

POPLHLTH 753

Special Topic: Tobacco Control

15 Points
Semester 2, 2010

Course Prescription

The School of Population health at the University of Auckland is a lead organisation in the field of tobacco control research in New Zealand. In addition to many individual researchers in the field it has a specialist unit devoted to tobacco research. This course introduces students to theory and research developed within public health and epidemiological contexts that are related to tobacco control. Students will review major theoretical issues and will consider current trends and future challenges to Tobacco Control. Topics covered will relate to three main themes (1) Reducing initiation, (2) Interventions to reduce smoking related harm, and (3), Smoking cessation and treatment of nicotine dependency.

Goals of the Course

- To provide an overview of the Tobacco Control sector.
- To promote a critical appreciation of major theoretical debates in the field
- To provide an introduction to nicotine dependency research.
- To foster graduate student interest, knowledge and possible ongoing commitment to research and practice in Tobacco Control.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the burden of disease in NZ and globally due to tobacco use
- demonstrate an understanding of the main assumptions and conceptual models used to respond to harm associated with tobacco use
- relate theory and practice to individual contexts and problems
- critically use research literature in developing an intervention plan or new policy or to critique an existing policy

Content Outline

The following themes and topics will be explored:

Intervention to reduce smoking related harm

- Patterns and history of tobacco use in New Zealand,
- Health promotion and social marketing
- The role of the Tobacco Industry
- Legislation, regulation, taxation & advocacy

Reducing initiation

- Risk factors for smoking
- Cultural differences in attitudes to smoking and child uptake
- Interventions to reduce uptake

Smoking cessation and treatment of nicotine dependency

- Effectiveness of treatment interventions,
- Specific interventions: pharmacotherapy, PREPs, behavioural support
- Effects of dependency on the family,
- Co-existent drug and mental health problems.
- Special needs populations: e.g. pregnant women who smoke, Maori, Pacific peoples

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Learning and Teaching

The course will utilise a combination of teaching session, discussions, and workshops relating to specific assessment tasks. Clinicians and researchers in the School of Population Health and from the Auckland region will deliver topic areas requiring specialist knowledge. The assigned readings will focus both on a general knowledge of the field and the development of specialist interests. Teaching assumes a large component of self-directed learning and students will be encouraged to develop their own perspectives and interests and to relate these to their work environment. Students are encouraged to participate actively in discussions and to clearly communicate both consenting and dissenting viewpoints. This 15 point course is taught in the second semester in two, 2 day blocks, located at the Tamaki campus.

Teaching Staff

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Programme Administrator

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Campus Teaching Dates in 2010

The course is held at the School of Population Health, Tamaki Campus on Thursday and Fridays 9:00-5:00pm August 12-13, September 30-October 1.

Learning Resources

Selected articles are provided at the first class of the course.

Assessment

- 1a) Reflective portfolio (500-2,000 words: 5%)
A piece of writing in which students reflect on their own exposure to and/or use of tobacco and tobacco use/availability in New Zealand.
- 1b) Journal/scrapbook (5%)
A book in which students gather and comment on news items relevant to the course, and reflect upon personal reactions to class lectures and discussions.
- 1c) Editorial (5%)
An opinion piece for a newspaper or similar publication.
- 2) Literature review (1,500 words: 15%)
Collate and critically review published literature on one aspect of tobacco control which will form the basis for the proposal for an intervention or development/modification of policy.
- 3) Briefing paper (3,000 words: 25%)
A briefing paper for the Minister of Health on how to rapidly reduce morbidity and mortality due to tobacco use and associated ethnic disparities.
- 4) Final examination (40%)
A two-hour examination that will require students to answer questions based on material presented throughout the course.
- 5) Class participation (5%)

The semester two examination period is Thursday October 28-Monday November 15. Note that the examination timetables are not finalised and available to students until 6-8 weeks into the semester.

Programme and Course Advice

This course would suit a wide variety of students interested in developing a framework for thinking about and processing ideas on tobacco smoking, nicotine dependency and other addictions. It would be suitable for students pursuing careers in health research, primary health and specialist practice in Maori health, mental health, alcohol and other drug services.