The Population Health Perspective

My Objectives were to:

1. Apply and strengthen my epidemiology skills
2. Improve my oral presentation skills
3. Have fun!

The Fellowship

- 10-12 months based at CDC in Atlanta, GA
- At least one analytical epidemiology project
- At least one surveillance project
- At least one field experience
- Year-weeks of public health and epidemiology orientation
- A seminar and workshop series on current public health topics
- Attend journal clubs moderated by the fellows
- Attend the Epidemiology Intensive (Epi-Intensive) Conference
- Attend the Clinical Investigation Student Training (CIST) Forum at the National Institute of Health (NIH)
- Fellowship receives a monthly stipend and educational fund

Projects

Analysis of Contributing Factors to Unrelated Groundwater Associated Outbreaks, United States 1971–2008

- 244 (3%) waterborne outbreaks reported to CDC between 1971–2008 resulted from drinking unrelated groundwater (Craun, 2010).
- The reviewers abstracted the number of cases, water system information, microbial water testing, and contributing factors for each outbreak.
- 443 contributing factors were identified in total.

- Project Impact
  - The data abstraction process identified areas where improvements could be made to CDC’s Waterborne Disease Surveillance System and offer guidance to local health departments as they work to prevent outbreaks. During my fellowship year, I also worked with the Emergency Operations Center during the first weeks of the Haiti Cholera Response.
  - Side by side with CDC’s cholera subject matter expert, I helped develop a model to predict cholera’s health impact in Haiti over the next five years. The model was presented to CDC’s director and to USASID to encourage increased clean water and sanitation development funding for Haiti.
  - I also traveled to California to help investigate DTaP vaccination status among pediatric vaccine cases reported during the outbreak.

- The CDC Experience fellowship provided me an unparalleled opportunity to explore a career in public health. Through one-on-one mentorship and hands-on experience in real-life public health, I was able to develop a study methodology, analyze my own data, and produce results which will influence public health practice as a member of the Epidemiology and Laboratory Science to improve health, from eradicating malaria in the United States in 1947, to the investigation (Epi-Aid), and participates in a series of small group discussions focused on public health fundamentals.

- I gained valuable guidance and practice in scientific presentations and writing which will have broad appeal to public health practitioners who work towards eliminating cholera.

- I was able to solidly ground my academic knowledge into practice.

- I applied my data collection skills to direct public health projects.

- I used epidemiologic data from cholera outbreaks in Peru and Zambia to predict the number of cholera cases over the next fiscal year.

- I tested cholera training materials for clinicians in Haiti.

- I experimented with using social media (Facebook, Twitter) and SMS (text) messaging to enhance timeliness of cholera surveillance.

- I participated in survey development and data entry for the first studies assessing risk factors for cholera.

- I received mentorship from CDC’s Global Water, Sanitation and Hygiene team lead and Cholera subject matter expert, Eric Mintz.

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Acknowledgements

- CDC Experience Fellows who have completed their second or third years are eligible
- Applications are available online: http://www.cdc.gov/epielective/More.html

References


