



Developing Inter-professional Public Health Strategies Through a Graduate Course on Overweight & Obesity

Institute for Public Health Sciences, Yeshiva University, Bronx NY

Judith Wylie-Rosett, EdD, RD ^{1,2}, Sonia Suchday, PhD ^{1,3}, Paul R. Marantz, MD MPH ^{1,2}, Su-Jong Kim, PhD ¹, Merrilly Calabrese ¹, Sarit Polsky, MD, MPH ², & Jonathan N. Tobin, PhD ^{1,2,3}



BACKGROUND

As the nation's twin overweight and obesity epidemics rise, the Bronx NY represents a highly affected community of 1.4 million ethnically and economically diverse people. Obesity results from a complex interplay of many factors which can be best understood from an inter-professional perspective: eating behavior (psychology), biology (medicine, nutrition and genetics), public policy (law, social work), industry (business, economics), and the environment.

The Institute for Public Health Sciences (IPHS) of Yeshiva University (YU) is developing a graduate course on Overweight/Obesity during 2007-2008. Utilizing a problem-based style of training and creating a novel teaching program, we aim to bridge schools and faculty from each profession/discipline, focused on investigating the social factors and societal consequences of the epidemic.

To understand the public health aspects of obesity, this course encourages utilization of principles drawn from multiple professions (e.g., medicine, psychology, law, business, urban planning). Faculty drawn from different disciplines and schools at YU (Schools of Medicine, Psychology, Social Work, Business, Law), will revise existing curricula, and recruit professionals and community-based partners to educate diverse students. The teaching methods will complement classroom-based activities with webcast-based teaching (see www.CDNnetwork.org) and community-based service-learning experiences.

The goal is to help students develop an interprofessional competency in addressing, planning, implementing, and analyzing studies with other professions in order to reduce the problems of obesity and diabetes epidemics by utilizing knowledge and skills obtained in this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an advanced seminar, which encourages students to utilize epidemiologic, behavioral and social science, and public policy principles in understanding the public health aspects of obesity, while appreciating important contributing factors of obesity, drawing on an array of different domains (e.g., law, business, economics, urban planning). This course is intended to help learners to identify and analyze an obesity-related issue of their choice from an interprofessional public health perspective.

The focus will be on addressing obesity prevention and control based on the ten public health strategies established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which include monitoring obesity trends, investigating causes of obesity, educating people, mobilizing community partnerships to address obesity, developing policies/plans to support healthier body weight, enforcing laws/regulations related to obesity, assuring people can receive needed personal weight treatment services and obesity competency within the public health and the medical care workforce, evaluating effectiveness, accessibility & quality of obesity prevention and treatment, and researching for new insights, innovative solutions and partnerships to address the obesity epidemic.

COURSE SYLLABUS

Date	Topic	Faculty	Objectives/Milestones	Assignment
S1. 1-22	The many faces of fat: The Obesity Epidemic: Local, National and Global Perspectives Course overview – Student projects, definitions	Sonia Suchday, PhD Judith Wylie-Rosett, EdD, RD	Introduction to Course Project -Review NEMS-S and NYC DOHMH market survey reports and tools	-become familiar with survey instruments
S2. 1-29	I am not hungry I'll just pick: Public health behavioral and biological determinants of health	Charles Swencionis, PhD Phillip M Alberti, PhD (NYCDOH)	Identify markets and communities-geo-coding/mapping -type of supermarkets, bodegas, grocery stores -location: define geography -mark up 2 survey instruments -identify what items are missing in instruments (eg: fresh vs. frozen vegetables), add/omit items	-continue marking up survey instruments and identifying missing items - create pilot instrument next session
S3. 2-5	The Zen of fat: Socio-ecological and other behavioral frameworks to address obesity research	Sonia Suchday, PhD Arthur Blank, PhD Judith Wylie-Rosett, EdD, RD	Create pilot survey instrument (modified from NEMS-S and/or NYCDOHMH) -time: feasibility; validity; inter-rater reliability -estimate time required for each market	-use survey instrument in one market and bring summary of results (data collection process, survey results)
S4. 2-12	Does this dress make me look fat?: Assessing obesity in community settings (Consideration of community based participatory as well as biostatistical and epidemiological methods)	Rosy Chhabra, PsyD Sonia Suchday, PhD	Report results of pilot markets surveyed -finalize survey instrument to use	-begin conducting surveys of markets with finalized survey instrument
S5. 2-19	Perspectives on beauty: The swimsuit edition	Yasmin Mossavar-Rahmani, PhD, RD	Discuss pilot database and data-entry program -adding to or deleting from an existing database and/or auxiliary database [this will be determined before the session]	-continue market surveys and begin data entry
S6. 2-26	The cost of fat?: Economic, medical and social aspects of the obesity epidemic	Antronette Yancey, MD, MPH Jonathan N Tobin, PhD	Report on data collection -discuss data entry -discuss quality control for upcoming sessions	-continue market surveys, data entry
S7. 3-4	Bloated bellies changing the face of malnutrition: Obesity disparities at home and worldwide	Su-Jong Kim, PhD Jonathan N Tobin, PhD	Draft interview schedule for market managers/owners and discuss interview questions (Qualitative Analyses) -sampling strategy -target both small and large markets -Who makes purchasing decisions? How is freezer space allotted in markets? Logistical issues? Etc.	-continue market surveys, data entry -begin creating interview questions
S8. 3-11	You are what you eat, or are you?: Evaluation methods for obesity interventions and research studies	Alice Fomari, EdD Judith Wylie-Rosett, EdD, RD	Develop skeleton analysis tables -continue working on issues from session	-continue market surveys, data entry, interview questions -begin conducting interviews
S9. 3-18	Selling them our garbage: Examination of international trade policy and obesity Book club discussion: <i>The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals</i> by Michael Pollan	Judith Wylie-Rosett, EdD, RD Jonathan N Tobin, PhD	Report on interviews -students present results of qualitative data from interviews	-continue market surveys, data entry, interviews
S10. 3-25	Sue who? Litigation and obesity	Leslie Gerwin, JD Jonathan N Tobin, PhD	Report on interviews -students present results of qualitative data from interviews	-continue market surveys, data entry, interviews
S11. 4-1	Do as I say not as I do: What is the Evidence Base used for Recommendations related to Obesity? (government, health agency, and international agencies)	Rachel Johnson, PhD, MPH, RD Judith Wylie-Rosett, EdD, RD Jonathan N Tobin, PhD	Report on interviews -students present results of qualitative data from interviews	-continue market surveys, data entry, interviews
S12. 4-8	What's the government doing? Obesity-related Intervention research in USDA programs	Karen Bonuck, PhD	Preliminary analysis -in-class hands-on analysis of data	-finish market surveys, data entry, conducting interviews
S13. 4-15	Let's work together: Intervention Research - collaborative strategies for addressing environment at community and global level (changing personal and family environments, consideration of social networks)	Phillip M Alberti, PhD Tracy Sbrocco, PhD Judith Wylie-Rosett, EdD, RD	Report preliminary results -show preliminary results in skeleton tables created on March 11	-continue data analysis
4-22	No Class			
S14. 4-29	Don't look the other way: The clinician's Perspective	Charles Swencionis, PhD Darwin Deen Jr, MD, MS Judith Wylie-Rosett, EdD, RD	Integration of qualitative and quantitative data; Feedback to markets -discuss how to integrate different types of data -discuss how to provide feedback to markets concerning what products to add to their markets, how to better display items of interest, etc.	-provide feedback to markets -finish data analysis
S15 & S16 5-6 & 5-13	Student Research Project Reports	Faculty	Final reports and Recommendations for future research -oral presentations of final analyses and recommendations for future -written tables with text explanations to facilitate continuation of objectives in future courses	-data-base close-out

COURSE PROJECTS

Each student will develop a behavioral theory paper that addresses an obesity problem from a local, regional, national or international public health perspective.

In addition, student teams will conduct observational surveys to create a longitudinal data-base which tracks food options available in local markets. The objectives are to assess the types of available foods from an obesogenic and leptogenic perspective, identify barriers to accessing healthier foods, and create recommendations based on nutritional principles for improving health food availability in this community.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the public health burden of obesity in a selected target population
2. Apply behavioral theory to assessment of obesity from an public health perspective
3. Collaborate with other disciplines and community organizers to develop obesity research/evaluation based on public health strategies

PROGRAM EVALUATION

We will evaluate measures of structure (community resources), process (curriculum planning and delivery, integration of multiple schools and disciplines, participant satisfaction) and outcome (course evaluation data, student performance, significance of projects, and impact on career plans for course participants), with the support of an external educational evaluator.

OTHER INFORMATION

Author Affiliations

- ¹ Institute for Public Health Sciences of Yeshiva University
- ² Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University
- ³ Kaufman Graduate School of Psychology of Yeshiva University

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Address for Correspondence

Jonathan N. Tobin, Ph.D.
Director of Education & Training
Institute for Public Health Sciences of Yeshiva University
Albert Einstein College of Medicine
1300 Morris Park Avenue – Mazer 346
Bronx, NY 10461 USA
Tel 718-430-3236; Fax 718-430-8877
JNTobin@aecom.yu.edu

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