Master of Public Health: Defense of Thesis and Field Experience

Daniel L. Kurz, B.S.
Department of Kinesiology
Kansas State University
10/09/2015
Field Experience Overview

- Fort Riley Department of Public Health [DPH] Rotations
  - Divisions of DPH
  - Experiences during rotations

- Public Health Accreditation Board [PHAB]
  - Accreditation process
  - Impact on DPH
DPH Overview

- Divisions of DPH include
  - Environmental Health
  - Army Wellness Center
  - Industrial Hygiene
  - Occupational Health
  - Army Hearing Program
  - Health Promotions Officers
  - Public Health Nursing
  - Veterinary Services
Environmental Health Rotations

- Conduct food service safety and sanitation inspections.

- Water Quality Surveillance:
  - Collected, transported, processed, and analyzed water samples.

- Collected, identified, and shipped mosquitos and ticks for vector surveillance.

- Hospital Waste Management:
  - Introduced to waste management codes, laws, and regulations.
  - Observed a medical and hazardous waste inspection.

- Observed a child development center sanitation inspection.
Army Wellness Center
Rotations

- Observed three physical fitness (YMCA) exercise tests.
- Observed three metabolic and body composition tests.
- Observed three fitness and nutritional counseling sessions.
- Observed one stress management course.
- Observed one tobacco cessation course.
Industrial Hygiene Rotations

- Educated on the basic principles of Industrial Hygiene including:
  - Ventilation
  - noise exposure and protection
  - air contaminants
  - asbestos, lead, and other hazardous materials

- Conducted an indoor air quality and ventilation investigation.

- Calibrated, tested and used noise dosimeters for a worksite noise level assessment.

- Conducted an office ergonomics assessment and provided solutions.

- Observed two Tuberculosis mask fitting/testing.
Occupational Health Rotations

• Observed pre-employment physical exams.
  • Physical included: Hearing test, spirometry test, vision screening, immunization check, tuberculosis screening, and vital checks.

• Educated on various occupational health programs such as:
  • Medical surveillance examinations and screenings
  • blood borne pathogens
  • hearing conservation
  • vision conservation,
  • occupational health and injury prevention and mitigation
  • work related immunizations.
Army Hearing Program

- Introduced to Army hearing regulations and Fort Riley Hearing Program policies.

- Understood the key aspects of the hearing program:
  - Noise abatement
  - Audiometric monitoring
  - Hearing protectors

- Understood the procedures of Fort Riley’s hearing program:
  - Hearing readiness
  - Hearing conservation
  - Clinical hearing services
Health Promotions Office Rotations

- Introduced to a multitude of initiatives to prevent/mitigate behavioral and mental health issues among soldiers at Fort Riley.
Public Health Nursing Rotations

- Conducted daycare sanitation inspections
- Introduced to disease surveillance and prevention
  - DRSi reports
- Attended one meeting with community partners to negotiate the Irwin Community Hospital’s on-campus smoking policy changes.
- Observed an STD counseling session covering awareness, treatment and prevention.
- Observed a Smoking cessation counseling session.
Veterinary Services Rotations

- Food sanitation inspection at local supermarket and one in a child development center.

- Understood the role in animal preventative medicine as identification and evaluation of:
  - zoonotic diseases
  - treatment and management of disease in the animal population
  - removal and collection of ticks/fleas to analyze for vectored diseases.
Public Health Accreditation Board Overview

- PHAB is accreditation board that ensures the accountability and quality of public health departments through accreditation.
  - 121 million USA citizens are living in an area covered by an accredited department

- Accreditation serves as an affirmation that a health department is practicing effective methods to improve the health of their community and is able to maintain these methods over time.
PHAB Accreditation Process

1) Pre-application
2) Application
3) Documentation, selection, and submission
4) Site Visit
5) Accreditation Decision
6) Reports
7) Reaccreditation
Step 3 – Documentation, Selection, and Submission
PHAB’s Impact on DPH

• Through a Community Health Assessment DPH learned:
  • A large portion of people would like to have access to a farmer’s market on post
  • Military spouses largest concerns often revolve around daily stress.
  • Improved intradepartmental communication
  • Greater attention to the 10 essential public health services
Limitations of DPH

- Higher command has to approve all initiatives that affect military troops.
  - Even if an initiative is well researched and is likely to be effective, higher command can prevent it.
  - Ex. Reduction of mental health issues (e.g. depression, anxiety, and suicide) through increased autonomy
    - However, autonomy promoting is highly regulated
Field Experience Relevance

- Exposed to a wide range of public health initiatives
- First hand experience in applying the 3 core functions of public health (Assessment, Policy Development, Assurance)
- Experience applying the 10 essential public health services and other theoretical constructs (Transtheoretical Model, Motivational interviewing) to an ecological system.