Managing Drug Abuse from a Public Health Perspective

Listing: Public Health – CHS 236

Course Time/Place: Thursday 9:00 AM - 11:50 AM, Room 41-268

Instructor: Martin Y. Iguchi, Ph.D.

Contact Information: Martin Y. Iguchi, Ph.D., x66019, iguchi@ucla.edu, Office Hours - Monday 9-11 or by appt. Room 61-254. NOTE: Please request office hour appointments by e-mail as that will help me to manage the time efficiently.

Units/Grading: Four units (3h/week with additional reading material) and letter grade required. Students will also be required to provide a brief written summary of a literature search and to provide a written critique of a research article. The final requirement will be a written term-paper. Grading will be allocated as follows: Course attendance and participation (20%), literature search report (15%), 2-page written critique of article (15%), Term Paper (50%).

Term Paper: The term paper will be limited to 20 double-spaced pages (not including references) on a topic of relevance to the course. Examples of possible topics include (but are not limited to):

1. What can be done to reduce underage drinking?
2. Do drugs cause violence?
3. What is the role of alcohol and drug use in the HIV epidemic in Latin America?
4. Is there a relationship between smoking on television and smoking initiation in adolescents?
5. How might perceptions of racism, stigma, or discrimination impact the effectiveness of drug abuse treatment?
6. How might we involve communities in reducing alcohol and drug use?

Course Description: This course is intended to provide students with a knowledge base and relevant analytic skills and tools for decision-making around issues relevant to public health management of drug abuse and related health problems. The course will focus primarily on public health options for controlling problems associated with the use and abuse of illicit drugs, but methods and approaches applied in the course will allow for generalization to other problem areas.

Course Objectives: By the end of the course, students will have an understanding of:

1. the numerous areas of public health impacted by drug use;
2. the public health options for controlling problems associated with drug use;

3. how to think about the positive and problematic aspects of drug use in terms of costs and benefits;

4. how to draw on and value a variety of information resources such as the scientific literature, surveys, institutional data bases, key indicators, key informants and expert opinions;

5. how to establish quality monitoring of programs in the field; and

6. how to make use of/apply specific decision-tools such as decision tree analyses, benefit-cost analyses, Delphi panels or other consensus building approaches, and basic epidemic models when developing public health policies having to do with substance use and misuse.

Course Materials:

No textbook.

Readings assigned for each lecture will be made available electronically. The reading list included in this syllabus may be changed over the course of the semester.

Recommended: Please consider purchasing ENDNOTE or some other reference management program.
Course Outline

Lectures are 3 hours/week

Lecture 1 (April 1). Introductions, course orientation, and an overview on drugs of abuse and US drug control efforts.

Readings


Please read pages 1-16 and more regarding each drug class as needed.


Lecture 2 (April 8). Areas of public health impacted by drug use and exacerbating problems associated with drug use (e.g. poverty, HIV and other STD's, OD, violence, mental health, homelessness, child welfare, health service utilization and availability).

Readings


Optional Readings:


Lecture 3 (April 15). EndNote training in biomedical library (Class will first meet at Biomedical Library Room 12-077 from 9-9:50) then return to classroom. Conducting a literature search and developing a critical eye for valuing studies.

The literature search exercise is intended to help students develop effective search strategies. Students will provide a written report on search strategies and results – how articles were categorized – how quality was assessed - and findings of interest. This will require rapid review of many abstracts, and a 2-3 page description of process – DUE April 29.

Readings


Additional Readings:


Lecture 4 (April 22). Review of data sources relevant to planning a public health response to drug abuse. Surveys, consensus approaches, and observations.

Readings

2. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. 2001. Multiple Indicator Analysis: Using Secondary Data to Analyze Illicit Drug Use


7. Brief summary of Delphi method may be found at: http://www.iit.edu/~it/delphi.html

Optional Reading:


Readings


Optional Readings:


Lecture 6 (May 6). Continuation of discussion regarding treatment and guest speakers on community-based interventions.

Readings – To be assigned

Lecture 7 (May 13). Public Health Intervention Options – Harm reduction, community involvement, self-help and self-organization.

Readings

indigenous harm reduction, and the self-organization and outside-organizing of users' groups. 18(2): 107-17


Readings


Lecture 9 (May 27). Thinking in terms of costs and benefits. (Guest Speaker: Beau Kilmer)

Readings


Optional Readings:


Lecture 10 (June 3). (Term Paper Due @ start of class). Reinforcing Quality. Discussion of a range of topics including: accreditation, evidence-based interventions, quality assessment, case-mix or propensity score adjustments, and related issues.

Readings


Optional Readings: