American University of Armenia, College of Health Sciences
Public Health Program
A Brief Overview

Module I: The Problem Solving Paradigm

Unit 1: Introduction & General Principles (March 20 - April 7, 1995)
Unit 2: Biostatistics, Demography and Information Systems (April 10 - April 28, 1995)
Unit 3: Social & Behavioral Sciences in Public Health (May 3 - May 24, 1995)

Module II: Techniques of Problem Investigation & Evaluation

Unit 1: Epidemiology (May 29 - June 23, 1995)
Unit 2: Problem Investigation in Environmental Health (June 26 - July 14, 1995)
Unit 3: Economics & Finance (July 17 - August 8, 1995)

Module III: Program Planning & Implementation

Unit 1: Health Services Management (September 4 - September 26, 1995)
Unit 2: Program Planning (October 2 - October 20, 1995)
Unit 3: Project Development & Evaluation (October 23 - November 15, 1995)

NOTE: ALL DATES ARE TENTATIVE

The AUA Public Health Program is a modular design curriculum approach to professional public health education. The organizing principle for the curriculum is a six-step public health problem solving paradigm for professional practice. In addition to providing a conceptual framework for tackling a wide variety of public health problems and a framework for integrating a number of other public health paradigms, the problem solving paradigm emphasizes the need for critical thinking and analytic reasoning skills within a rational context which clarifies the need and role of each of the core public health disciplines [biostatistics/demography, epidemiology, behavioral sciences, environmental & biological factors, health finance & management] and a number of related skills such as computer literacy, effective verbal and oral communication, working in multidisciplinary groups and interacting with the public at-large as well as with the private and governmental sectors.

The six steps of the paradigm are: Problem Definition; Measuring Magnitude; Understanding Key Determinants; Developing Prevention & Intervention Strategies; Setting Priorities & Policies; and Implementation & Evaluation. The content of the modules is sequenced to provide the core skills and knowledge associated with each of these steps.

The first unit of module one (Introduction & General Principles) is designed to 1) provide students with the broad conceptual framework for the entire AUA Health Sciences Program; 2) define the domains of public health; 3) explicate the problem solving paradigm using a variety of specific examples; 4) demonstrate the relevance of the paradigm to professional practice; 5) develop basic group process and multidisciplinary team building skills and 6) provide an overview of the types of skills and disciplines that bear on a public health problem and at which point in the problem solving process the various disciplines contribute most.

With the conceptual framework in place, students will then be exposed to the core disciplines and key paradigms in the sequence in which they bear importance in the problem solving paradigm. Part of unit 1 and Unit 2 provide the requisite skills and paradigms for critically assessing the existance of a problem and descriptively assessing its magnitude. Unit 3 addresses one of the considerations in seeking to understand the key determinants of a problem: socio-cultural factors.

Module II continues with a detailed unit addressing analytic and quantitative epidemiologic skills. An examination of the environmental and biological determinants of health follows. With an understanding of the "disease" processes and magnitude in hand, the last unit of Module III addresses the practical considerations in selecting from among the various options which have been identified: economics and financing.

Module III concludes the paradigm with the remaining issues of program planning, implementation, and evaluation. In this way, the broad overview of knowledge, skills, and application considerations raised during the initial unit in Module I are expanded and developed in greater depth and breadth. Within each of the disciplines, a number of other conceptual paradigms are developed and related to the overacrhing problem solving paradigm The use of the paradigm aids integration and application of the various components into professional practice even before completing the entire program.