

News Briefs

The Epidemiology Education Movement presented a poster and a lunchtime session at the 2006 North American Congress



of Epidemiology held in Seattle in June. The Congress is the largest meeting of epidemiology professionals and is held every five years by the American College of Epidemiology, the Society of Epidemiologic Research, and the epidemiology section of the American Public Health Association. This was an excellent opportunity to communicate activities within the Movement and to elicit feedback and ideas about future efforts.

Up-Coming Epidemiology Education Events

November 7, 2006

– Roundtable presentation entitled “Epidemiology Education Movement” at the 134th Annual Meeting & Exposition (November 4-8, 2006), Boston, MA

November 7 & 8, 2006

– Consensus Conference on Undergraduate Public Health Education, Boston University School of Public Health

Comments?

Epidemiology Is Contagious

By Cheryl S. Broussard, PhD Candidate, University of Texas School of Public Health, Cheryl.S.Broussard@uth.tmc.edu

I first learned of the Baton Rouge Magnet High School epidemiology club by reading an article in the October 2005 edition of the EpiMonitor. Ershela Durrezi, a 2004-05 Young Epidemiology Scholars Competition Regional Semifinalist, had spread epidemiology to her school after being exposed to the field through the YES Competition, by establishing the very first high school epi club. I took an immediate interest in her initiative since she was only an hour from my hometown of Lafayette, Louisiana.

A couple of months later, an article about the Epidemiology Education Movement appeared in the EpiMonitor, and it motivated me to contact the student I had read about to do my part in promoting epidemiology education and careers. One of the high school club's activities is to invite local public health professionals to speak at club meetings, so I volunteered to give a lecture in April on my path to becoming an epidemiologist and my dissertation research.

Since I am a former middle school science teacher, I brought neat goodies to hand out to the kids: some buttons with catchy epi sayings, like “Warning: epidemiology involves risk” (full list available upon request), Giant Ulcer toys (www.giantmicrobes.com) that were leftover incentives from my Helicobacter pylori research study, and a list of careers in public health.



When I asked before my lecture for a show of hands of future epidemiologists, I only got a couple, but I give the group kudos for knowing what epidemiology is in the first place and especially for developing a club devoted to it – at least studying epidemiology will deepen their scientific knowledge and broaden their public health literacy. And you never know, maybe I even made a convert or two!

Epidemiology - Spreading Like Wildfire?

By Cheri Stein, Baseline Middle School, South Haven, MI, Cstein@shps.org

I was desperate. I had a new grade level assignment and a “mini-elective” to teach in science – with no guidelines and a window of time of six weeks per session. I surfed the net looking for any ready made curriculum that would fit



the inquiring minds of 8th graders yet also provide some immediate structure for their teacher! Seemingly by chance, I ran across

“Detectives in the Classroom,” a middle school and high school epidemiology curriculum for science, math, and health educators.

This incredibly well documented curriculum is available in full on-line at www.montclair.edu/detectives/index.html and was written by educators and epidemiologists associated with Montclair State University in New Jersey. The challenging, thought-provoking modules were exactly what I needed in a format easily accommodated to student booklets and teacher manual material. When we have a few extra minutes, I've supplemented with readings from Richard Preston's books “The Hot Zone” and “The Cobra Event”.

My students are enthralled. Our stimulating discussions sometimes range far afield of my intended lesson but manage to remain in the domain of science and epidemiology in particular. That kind of focus is rare in an 8th grade classroom, and is more rewardingly intense in this

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments about the Movement or our website.

We also welcome your suggestions for future items for the newsletter.

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Epidemiology - Spreading Like Wildfire? (Continued)

curriculum than in my regular science curriculum. Students have brought in articles and questions about real life epidemiological events around the world and have a new appreciation for

hypotheses and the rigors of research. I have a fresh appreciation for what thirteen year olds can accomplish when they're motivated and stimulated.

UIC School of Public Health Urban Health and Diversity Program

by Dorothy Washington-Calvin, University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health, Health Careers Opportunity Program, dwash5@uic.edu

In collaboration with the Chicago Public Schools, the UIC School of Public Health Urban Health and Diversity Program adopted and implemented an epidemiology curriculum with eighth grade students. This curriculum, made available to the project through Montclair State University, was one facet of a cohort-based project designed to encourage preparation for public health and health careers. UIC School of Public Health graduate students were recruited and trained in the curriculum and its delivery to serve as health educators. The health educators also developed activities to enhance the lessons. These activities included a word search puzzle on careers in public health and terminology from the curriculum; EPI Jeopardy, based on the television show; viewing of the documentary Typhoid Mary: The Most Dangerous Woman in America; and a series of guest speakers including an epidemiologist from the Chicago Department of Public Health.

These eighth graders participate in the UICSPH Pipeline to Health Careers. On the elementary level, the pipeline maintains cohorts of students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Participating students attend magnet and community schools that enroll populations of students including gifted, learning disabled and English as a Second Language students.

As part of the evaluation component of the project, the health educators administered a pretest and posttest to participants. Results showed an increase in student knowledge of public health and health careers, epidemiology and epidemiology issues. The health educators reported that by the end of the project, students were bouncing the term epidemiology around the classroom. In the beginning, students had found the curriculum challenging, but they were rewarded for their efforts and, in the end, the world of epidemiology was open to them.

The Public Health Agency of Canada presents Buffet Busters at Canada's National Science & Technology Week!

by Brian Szklarczuk, Research Promotion and Outreach, Public Health Agency of Canada, brian@nml.ca



The National Science and Technology Week is an annual event led by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) that brings together some of Canada's leading science and technology to promote careers with young people.

Buffet Busters is an activity designed for Grade 5 students to promote awareness and understanding of epidemiology through a food-borne investigation.

