

Instructions for the assignment of course MPH610 Introduction to Public Health

An important aspect of Public Health practice is to seek funding from government agencies or local authorities to support programmes and interventions to protect and promote public health.

This process usually consists of the following 4 steps:

- 1. Description of the population affected by the specific public health issue and list of key health indicators**
- 2. Description of the specific public health issue, affecting health and well-being or increasing mortality in the population**
- 3. Description of a proposed public health programme aimed at resolving or mitigating the effects of this public health issue**
- 4. Evaluation of the anticipated impact and benefit of the programme in the population**

In the **first course assignment (PART A)**, you are requested to choose an important public health issue in a specific population and to cover the **first two steps** of the above process, in two separate sections:

- (1) Description of the population** affected by the specific public health issue and list of key health indicators
- (2) Description of the specific public health issue**, affecting health and well-being or increasing mortality in the population

PART A Description of an important public health issue in a specific population

Word limit: 1000 words ($\pm 15\%$)

Weighting: 20% of the total course grade

Method and deadline for submission: Online via Blackboard (**Monday 16 November 2022**)

Section 1. Description of the population affected by the specific public health issue and list of key health indicators (*500 words $\pm 15\%$, 9 points*)

In this section, you are requested to describe the population in which the proposed Public Health programme will be implemented. You can focus on either a country as a whole or a locality within a country (i.e. city, region, province, district, etc.). This section should include a summary of the following information, based on the European Core Health Indicators (ECHI):

- *Demographic and socio-economic situation of the population*
 - Total population (by gender and age, if available)
 - Basic ethnicity (and other ethnic minorities, if any)
 - Indication of urbanization (mainly urban or rural population?)
 - Crude birth rate or general fertility rate
 - Life expectancy (separately for both sexes, if available)
 - Human Development Index
 - Gross domestic product (GDP) or Gross National Product (GNP) and risk of poverty or social exclusion (if available)
 - Income inequality (e.g. Gini coefficient, if available)
 - Unemployment rate
 - Literacy rate
- *Health status of the population*
 - Perinatal and infant mortality rates
 - Main causes of death (and cause-specific mortality rate, if available)
 - Prevalence or incidence of major diseases (e.g. cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, dementia, HIV/AIDS and other serious infectious diseases - if available)
 - Healthy Life Years (if available)
 - Nutritional status (mainly concerns the frequency of malnutrition and other nutritional deficiencies in low- and middle-income countries)

- Access to clean water and basic sanitation (mainly concerns low-income countries)
- *Health determinants*
 - Breastfeeding rates
 - Prevalence of obesity and hypertension
 - Frequency of smoking, alcohol abuse, and drug use
 - Frequency of fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity
 - Exposure to environmental pollution (air, water, land – whichever available)
- *Health interventions: health services*
 - Health expenditure per capita (total and as % of GDP)
 - Active doctors and nurses per 1000 inhabitants
 - Basic vaccination coverage rates
- *Health interventions: health promotion*
 - Policies to reduce exposure to environmental tobacco smoke - *briefly*
 - Policies to promote a healthy lifestyle - *briefly*

It is understandable that the above information is not readily available for all populations, so not all categories and subcategories need to be included in this section of the assignment. Note, however, that during the evaluation of the assignment, which piece of information is available for each proposed population and which is not, will be investigated by the assessor. It is also strongly recommended to use the above structure in this section (i.e. displaying the key information in the form of a list), with no need for further expansion.

Section 2. Description of the specific public health issue, affecting health and well-being or increasing mortality in the population (500 words \pm 15%, 9 points)

In this section, you are asked to describe a major issue that negatively affects the health and well-being or increases mortality in the population of your choice. The public health issue could be a chronic disease (e.g. cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, dementia, etc.) or an infectious disease (e.g. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, etc.), as well as other health-related issues such as high infant and maternal mortality, road accidents, suicides, homicides, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, occupational diseases (e.g. asbestosis from long-term asbestos exposure), etc.

It is essential that the public health issue of choice has a major impact on the health of the population. A simple model for determining the impact of a public health problem is:

- ***Mortality*** (large number of deaths in the population)
- ***Morbidity or disability*** (large number of diseased and/or disabled people and consequently impact on the well-being and quality of life of a large portion of the population)
- ***Psychological impact*** (causing distress, psychosocial stress, psychological burden, social isolation and other consequences that affect the well-being and quality of life of a large portion of the population)
- ***Economic cost to society*** (for example huge treatment costs, which indirectly affect the health of the population, especially the most vulnerable groups, due to redistribution of priorities in terms of health care and disease prevention services)

Using the above model, you should give a convincing justification for choosing the specific topic as a major health problem in the population of your choice. In this regard, although not all of the above categories need to be covered, at least one of the first three should definitely apply (and be described in detail). An additional justification could be that the health problem is 'neglected' (i.e. it has never been evaluated or managed in this population), or that it affects a particularly vulnerable population group (e.g. children, low socioeconomic strata, ethnic minorities, etc.). The rationale for choosing the specific public health issue in this section, should be precise and comprehensive.

General appearance of assignment: Should follow the recommended structure in these Guidelines (e.g., correct use of sections, appropriate referencing, etc.) (2 points)

Note 1: The current COVID-19 pandemic is considered to be the largest public health problem worldwide at the moment. Due to this and in order to ensure diversity in the choice of topics, you are requested to avoid selecting this topic for the current assignment.

Note 2: The use of references is extremely important in both the first and second sections. The non-optimal use (or even worse the absence) of citations, both in the text and in the final reference list of the assignment, will be considered a serious omission and will result in loss of points.

Note 3: This work requires a very specific structure (as described in the two Sections above), which must be followed precisely. In other words, the assignment should

consist of only the 2 sections described above, without the use of additional sections (e.g. Introduction, Discussion, Conclusions, etc.). Adherence to instructions is a very important skill in science, so failure to follow the required structure of work will result in loss of points.

Note 4: Your assignment file should be saved as in the example below:

Course code section_Name_Surname (e.g. MPH610X_Konstantinos_Giannakou)