

SavitribaiPhule Pune University
Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences
2nd Field course on Public Health in India
2nd to 28th July 2018



About the course

The goal of this four week course is to illustrate public health in action in India. We intend to demonstrate how public health interventions are delivered in India, and how local factors influence the result of interventions. The course is primarily field-based, preceded by orientation lecture/discussions, and followed by analyses and discussions of field experiences. There are assignments, and students will be expected to participate in discussions and make presentations as given in the schedule. At the end of the course, students are eligible for a certificate confirming their participation and completion of this course. Online Pre-course (credit 1), equivalent to self study will be opened after registration for the field course. This is the second year that we are formally offering this course. A summary of the first field course is available (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKd4eG6Haok>).

(Please be aware that this is a very intensive course, with long hours of study).

Background

This field course on Public Health in India is based on the understanding that the science of public health is global, but its practice is specific to the context in which the science is applied. The local context, the people, their socio-cultural, biological, physical and economic environments, and the health policies, services and interventions will determine the health of the population.

Objective

The objective of this course is to practically illustrate public health activities in India, and provide students with an exposure to public health policies and the context in which public health is practiced in India.

Organization of the course

The course is arranged in modular form. Each module has a defined learning outcome and has three components. (i) A pre-visit lecture-discussion will provide an overview of the public health issue, and the strategy to address the issue. The discussion will dissect the science of public health, followed by the Indian adaptation of the strategy based on the context. (ii) This will be followed (in most cases) by a field visit. Study guides will be provided to assist students on what to observe in the field. (iii) The visit will be followed by student observations, followed by discussions and analysis.

Modules

Module 1: Identifying the health challenges of India, epidemiological transition and its public health impact

The module illustrates epidemiological transition and the diversity of health needs in India through analysis of datasets. The aim is to understand the diversity of India, in terms of health status and needs, and to understand why blanket health policies may not be relevant across the country.

Module 2 is an exercise where we analyze mortality data to identify the major health needs of the population, and identify vulnerable geographical areas and populations in the country.

Module 1 and 2 should lead to an understanding of the health needs of the Indian population, and the vulnerable groups and regions of the country. This information should be the basic information to understand health delivery priorities, and also to compare needs with available services.

Module 3: the Indian health system: structure of the rural health system, private health services, urban health issues and services, medical pluralism in India

This module will provide an exposure to the Indian health system. Through visits and discussions, this module will examine the structure of the rural health system, the urban health infrastructure, the private health services and medical pluralism in India. The learning objective is to illustrate the characteristics of a mixed health system of a developing country, followed by a discussion on the impact of such a system in terms of out of pocket expenditure and health information.

Module 4: National health programmes (Reproductive and Child Health programme, Control of infectious diseases, Non-communicable diseases, and injury prevention)

This module provides an overview of national health programmes. These are intervention packages, targeted towards addressing health of women and children, infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases. Delivery of national health programmes is the primary function of public health services. This year, these modules will be taught through field visits, illustrating strategies to reduce maternal and child mortality, population control, immunization, two infectious and one non-communicable disease control programme).

Module 5 will provide an overview of urban health issues, including a seminar on air quality and respiratory health.

Module 6: Social determinants and social security networks, nutrition and food security, environmental issues

This module discusses the determinants of health, primarily the social determinants of health in India, the nutritional status of the Indian population, issues related to food security.

Module 7: Access to drugs and devices, regulation of drugs and devices, Regulation of clinical trials in India

Herethrough two Seminars, we discuss issues of equity and universal health care in India. The first Seminar discusses access to drugs, and the second Seminar discusses the regulation associated with the conduct of clinical trials in India.

Module 8: Collecting primary data in India

This module will use the field experiences to discuss the approach to collecting primary data in field settings.

Module 9: Volunteering

This module comprises placement with NGOs/field based organizations. The goal is to understand the reality and the multitude of factors that influence health in India.

Summing up and valedictory

Assessments

The course requires two assessments, one at the end of week 2 and the other before the end of week 4. These assessments will be electronic submission/presentations.

Pre-course requirement

Students will have to complete an online introductory module, to be opened after registration.