

Public Health Practice



Stories from the Field

The University of Texas School of Public Health
Student Practicum Experiences
Fall 2011 – International

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 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 sixth-edition e-magazine showcases student practicum experiences throughout the Fall 2011 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: 5

Hours per Week per Student	Approximately 12
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Countries	5
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Student

International Practicum Experiences

Costa Rica: Community Health	Lisa Blackwell
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Denmark: Public Health Service	Julia Sundstrom
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Ethiopia: Reproductive Health	Semhar Fisseha
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Mexico: Millennium Development Goals	Luis Solis
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South Korea: Acculturative Stress	Diep-Thuy Ho
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Community Health in Costa Rica

Responsibilities & Achievements:

- ❖ Sought out local partnerships.
- ❖ Conducted a community health needs assessment.
- ❖ Researched, designed and implemented a health promotion campaign for the community.
- ❖ Conducted an evaluation and created summary report to direct future endeavors.

“When it comes to global health, there is no ‘them’...only ‘us.’ ”

Global Health Council



Rain moving in from the Pacific. Photo taken by Lisa Blackwell.

Assessing Community Health in Atenas, Costa Rica

By: Lisa Blackwell, MPH Candidate 2012

I had the good fortune to spend the past summer in Costa Rica. A volunteer organization, Institute for Field Research Expeditions, set up my work and housing assignments, and I lived with a host family to experience the entirety of life as a “Tica.”

The city in which I lived and worked was Atenas, a small town an hour outside of San Jose, surrounded by lush and misty coffee bush-covered mountains. The town felt safe, with familiar faces everywhere, and most things close enough to walk for those who would brave hiking hills in sultry heat and sudden thunderstorms!

Public Health Significance

Our primary goal was diagnosing and investigating health problems and health hazards specific to the community of Atenas. We gathered data on health problems endemic to Costa Rica, but further, we talked to practitioners, teachers, non-profit directors and average citizens about their personal concerns specific to their community.

Most of the families visited our booth because of the learning activities and

I partnered with Audrey Luoma, a Public Health graduate of Central Washington University, to perform a community health needs assessment. We worked with the community center, and sought out data from Cruz Roja and Ministerio de Salud. We identified several issues and created a campaign around those needs:

- Vector control in preventing dengue fever,
- Traffic safety,
- Youth drug and tobacco use,
- Vegetable consumption, and
- Lightening safety.

We developed education materials and created learning activities for a health fair in the center of town.

the prizes we had for children, but the adults read our brochures and talked to us about health and safety. We asked participants to answer a short survey and discovered additional topics of interest:

- The environment,
- Senior adult care, and
- Family communication.

Since our volunteer organization has ongoing projects in Atenas, we made a report of our findings in hopes of seeing future interns build on our research.

Denmark's Public Health Service



Source: <http://www.ssi.dk/English/PublicHealth.aspx>

The Danish Ministry of Interior and Health's Public Health Service (i.e. Statens Serum Institut) is a central, integrated part of national and international disease control.



SSI Internship/Practicum
Meetings & Lectures

Danish Food & Drug Administration and Department of Agriculture; Participants discussed recent food and water borne illnesses and infections in DK and the EU.

VTEC O104:H4 - The largest known outbreak of verocytotoxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (VTEC) infection in Europe occurred in Germany in May/June 2011.

World Health Organization; met with staff on vaccine preventable diseases and global health concerns

"When it comes to global health, there is no 'them'... only 'us.'"

Global Health Council

Think like a Dane...Denmark takes a global perspective on disease surveillance & outbreak investigations!

By: Julia Sundstrom

Statens Serum Institut (SSI) is a public enterprise and for over 100 years has been charged with ensuring the health of the citizens of Denmark against infectious diseases and congenital disorders.

Today the organization's responsibilities have been expanded to encompass the entire spectrum of public health from international collaboration on disease surveillance and outbreak investigations to vaccine research and production.

Public Health Significance

Surveillance - Outbreaks - Epidemiology - Infectious Disease - Vaccines - Biological Threats - Emergency Preparedness

Disease Surveillance & Outbreak Investigations – monitors infectious diseases and microorganisms, oversees and monitors vaccination coverage as a central part of national & international disease preparedness.

Epidemiology & Infectious Disease Control – ensures national and international preparedness through employing methods to identify agents, the population at risk, developing case definitions, conducting confirmatory tests, along with evaluating effectiveness of countermeasures.

My practicum experience with SSI's Epidemiology Department focused on disease surveillance and outbreak investigations within Denmark (DK) and the European Union (EU).

Dr. Steen Ethelberg, my mentor, provided excellent guidance and an opportunity to participate in an outbreak investigation. In addition, the entire staff took time to provide an in-depth overview of SSI-EPI, its responsibilities, and their area of expertise (e.g. Vaccine Programs, TB, HIV & HPV, global/travel medicine, etc).

Vaccination Programs – programs include: childhood vaccinations which are free in DK, fee for service for travel vaccinations, R&D and vaccine production.

The Centre for Biosecurity and Biopreparedness (CBB) - authorizes all research and industry biological dual use components, responds to bioterrorism threats, and is responsible for emergency management.

Danmark




Flag Coat of arms



DENMARK

Capital (and largest city)	Copenhagen 55°43'N 12°34'E
Official language(s)	Danish [?]
Ethnic groups (2010)	90.1% Danes, 9.9% others ^[2]
Demonym	Danish or Dane(s)
Population	
- 2011 estimate	5,564,219 ^[3] (110th)
- Density	129/km ² (88th) 334/sq mi

Sources: LonelyPlanet.com;
Wikipedia.com

Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health in Ethiopia

Photo courtesy of Semhar Fisseha



I learned that people can really make differences in the lives of others. Working with Pathfinder International showed me that if approached the right way, people are willing to make changes that benefit them in the long run.

Improving the Lives of Women and Children in Ethiopia.

By: Semhar Fisseha

I worked for an NGO called Pathfinder International in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I was involved in the field of Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health, working with Senior Advisor Worknesh Kereta. Pathfinder is a leader in reproductive health in places like Ethiopia and has made substantial differences. They work with the Ethiopian government and other organizations to improve the

lives of women and children in Ethiopia. I was fortunate to be able to travel to rural parts of Ethiopia and participate in Sensitization Sessions designed to introduce new youth friendly services provided in the area to local residents. Additionally, I was able to observe the monitoring of Health Extension Workers to ensure they were properly equipped to provide comprehensive health services to youth in the area.

Public Health Significance

My practicum experience addressed many of the Essential Services of Public Health, including mobilization of community partnerships to identify and solve health problems, and informing, educating and empowering people about health issues, among many others.

The essential service that is most related to my practicum is Inform, Educate, and Empower people about health issues. This was particularly practiced with the sensitization sessions

conducted in various cities. The audiences consisted of the town administrators, educators, elders, and youth, and the sessions were designed to educate the public about the adverse health effects of certain practices such as early marriage, and to empower them to make behavioral changes that will benefit the health of everyone involved. They were then informed of the availability of health services aimed at youth and encouraged to educate others to utilize the services offered.

ONU Millennium Development Goals

Practicum Highlights

- ❖ Establishment of a collaborative agreement between the University of Texas School of Public Health and the Autonomous University of Yucatan, Mexico
- ❖ Enhanced research experience
- ❖ Broadened professional horizon

“The opportunity to work alongside public health colleagues in an international setting provided me with an invaluable experience.”



From left to right, Ermilo Contreras, MD, Director of Postgraduate Studies, Luis Solis, DrPH candidate, Guillermo Storey, MD, Medical School Director, Marco Palma, MD, Director UIICE and site preceptor.

Evaluation of Millennium Development Goals: AIDS, Malaria and Tb

By: Luis H. Solis

I did my practicum at the Department of Clinical and Epidemiological Research at the Autonomous University of Yucatan (UADY), Mexico. During my practicum I was involved in research regarding the AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis Millennium Development Goals set by the ONU. My duties were to collect, analyze, and report the demographic, socio-economic, and political data of all the countries of the world from the 1990s to 2010.

The idea of this research was to ascertain the net effects of the socioeconomic and political situation of a particular country during different periods of time in achieving or not achieving the Millennium Goals. Preliminary findings indicate how during turbulent and bad economic times, a country's healthcare expenditures decrease which affects its capacity to actively fight these diseases and achieve the goals set by the ONU.

Public Health Significance

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

1. Diagnosis and Investigation of health problems and health hazards in the community. My project's objective was to investigate the effects of socio-economic and political environments on health issues.
2. Evaluation of effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.

Preliminary results of this research project indicate how during negative socio-economic times the capacity of a country to provide adequate health services is decreased.

3. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems. As part of the university and medical school the Department of Clinical and Epidemiological Research strives to find solutions to community health problems.

Acculturative Stress & Implications

Evaluating Factors of Acculturative Stress and Their Implications on Degree Seeking International Students at Seoul National University

By: Diep-Thuy Ho

For my practicum experience, I attended a course called Community Health Field Training at the Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH) at Seoul National University (SNU) for the Fall 2011 semester. Here I am part of the Community Based Health Research Group #8.

Our duties were to decide on a topic for our research, plan, create, and conduct the study, do data entry and analysis, and report our findings through a PowerPoint presentation and written report.

Our particular research study is called, "Affecting Factors of the Level of Acculturation Stress among Degree Seeking Foreign Students at Seoul National University and their Implications."

The final product of this course is the final written report on our findings.



Seoul National University's (SNU's) Front Gate Entrance

– Photo Courtesy of Diep-Thuy Ho

Special Highlights from this Practicum Experience

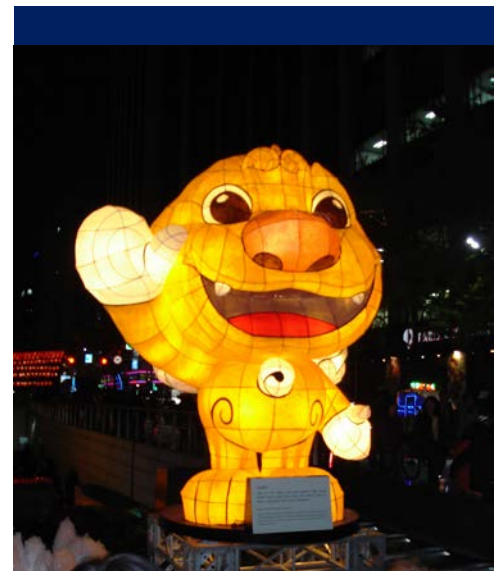
- Helped create, conduct, and complete a research study.
- Toured SNU's beautiful Gwanak-gu campus while finding participants for our research.
- Met a lot of amazing SNU students, both international and Korean, from various backgrounds.

Public Health Significance

My practicum experience is related to Public Health because our course is focused on community health, particularly at SNU. Our duty was to develop a research on a particular SNU population, identify their determinants of health, and submit a report of our findings and suggestions (for future changes or studies) to help that particular population.

We investigated SNU's degree-seeking international students' determinants of health, and we hope that our results could result in positive changes at SNU to improve their overall life (physical and mental health) at SNU. We reported our findings to our classmates and professor, and our final report will be published in the "Student's Reports for Community Health Field Training" of 2011 at SNU's GSPH.

The Essential Services of Public Health (PHES) that most closely relates to my practicum experience was (2) Diagnose and investigate, (3) Inform, educate, and empower, and (9) Evaluate.



Haechi – Seoul's mascot greeting visitors at the 2011 Seoul Lantern Festival

– Photo Courtesy of Diep-Thuy Ho

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/>