

Fall 2017 Practicum Abstracts

MPH Epidemiology students conduct placements at a variety of organizations and on a variety of topics. Below you will find a selection of practicum abstracts from Fall 2017 practica. Students have provided their consent to share these abstracts, which were submitted to the DLSPH as a part of their final practicum package. The structure of the abstract varies depending on the amount of information that could be shared by the student and the student's preferences in format.

A.C.

Public Health Ontario

Over the course of my placement with the Emergency Preparedness and Response team at Public Health Ontario, I had the opportunity to work on a qualitative analysis of the ethical dimensions of emergency response and how these ethics and values could or should be built into response frameworks and plans. In addition, I was included in a number of activations of the emergency response team within Public Health Ontario, and was also able to attend the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's (MOHLTC) Emergency Operations Centre to observe their response. I met with the entire response team at Public Health Ontario and learned their roles. I was also able to participate in some of their training and delivery with local public health units. My main project, the qualitative analysis, was completed in draft during the placement and is now being reviewed by the knowledge user group as part of the collaborative research approach. This too was an excellent learning opportunity and I was able to increase my knowledge of various research methods, the composition of research teams, and how this approach could be useful in other scenarios. I was able to improve my own skill set considerably and learned much from the experts in qualitative analysis who were part of the team. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to present the findings of this work to a group convened to discuss research in the field of emergency preparedness internationally. Finally, this work will be presented at the Ontario Public Health Conference in the spring.

D.K.

Cancer Care Ontario

I was a full-time practicum student at Cancer Care Ontario during September – December 2017 under supervisors Dr. Michelle Cotterchio and Vicky Chang. CCO is known as the "Ontario government's principal cancer advisor" whose role includes collecting data to identify and measure problems in Ontario, developing cancer services guidelines, monitoring funding and performance and conducting research. The objective of my practicum project was to investigate lifestyle/dietary factors associated with endogenous sex hormone levels in postmenopausal women for possible prevention of hormone-related cancers, including postmenopausal breast cancer. Specifically, my work involved doing literature reviews on related topics, conducting statistical analyses using SAS statistical software and drafting a manuscript for possible submission to an academic journal. Overall, I am very impressed with the quality of my practicum experience at CCO and now I think I know what I am capable of and what areas I need to improve on as a future epidemiologist.

M.A.*Dignitas International*

My practicum experience was with Dignitas International (DI) from August 28 – Dec 5, 2017. DI is a medical and research organization, which is dedicated to improving access to lifesaving treatment and care for HIV, TB and related diseases in resource-limited settings. Dignitas also works in partnership with patients, health workers, researchers and policymakers to tackle the barriers to health care in resource-limited communities. Dignitas emphasizes a balance between frontline care and research in order to treat patients, strengthen health systems and shape health policy and practice. This practicum opportunity allowed me to design, conduct and execute an operations research, a retrospective cohort study, that aimed at measuring the impact of the new WHO guidelines on patients retention in care. The objectives of my practicum placement were to achieve the epidemiological and statistical competencies through following the different stages of research process which include: formulating a hypothesis, designing the study, extract the data required, data cleaning and management, conducting the analysis and finally, communicating the results through manuscript writing.