Reproductive Health in Sub-Saharan Africa

CHS 427
Winter 2004
UCLA School of Public Health

Instructor: Paula Tavrow, PhD
Course description: The purpose of this course is to provide graduate students with an in-depth understanding of the reproductive health challenges facing Sub-Saharan Africa and the main programs over the past two decades that have been designed to address them. The topics that will be included are: adolescent reproductive health, family planning services, sexually transmitted infections, sexuality and violence, female genital mutilation, abortion services, postabortion care, prevention of HIV/AIDS, and refugee reproductive health. Key conceptual and theoretical frameworks and controversies will be presented. Programs in various African countries to improve reproductive health will be analyzed and reasons for their effectiveness (or failure) will be synthesized.

Required readings: All readings will be found in the course reader unless otherwise noted. For students with a limited background in reproductive health, or for those wishing to have a reference text, the following book is recommended for purchase: Reproductive Health in Developing Countries: Expanding Dimensions, Building Solutions, edited by A. Tsui, J.N. Wasserheit, and J.G. Haaga, Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1997.

Paper: Students will be expected to complete a 12-15 page term paper that uses 2-3 health, psychological, sociological or behavioral science theories to analyze a reproductive health program in Africa. Course readings with asterisks (*) indicate programs that students can use as the basis of their papers. For an overview of health promotion theories, students should consult “Theory at a Glance: A Guide for Health Promotion Practice” at this website: http://cancer.gov/templates/page_print.aspx?viewid=caa6c8cb-705d-498a-a5f4-fdc7edbdab6

Grading: It is important that students come to all class sessions, complete the assigned readings, and participate actively in the discussions/debates. The course will have a final exam based on the readings. Grades will be determined as follows:

- Participation in classroom discussions: 20%
- In-class presentations: 20%
- Term paper analyzing a reproductive health program: 30%
- Final exam: 30%
Course Outline and Readings

Mon  1/12:  Introduction to the course
   Political and socio-economic context for reproductive health in Africa
   •  No readings.

Wed  1/14:  Historical overview to reproductive health and rights in developing countries

Mon  1/19:  Martin Luther King holiday (no class)

Wed  1/21:  Cultural context for reproductive health in Africa

>>Video on girls’ education in Africa

Mon  1/26:  Adolescent reproductive health: Issues and challenges

>>Presentations of health and behavioral theories: Part 1

Wed  1/28:  Adolescent reproductive health: Programs

>>Presentations of health and behavioral theories: Part 2

Mon  2/ 2:  Family planning services: Access and quality issues


Wed 2/4: Family planning clinical services: programs to measure and improve quality


>>Presentations of programs

Mon 2/9: Integrating sexually transmitted infection prevention: Issues and programs


Wed 2/11: Family planning: community-based approaches and male involvement


**Presentations of programs**

**Mon 2/16:** President’s Day holiday (no class)

**Wed 2/18:** Post-abortion care


**Presentation of program**

**Mon 2/23:** Abortion services: legal and illicit (Zambia case study)


**Wed 2/25:** Promoting sexual health and preventing violence: issues


Mon 3/1: Promoting sexual health and preventing violence: programs


>>Presentations of programs

Wed 3/3: Promoting sexual health and preventing violence among refugees


>>Presentation of program
Mon 3/8: Female genital mutilation: controversies


>>Video on female genital mutilation

Wed 3/10: Female genital mutilation: programs


>>Presentations of programs
Mon 3/15: AIDS: theories and evidence about transmission


- Heise L, Elias C. Transforming AIDS prevention to meet women’s needs: a focus on developing countries. Social Science and Medicine 1995, 40 (7): 931-43.

Wed 3/17: AIDS prevention: programmatic developments


- *Shaw M. Before we were sleeping but now we are awake: the Stepping Stones workshop programme in the Gambia. In Realizing Rights: Transforming Approaches to Sexual and Reproductive Well-Being, ed. by A. Cornwall and A. Welbourn, London: Zed Books, 2002: 128-140.


>>Presentations of programs

Tue 3/22: Final Exam 11:30-2:30