

Public Health Practice

Assessment



Policy Development



Assurance

UTHealth
School of Public Health
Practicum Experiences
Fall 2015 – 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 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 gain a deeper understanding of public health practice, interact with professionals in the field, and expand their repertoire of professional skills.

This 18th edition e-magazine showcases student practicum experiences throughout the Fall 2015 semester. Prior editions may be accessed on the practicum website at <https://sph.uth.edu/academics/public-health-practice/#tabs-2> (click on the Reports tab)



Practicum Topics

International Experiences

Number of Students: 2

South East Asia

India

Tibetan Medicine and Public Health

Doug Mayeux

South America

Dominican Republic

WASH Education: Do Visual Aids Work?

Jennifer Nordhauser

Tibetan Medicine and Public Health



The Himalayan Mountains from the Monastery of the Nechung Oracle.

Special events/ duties during your practicum

- Interview with Trinley Palmo, Head, Public Health Division Department of Health, Central Tibetan Administration
- Presented Public Health lecture to medical staff at Delek Hospital, Dharamsala

Advice for Future Students

- Working in foreign environments can present with many challenges. Don't get discouraged, and instead keep working towards your goal.

Taking Flight in it's Own Right – The Tibetan Refugee Public Health System

I'm a first year medical resident, training this year as a surgery intern, before focusing next year on emergency medicine. For my project, I travelled with a group from the University of Minnesota to Dharamsala, India.

As a group we studied Tibetan medicine, and observed the interplay between this and Western medicine, through coordination between the

By: Doug Mayeux, M.D.

Men-Tsee-Khang and the Delek Hospital.

My personal focus was on how these opposite systems fit into public health.

The public health system is managed by the Central Tibetan Administration, and is operated by a minimal staff.

My culminating project is an essay describing the system and how it faces challenges primarily related to

Public Health Significance

My practicum experience centered on the intersection between public health agencies, healthcare providers, and education organizations.

We were hosted by the Men-Tsee-Khang and the Central Tibetan Administration. The Men-Tsee-Khang focuses on healthcare administration (from a Tibetan Medicine perspective, where the Central Tibetan Administration operates not only the Men-Tsee-Khang, but also the Department of Health through this

department the Delek Hospital (which is the Western medicine hospital).

Public health in this refugee community relies primarily on the combined efforts of these agencies, with the Indian government only becoming involved in disaster situations where the limited resources are overwhelmed due to scarcity of resources



The Department of Health of the Central Tibetan Administration

WASH Education: Do Visual Aids Work?

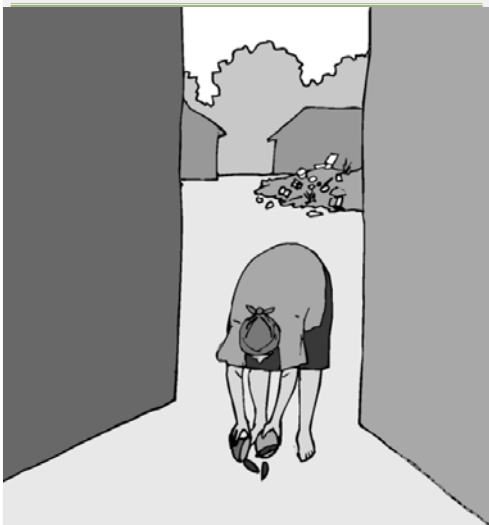


Image from the WASH Toolkit showing a woman scooping up excrement. Local artists were commissioned to draw these images for western Dominican Republic communities. Image courtesy of Jason Rosenfeld

Evaluating a Visual Aid System in Bateyes in the Dominican Republic By: Jennifer Nordhauser

To improve Water, Education, and Hygiene (WASH) in rural communities Dominican Republic (DR), I designed an interview-based protocol to evaluate a visual aid education system called the WASH Toolkit.

My host organization, Hospital Buen Samaritano, in collaboration with Jason Rosenfeld, the Assistant Director of Global Health at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio has already implemented the WASH Toolkit through Community Health Clubs (CHCs) in western DR. The system uses flashcards featuring images of positive and negative WASH behaviors. The protocol evaluated

for image legibility and ease of interpretation of the images in the card deck. In order to be usable in eastern DR rural communities, responses to the interview questions would identify if these cards were both visually appropriate and culturally applicable.

Highlights of Practicum

- Completed 112 interview responses that each evaluated 10 cards selected from the WASH toolkit
- Male, younger, and more educated respondents more frequently interpreted images correctly

Public Health Significance

My practicum experience reflected the Essential Services of educating and empowering populations and evaluating population-based health services.

To serve the purpose of “informing, educating, and empowering people about health issues,” my project worked with an education system already in place in western Dominican Republic to determine if it could be used as an educational tool in rural communities in other parts of the country. This tool would be used within the Community Health Club model, which encourages learning through community discourse.

To “evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services,” my practicum evaluated both access to WASH education and the quality and effectiveness of the educational tool for the rural Dominican Republic community population. This evaluation process took the form of interviews that beta-tested the card deck through questions that specifically targeted community members’ understanding and interpretation of the images. Through this feedback, I selected images from the card deck to be excluded or revised for better cultural applicability and to better match the context where the toolkit will be used.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

Try to keep your practicum project simple and focused – I did not think that evaluating a deck of images would have as much impact as it will when the images are used to teach community members about Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene as soon as next summer!



Sugar cane fields in rural farming communities where water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices are frequently insufficient. Image courtesy of Christopher Smith

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/>