learned the importance of familiarizing oneself with any cultural differences while conducting research, as well as being mindful of any language barriers.
Public Health Significance

The above described tasks that I took on as a SAFE intern, including data collection, evaluation and feasibility assessment projects, fit the core functions and essential services of assessment, policy development, and assurance. More specifically, these projects included elements of evaluating community health through collecting hospital data on maternal and child health and health services, searching for insight into a public health problems related to child and maternal health, as well as informing, educating and empowering the community regarding health topics and mobilizing community partnerships through our interactions with the Iganga community groups. While evaluation through questions and data collection did occupy a high priority spot, the other above mentioned essential services were vital and substantial goals within these projects.

Evaluation & Assessment of SAFE Programs

Safe Mothers Safe Babies: Impact and the Way Forward

By: Hitomi Hayashi

I worked alongside fellow volunteers in creating a qualitative questionnaire to evaluate and gather community opinions and experiences with SAFE existing and tentative programs. These programs include those listed on the right panel. The final product was a 50 item survey which was administered to the community groups, also listed in the right panel.

Overall findings from evaluation questions for existing programs show overall positive experiences and opinions of SAFE related programs, thus providing support for the maintenance of these programs.

Findings from feasibility and needs assessment for the Gnut and Save for Safe programs reveal high community need and support for both programs.

Community Groups:
- Kalalu Women’s Voice
- Balibonelawo
- Buga Bakyie
- Kameda
- First Aider’s
- Mabeda
- Bubeda

Existing Programs:
- Solar Suitcase Program
- Safe Mama Kits
- E-Ranger Program

Proposed Programs:
- Gnut Program
- Save for Safe

Advice for Future Interns

Keep an open mind and always look for ways to improve even if it means taking a couple steps back in a project, because fixing mistakes now will mean a better product later.

Image of local Ugandan woman holding her child.

Photo courtesy of: Anne Sherwood (2009)
Safe Delivery Kits In Uganda

Promotion of safe delivery in Uganda: A maternal and Child Health project

By: Divina Oweis

I worked with a non-profit organization called Safe mothers Safe Babies to help improve maternal and child health in the district of Iganga in Uganda. My main project was called SAFE Mama kits. These kits contain the basic supplies necessary for a clean, vaginal delivery. I worked in country for a month to increase access to the kits. Additionally, I helped launch an income generating business for a community group that is interested in promoting this project.

With a group known as MABEDA, I formulated a yearly business plan to help start the business. Also I helped train and formulate three committees: business committee, assembling committee and a promotion committee, to get the business running.

Public Health Significance

This experience was able to introduce the community groups to the essential services of public health. Mainly, with this project I was able to inform, educate and empower the villages about the maternal and child health problems that arise from unsafe delivery. The community members became well trained and informed on how to provide these kits to the community to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and fatalities. Additionally, new partnerships between these individuals and the health centers were formed. We were able to create a nonprofit agreement between MABEDA and Bukateka health center, in which the group can use the sanitary conditions of the center for assembling the kits, while the center has access to buy these kits for their patients.

Highlights of events

June 21st 2012: First training and kit assembly meeting. The first 25 kits were made and the group was fully trained to assemble sterilized kits.

June 23rd 2012: Health Fair at Ibulanko Health Center where the kits were launched for the first time.

June 26th 2012 – Health Fair Luberia health center where the kits were launched as well.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

- Be well prepared before an international practicum for living simply and being culturally sensitive
- Be patient as accomplishing things internationally takes a long time
- Be open to change of environment and working with different personalities
- Enjoy the new country and everything it offers
- Have fun it’s a learning experience
Safe Mothers Safe Babies: PhotoVoice Project

Capturing Maternal and Child Health in Kalalu Parish, Uganda

By: Serena Rodriguez

Safe Mothers Safe Babies collaborates with community groups and health centers in rural Kalalu Parish, Uganda to address maternal and child health (MCH) issues in the community. I led the PhotoVoice Project which gave community members an opportunity to talk about MCH in a different way - through photographs.

Participants were issued cameras and charged with photographing MCH issues they felt were important.

Participants captioned each photo and detailed its importance. Two community exhibitions offered opportunities for the wider community to view the photographs and to discuss barriers to good MCH, community strengths, and potential solutions.

In the end, each community group received one camera so that they can work with Safe’s In-Country Program Manager and continue the dialogue that will inform future programs.

Public Health Significance

A key aim of the PhotoVoice Project was to empower participants to talk about and to define maternal and child health in their community.

Participants photographed MCH issues including barriers to good MCH and the strengths of their community in overcoming those barriers. For example, one participant spoke about the importance of proper infant nutrition, and she photographed a mother breastfeeding her baby (above).

The photographs were exhibited in health fairs to inform and educate the wider community while promoting dialogue amongst leaders and community members.

The PhotoVoice Project worked well within Safe’s “participatory development” framework. By collaborating with community members to identify problems, prioritize, and develop solutions, Safe programs are culturally appropriate and sustainable.

PhotoVoice Project Highlights:

- 10 women, including 1 midwife, and 3 men from 6 community groups participated in the project
- 2 community health fairs exhibited the photos and drew over 400 community members

Keys to a Successful Project:

- Introduce the project to the community, ask for ideas, listen to feedback, adapt as needed, and work one-on-one with participants and community leaders to build a strong project together

Photo taken by project participant Beatrice Bagaga who explained, “I wanted to show the importance of breastfeeding.”

Handing out cameras to participants from Kalalu Women’s Voice and Balibonarewo. Photo by Dara Schmitt.

All participants consented to having their photos taken and published internationally.
Public Health Significance

Safe Mothers, Safe Babies serves the essential service of Monitoring, as well as, Diagnosis and Investigation, because they collect data concerning maternal and child health in areas they cover in order to determine if their programs have made any improvement in health center attendance and performance. One of my assignments was to gather information from health centers, as well as, relevant information from government authorities.

The organization also caters to policy development in its work with the community groups. SAFE provides the groups with training concerning various health related topics, which empowers them to disseminate that information throughout the community. Specifically, I worked with the group MABEDA to implement a business plan that we developed together and helped them create a sustainable income-generating project.

SAFE works with the evaluation essential service in that it is currently evaluating two of its programs that they initiated last year, the E-Ranger project and the Solar Suitcase project. In this regard I collected information on possible controls to compare against the health centers that received the solar suitcases last year. I also worked closely with MABEDA to develop training and certification programs for the assembly of the SAFE Mama Kits, in order to assure that the kits assembled are sanitary.

Lessons Learned

During my time spent in rural Uganda I realized how important it is to be as flexible as possible when conducting work in a different cultural setting. It is important to understand the differences between yourself and the groups you are working with in order to minimize misunderstandings and foster good rapport on both ends.

Special events

- We successfully managed to develop business and training plans with one of the local community groups in order for them to assemble and sell kits containing all the necessary supplies for a sterile birthing, which are desperately needed in rural Uganda.
- With 7 of the local community groups we were able to organize two health fairs which provided HIV/AIDS testing, deworming medication and other educational services.

Improving Maternal and Child Health in Eastern Rural Uganda

By: Dara Schmitt

For my Practicum opportunity I was able to work with Safe Mothers, Safe Babies in the Kalalu Parish of Uganda for 7 weeks. The main goal of the organization is to work directly with people in the villages and health centers to empower them to take an active role in their own health and the health of the members of their community.

While in country I collected baseline data on health centers and hospitals in Uganda, as well as, general information on maternal and child health in the country. This data will be used to select health centers to serve as controls to evaluate the solar project SAFE has in place and to evaluate the effectiveness of other programs they have initiated.

I also worked closely with 7 local community groups affiliated with SAFE and documented their activities and outreaches in order to determine their effect in the community.

Lessons Learned

- During my time spent in rural Uganda I realized how important it is to be as flexible as possible when conducting work in a different cultural setting. It is important to understand the differences between yourself and the groups you are working with in order to minimize misunderstandings and foster good rapport on both ends.

Summer 2012 • Dara Schmitt • Uganda • Maternal and Child Health
Emergency Obstetric Response

**Practicum Highlights**

- Assessment of the usability of e-Ranger motorcycle ambulance by the rural community for emergency obstetric care.
- Reviewed the support of the community-based organizations (CBOs) to promote use of the e-Ranger motorcycle ambulance.

**Lessons Learned**

**Advice for Future Practicum Students**

- Success of any community project depends on their own involvement in decision making and implementation.
- Cost-sharing for any community project should put in consideration the most vulnerable group.
- Advice to future practicum students is not to ignore the voice of the people.

---

**Evaluation of the e-Ranger motorcycle ambulance in a community Health Center in Uganda.**

**By Paul Tumbu**

The e-Ranger motor cycle ambulance was initiated about a year ago by Safe Mothers Safe Babies Program in a community health facility in Iganga district, Uganda. This was an evaluation of its usability by the local community. It involved interviews with different stakeholders like the community health facility staff; the village health teams (VHTs) or community mobilizers, traditional birth attendants (TBAs), former e-ranger users and community drama groups. I reviewed the local drama performances for health message content particularly obstetric emergency response.

I organized and presided over meetings with the stakeholders for the e-Ranger ambulance project. I wrote a comprehensive report of my practicum experience with the e-ranger project. Generally, the e-Ranger project has been accepted by the community. However, we revised the amount contributed for gasoline to enable all eligible women use the e-Ranger ambulance.

**Public Health Significance**

My practicum experience was directly related to the following Essential Services of Public Health:

- Informed, educated, and empowered people about health issues. I educated the community about emergency response and empowered women to save for delivery.
- Mobilized community partnerships to identify and solve health problems. I guided in developing strategies by drama group to educate men about their involvement in emergency response.
- I enforced laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety. Reviewed the safety of mothers and their babies by TBAs and I recommended urgent training needs.
- Developed policies and worked with health facility management to plan for individual and community health activities.
- I linked people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care. Empowered the VHTs to integrate e-Ranger ambulance in other community programs.
- I evaluated effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.

---

**Practicum Highlights**

- Assessment of the usability of e-Ranger motorcycle ambulance by the rural community for emergency obstetric care.
- Reviewed the support of the community-based organizations (CBOs) to promote use of the e-Ranger motorcycle ambulance.

---

**Lessons Learned**

**Advice for Future Practicum Students**

- Success of any community project depends on their own involvement in decision making and implementation.
- Cost-sharing for any community project should put in consideration the most vulnerable group.
- Advice to future practicum students is not to ignore the voice of the people.

---

**Evaluation of the e-Ranger motorcycle ambulance in a community Health Center in Uganda.**

**By Paul Tumbu**

The e-Ranger motor cycle ambulance was initiated about a year ago by Safe Mothers Safe Babies Program in a community health facility in Iganga district, Uganda. This was an evaluation of its usability by the local community. It involved interviews with different stakeholders like the community health facility staff; the village health teams (VHTs) or community mobilizers, traditional birth attendants (TBAs), former e-ranger users and community drama groups. I reviewed the local drama performances for health message content particularly obstetric emergency response.

I organized and presided over meetings with the stakeholders for the e-Ranger ambulance project. I wrote a comprehensive report of my practicum experience with the e-ranger project. Generally, the e-Ranger project has been accepted by the community. However, we revised the amount contributed for gasoline to enable all eligible women use the e-Ranger ambulance.

**Public Health Significance**

My practicum experience was directly related to the following Essential Services of Public Health:

- Informed, educated, and empowered people about health issues. I educated the community about emergency response and empowered women to save for delivery.
- Mobilized community partnerships to identify and solve health problems. I guided in developing strategies by drama group to educate men about their involvement in emergency response.
- I enforced laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety. Reviewed the safety of mothers and their babies by TBAs and I recommended urgent training needs.
- Developed policies and worked with health facility management to plan for individual and community health activities.
- I linked people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care. Empowered the VHTs to integrate e-Ranger ambulance in other community programs.
- I evaluated effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.

---

**Practicum Highlights**

- Assessment of the usability of e-Ranger motorcycle ambulance by the rural community for emergency obstetric care.
- Reviewed the support of the community-based organizations (CBOs) to promote use of the e-Ranger motorcycle ambulance.

---

**Lessons Learned**

**Advice for Future Practicum Students**

- Success of any community project depends on their own involvement in decision making and implementation.
- Cost-sharing for any community project should put in consideration the most vulnerable group.
- Advice to future practicum students is not to ignore the voice of the people.
Public Health Significance

Under the Core Function of Assessment, PLC provides the Essential Services by organizing screenings of children for congenital heart defects. Alongside their partners, they have done research into the incidence of congenital heart defects, as well as to investigate the cause of the increased rate of congenital heart defects.

PLC achieves Policy Development through partnering with the Iraqi Government and other local NGOs to enable the delivery of life-saving heart surgeries to Iraqi children. Most recently they are developing a proposal to present to the Ministry of Health regarding the quality and availability of pediatric cardiac care.

The Assurance Core Function of public health is the most recent venture of PLC. They are developing a year-long fellowship program to train local doctors and nurses to assure a competent cardiac surgical workforce. They are also developing tools to evaluate the effectiveness, accessibility and quality of cardiac surgical services available to the Iraqi people.
Public Health Significance

The Public Health Essential Service (PHES) that most closely related to my practicum experience was number 2, diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.

Occupational injuries and diseases are one of the main burdens of disease in the working population in Bangkok, Thailand. Through this project, the economic impacts of occupational injuries can be measured, and areas for further research can be identified to prevent high morbidity and mortality rates due to occupational injuries.

The organization that I worked with, the Sirindhorn College of Public Health, trains future public health and health care professionals. The university conducts local research as well as projects to better the health of the community.

Special learning experiences during the practicum

- Part of the practicum also entailed visiting health care centers to learn more about Thailand’s health care system
- I was also able to participate in several school cultural and educational functions, which gave me opportunities to learn more about the beautiful Thai culture.

Advice for Future Students

- I recommend taking as much time as possible to research your practicum site and learn as much of the language as you can when doing an international practicum so that you can make the most of your experience when you get there!
Global Public Health

This practicum encompassed many practices of public health. We monitored the health status of Bangkok and Trang by focusing on occupational illness and injury to ensure that the issue was not accelerating at a hazardous level and was on the decline.

We were investigating the details of the issue by looking at rates in different professions and how different types of injuries played out long term.

We also evaluated the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal care by conducting our own research and exploring public health locations such as hospitals, public health colleges, and local health offices to draw conclusions.

We were also able to delve deeper into our research and evaluation by comparing Thailand’s health system to the United States which enabled us to take a closer look at the inner workings of both systems.

Occupational Morbidity and Mortality in Trang Province, Thailand

By: Erline Miller

I was based in rural Trang Province, Thailand. I chose this location because I wanted to learn more about Thailand’s health system and prominent issues.

I analyzed data gathered on occupational morbidity and mortality in Trang and Bangkok, Thailand. We also did a comparative systems study with Thailand and the United States’ health system.

We were given guidance to draw conclusions and tours of various public health locations by our preceptor.

I was involved with all three projects but focused on the Trang data analysis where I used biostatistics, epidemiology, and STATA to draw conclusions. The results were explicated in a final paper and presented using PowerPoint.

We found that males, aged 15-30, working in machinery were most likely to suffer from occupational morbidity and mortality in Trang Province, Thailand from 2007-2009.

Occupational Morbidity and Mortality in Trang Province,
Thailand

By: Erline Miller

I was based in rural Trang Province, Thailand. I chose this location because I wanted to learn more about Thailand’s health system and prominent issues.

I analyzed data gathered on occupational morbidity and mortality in Trang and Bangkok, Thailand. We also did a comparative systems study with Thailand and the United States’ health system.

We were given guidance to draw conclusions and tours of various public health locations by our preceptor.

I was involved with all three projects but focused on the Trang data analysis where I used biostatistics, epidemiology, and STATA to draw conclusions. The results were explicated in a final paper and presented using PowerPoint.

We found that males, aged 15-30, working in machinery were most likely to suffer from occupational morbidity and mortality in Trang Province, Thailand from 2007-2009.

Practicum
Highpoints

• Visiting with college students at our practicum site was stimulating as they were eager to learn about our public health experience as we were theirs.
• The cultural awareness we gained was priceless and life-altering.

Recommendations

• Always be culturally considerate, but do not hesitate to pre-establish all formalities so you can avoid confusion and miscommunication.
An American Perspective on Thai Health Care

By: Nicole Nicksic

During my five weeks from June to July at the Sirindhorn School of Public Health, I had the opportunity to work on three different projects and present to faculty about the Thai health care system. This project looked into the issues of insuring citizens in Thailand and in the US, and how Thailand has taken steps to overcome this problem.

Through literary reviews, tours of health care facilities and presentations and talks with health care personnel, I was able to gain perspective on the health care system in Thailand and apply the information I acquired to the US health care system. With the guidance of our mentor, I learned about the 30 baht scheme that lead to universal coverage in Thailand as well as how access to health care works.

In conclusion, universal health care is obtainable and can function well in any country, including developing nations. America can learn from Thailand's example and increase coverage to all citizens in addition to promoting public health.

Public Health Significance

Since this practicum involved both a public health college and health care facilities, most essential services of public health were shown or discussed during our time as interns. Since my specific project dealt with the health care system, the first two essential services relate directly to my practicum experience.

The first service, monitor community health problems, occurs in both the health care system as well as the public health office that we toured. The effective communication between the public health sector and the health care facilities enabled workers to determine what issues are occurring in the community.

The monitoring of the community also leads into the second service of diagnosing and investigating health issues. While the health services diagnose concerns, the public health sector directly investigates issues, such as with the flu epidemic.

In conclusion, the public health measures in Thailand are effective and expanding to increase promotion.
International Perspectives

Practicum Highlights

- Pay for Performance
- Physician Burnout
- International perspectives

Think Outside the Practicum

- The practicum is a tool to learn more about not only the work you are doing, but also more about what it is you plan to do. Do not be afraid to apply your interests to areas outside the confines of your practicum.

Globe & Stethoscope to symbolize a global perspective on health care systems.

Source: http://www.csc.com/nl/ds/40530-healthcare

Pay-for-Performance, Physician Burnout, and understanding global health systems

By: Morgan Parrish

At the practicum site of Radboud University in Nijmegen, Netherlands I was able to participate in research on pay-for-performance and physician burnout. The research project on pay-for-performance enabled me to gain experience in the construction of a paper for a conference and do research on this experimental type of program that is gaining popularity in the U.S. as well as other countries, such as the Netherlands. Physician Burnout was a secondary project where I have assisted in the research and the very beginning of the writing process for a paper that will be submitted for publication. In addition to these research opportunities I have gained experience in researching other health systems and forming presentations on these systems for the purpose of teaching medical students. Research has been done to better inform those who help inform policy makers as well as to better inform medical practitioners.

Public Health Significance

Research and education are the primary essential services involved within this internship opportunity. The research conducted on pay-for-performance looks into this innovative solution and critiques its usefulness as these experimental programs gain popularity though they may be harmful to health care systems. If this research is not produced in the literature then policy makers will not be making well-informed policy decisions based on evidence when creating these programs. The same consequences exist for the research being conducted on physician burnout and how that affects quality of care within a quasi-market; literature searches show there is limited information on this. Market mechanisms and physician burnout may be related and be negatively impacting quality of care and if the research is not conducted and then used to educate the public and policy makers then there again lies the risk of having policy decisions made without evidence. Finally, education is also a big part of this internship as material is produced so medical practitioners can understand various health care systems.
**Nutrition in Honduras**

**Medical Mission to Honduras**

By: Angelli Gomez

I went to Honduras with the Baylor Shoulder to Shoulder medical team and was able to assist physicians in examining and diagnosing patients and also evaluated the nutrition that a group of women were getting. The public health issue I worked on was nutrition. The approach that Baylor Shoulder to Shoulder took to address this issue was educating the women of a nearby town, Colomoncagua, about the importance of eating nutritious and healthy foods.

I was involved in a nutrition project, where I evaluated the extent to which a group of women in Santa Ana had access to nutritious food, and where I helped to educate women leaders in Colomoncagua about eating healthy. The final product I created for my practicum site was a nutrition presentation and an idea to the medical team committee about improving access to nutritious food in Santa Ana.

**Public Health Significance**

My practicum experience related to the Essential Services of Public Health because it helps monitors the health status of the community to identify health problems, it informs, educates, and empowers people about health issues, it mobilizes community partnerships to identify and solve health problems, it links people to needed personal health services when otherwise unavailable, and provides opportunities for researching new insights and solutions to health problems.

The Public Health Essential Service(s) (PHES) that most closely relates to my practicum experience is researching new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

My host organization contributes to public health because it provides health services in a rural area, it informs and advises people on ways to improve their health, and it allows research to occur in order to find innovation for improving health.

**Advice for Future Students**

- Carry a bottle of water wherever you go and always keep your valuables safe.

**Special events during my practicum**

- The medical team and I visited a waterfall near Colomoncagua
- We had movie nights
- We visited a ranch and got to ride a horse

**Summer 2012 • Angelli Gomez • Honduras • Nutrition**
Public Health Significance

The presence of arsenic in natural waters remains a global health concern, as chronic levels of arsenic exposure have been linked to cancerous and non-cancerous health outcomes. The degree of human toxicity depends on the metabolism of arsenic species, with some researchers noting inter-individual differences in the efficiency of elimination by age, gender, and to a less consistent extent, body mass indicators. The objective of our study was to explore the possible association between body mass indicators and an individual's ability to metabolize toxic forms of arsenic species. Data are from a study on breast cancer among women from the Lagunera region in Northern Mexico, an area known for water levels of arsenic well above both national, and global, recommendations.

I participated in the Mount Sinai International Exchange Program for Minority Students. Through this program, I was placed at the National Institute of Public Health in Cuernavaca, México for 10-weeks. At the INSP, I was matched with Lizbeth López-Carrillo, DrPH, a leading environmental health researcher. In collaboration with Dr. López-Carrillo and her team of researchers, I explored control data to examine arsenic methylation efficiency and its association to body mass indicators among women from Northern México. Following a review of the literature, we decided to go beyond exploring arsenic exposure and obesity alone, and use more specific measures: urinary concentrations as well as methylation efficiency; standard obesity criteria (BMI) as well as Body Adiposity Index (BAI), waist-to-hip ratio. The final product will be a manuscript that we will be sending to the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE).

Advice for Future Students

• Be genuinely open to learning, especially when you’re working on a topic outside your comfort zone.
• Ask questions, both to inquire and to confirm that you are approaching the topic in the best way.
• Make the most of your time: explore surrounding geographical areas whenever possible.
Improving Eating Habits in Rural Nicaragua

By: Katie Powell

Manna Project International Manna Project International (MPI) is a non-profit that utilizes the passion and energy of young people to empower developing international communities through hands-on learning and service in Managua, Nicaragua. I gathered information on the community and its nutritional needs. In creating a training program for volunteers to educate on basic topics, the product is resulted from assessing the faults in dietary habits and assuring those were met with activities and innovative techniques. Educating and empowering community members are the heart of this project. The hope is that fundamental, simple changes will occur to change the path of nutrition to a healthier, more holistic and happier lifestyle. My final project was a guide to nutrition education. The volunteers will use this manual to steer their empowerment and education of the community members to provide more nutritious and healthy foods for their families.

Public Health Significance

Initiating positive change through cultivating leadership skills and empowering Nicaraguans is an important part of the organization I worked for. This is also a part of assessing the health of the public. While creating a rapport with the community, information is also gathered to better serve members and create a healthier environment.

By collaborating and dialoging with the community in which they work, MPI engages the views of the beneficiaries directly. They also partner with other organizations in and around Managua. Pooling resources together creates a more effective and efficient ground for interventions to thrive and be sustainable. This fits nicely with assuring the health, while implementing programs with input from outside resources.

In hearing the issues that people in these communities face with regard to accessibility and affordability to feed their families well, it is important to listen. Preconceived notions are human nature and in public health, it is easy to blame the person. They are making the choice to live the way they do, so why should we care to help them? However, there are a myriad of factors influencing behavior, from environment, to policy to society.

It is more important that people change because they want to, because they believe in the result, not because you told them to and gave the tools to make it happen. Being successful for me is someone realizing they altered their life for the better on their own. Empowering others to be catalysts for change is always my goal.

Pearl of Wisdom

Always listen. You may be the ‘expert’, but the people you are helping have insight into their lives. What you think they need or want, may not always be true. Things are going to change, but be flexible. It will all work out!
Preventing Child Hospitalization

Audit of potentially modifiable risk factors for acute child hospital admissions in the Wellington Region

By: Amanda Waclawczyk

During my practicum I was involved in the development of a study that is exploring the prevalence of potentially avoidable hospitalization in children who are admitted to the Capital Coast DHB in Wellington, New Zealand. My specific role in this project was to develop the rapid assessment questionnaire that is being given to the children admitted to the hospital.

In order to develop the questionnaire, I attended relevant meetings and conferences, spoke with experts, read pertinent literature and researched past work on this topic.

The results of the study have not yet been analyzed, but I will be thoroughly analyzing the data once the study is complete.

Public Health Significance

My practicum experience was most closely related to the essential public health service of monitoring health status to identify community health problems. The objective of the questionnaire I developed was to identify the prevalence of factors (i.e. housing hazards/conditions, heating, or indoor pollution) that could be leading to an excess of potentially avoidable hospitalization in children.

My project contributes to public health because the data from the questionnaire will give insight into what factors are causing high child hospitalization rates. Additionally, this questionnaire can be adapted to fit other populations to determine factors leading to abnormal hospitalization rates, or these results can be the basis of a screening mechanism to target children who are more vulnerable to hospitalization.

Practicum Highlights

- Muffin meetings every Thursday!
- Attending a meeting by the Child Poverty Action Group over the potential effects of the newly released government budget.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

Pick a practicum topic related to what you would like to research because you will receive a great deal of knowledge on this topic that can make a thesis easier to write.

The team I worked with during my practicum.
Women’s Health in Rural Ecuador

Pregnant Teens Empowered by Prenatal Brochures

By: Stephanie Garrett

I worked at Centro Comunitario Patronato Provincial de Pichincha (CCPPP) in Tumbaco, Ecuador. CCPPP is a community health center with clinics for obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics, internal medicine, and dentistry. The center serves the rural city of Tumbaco by providing affordable clinics as well as by surveying the community to assess deficiencies in health care and implementing interventions to correct these issues. The providers at CCPPP also have active participation in the Ecuadorian government and lobby for effective positive changes for their community.

My project with CCPPP was to explore teen pregnancy in rural Ecuador and barriers to positive change. I found that there were many cultural and political barriers to improvement in this area.

Public Health Significance

CCPPP works to monitor and investigate health problems found in the community and then create interventions that inform, educate, and empower the community about these health issues. For example, the providers recognized a lack of continuity of care in prenatal care for pregnant women. This was leading to situations where women were not properly vaccinated or treated for conditions that are important during the prenatal and perinatal periods. To remedy this, CCPPP created brochures meant to be brought to and updated at each prenatal appointment.

I had the opportunity to distribute these brochures and teach women about their meaning and importance. It was great to see women bringing in their brochures to each appointment, as they seemed to really empower the women to be more informed about their pregnancies as well as their own health throughout the pregnancy.
Breastfeeding Promotion

Promoting breastfeeding advocacy by health professionals.

By: Silvia Brandt

During this summer of 2012, I was fortunate to obtain a practicum opportunity in my hometown of Caracas, Venezuela. I was a part of a multidisciplinary team at the Galacma Group, wherein we were responsible for designing and implementing a Postgraduate Course on Breastfeeding and Supplementary Infant Feeding Practices. It was a delightful learning experience for me to work in a team comprising of such talented and insightful individuals as well as interacting with the community members to better understand what the main barriers to breastfeeding are, in my country. We found that, one of the strongest barriers was the decreased advocacy of breastfeeding by health professionals. Thus, we developed our course curriculum with a special emphasis on teaching health professionals the importance of imparting breastfeeding education, the right educational content, the correct timing and methodology of providing information to expectant and new mothers on breastfeeding and supplementary feeding practices. We developed the course in an online format to promote higher participation rates among health professionals.

Public Health Significance

Assessment and assurance were the two public functions involved in this practicum experience.

Having put in all this effort in developing a course that would better equip the health professionals with all the necessary information required to educate the public on breastfeeding practices, we hope that it will help improve the rates of breastfeeding in my country.
For more information regarding The University of Texas School of Public Health, Office of Public Health Practice and the practicum program, please visit: http://sph.uth.tmc.edu/practicum/