International Neurologic and Psychiatric Epidemiology Program

2012-2013 Brown Bag Seminar Series

“Utilizing epidemiologic methods to study neurologic and psychiatric conditions that impact public health in developing regions of the world.”

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http://neurology.msu.edu/academics/inpep.shtml
The National Student Health Assessment in Tanzania: A push for sustainability

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Objectives

- Describe the MSU PSCD + TPP initiatives
- Discuss the purpose for and history of the Tanzanian Student Health Assessment program
- Identify factors impacting program failures
- Delineate strategies for developing an effective and sustainable SHA
Partnerships for Sustainable Community Development (PSCD)

Mission: “find solutions, build capacity and create collaborations that promote resilient and sustainable communities. Unite research, education and development in ways that boldly push frontiers of knowledge and role universities play in transforming local communities….”

http://www.isp.msu.edu/pscd/about/vision.htm
PSCD core principles

- Ensure sustainability
- Commit to an integrative approach
- Engage interdisciplinary research
- Promote participation
- Employ adaptive learning
- Establish long term commitments
Tanzania Partnership Project (TPP)

- First initiative of PSCD

- Focuses on two rural villages
  - Milola (Lindi Rural District)
  - Naitolia (Arusha)
TPP Partner Villages
Institutional partners

• MSU
• Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)
  – Aga Khan Foundation
• University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM)
  – Institute of Resource Assessment (IRA)
  – College of Education (DUCE)
Academic disciplines

- Agriculture
- Animal health
- Human health
- Social Science
- Education
- Communication
TPP priority areas

• Capacity building
• Education
• Human health
• Animal health
• Water safety and access
Purpose of the National SHA

• Provide a framework for collecting information on health of school aged children
• Screen for common health problems
• Early diagnosis and treatment
• Improve school attendance and performance
• Guide policy and decision making re: school health programming
Why should TPP focus on the student health assessment (SHA)?

- Teachers and village officials conveyed concern for health of students
- Existing policy was not being implemented
- Health of primary school children gives picture of health of community (baseline data for TPP)
- Integrative approach (all TPP priority areas)
History of the National SHA

• 1921 medical screening implemented in mainland TZ & health education integrated into school curricula
• 1961 mobile school health teams but by mid 60’s services deteriorated
• 1978 revival of interest in school health (25% total population in this age group)
History of the SHA

• 1980 USAID supported school health project. 7 yrs of funding yielded only 10% of schools involved

• 1988 National School Health Guidelines developed. Not implemented widely despite many NGOs, other country involvement (eg., Ireland)
History of the SHA

• Through 1990s to now, multiple initiatives undertaken. None scalable or sustainable

• TPP supported SHA in Milola with disappointing results
Reasons for failure of SHA

- Lack of funding
- Lack of health assessors
- Poor training of assessors
- Lack of equipment, supplies (cards)
- Lack of communication
- Lack of community engagement (parents, teachers, students)
- Local and district governmental units not engaged
Potential facilitator

- **Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) Control Program**: provides community-based tx for Schistosomiasis, Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH), Lymphatic Filiariasis, Trachoma and Oncocerciasis
- Funding still an issue
Components of the SHA

- Demographic information
- Ht/Wt
- Nutritional status
- Immunization history
- Screening history
  - Tb, diabetes, schisto, parasites
- Physical exam
  - BP, eyes (including Snellen), ears, mouth, skin, lymph nodes, hepatomegaly, heart, developmental assess
  - Look for signs of anemia
    - Stool for O&P, urine for hematuria, HCT
Common health problems

- Malaria
- NTDs
- Intestinal parasites
- Chronic diarrhea
- Stunting/malnutrition
- Recurrent URI
- Skin infections
The road to SHA sustainability

- Community engagement
  - Focus groups
  - Teacher involvement
  - Local/district health/education and governmental representatives
  - Create shared understanding of problem
The road to SHA sustainability

• Partnership building
  – SHA team creation
    • Peek, Ruonavaara (MSU)
    • Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (School Health Program director)
    • Muhumbili University Medical School
    • Institute for Adult Ed.

• Systematic evaluation
  – Review of “gray” literature
  – Review of Round 1 SHA process/data
  – Development of evaluation materials for Round 2 SHA
  – Evaluation to be undertaken Fall 2013
The road to SHA sustainability

• Capacity building
  – Building on strengths
  – Training of assessors
  – Development of improved training materials
  – Acquisition of supplies
  – Community mobilization

• Research
  – Pilot “best practice” in Round 3 (eg, increasing role of classroom teacher)
  – Test scalability
The road to SHA sustainability

• Policy formulation
  – Work with stakeholders to develop effective, cost efficient, sustainable policy & procedures
  – Fiscal decision making informed by accurate data
Questions to consider

• Are there alternatives to health assessment in the school that can be developed?
• Can policy be built that is flexible enough to be applicable to diverse regions/communities
• How can we deal with the competing demands for teachers time/expertise? Should there be a reward system imbedded to encourage participation?