

Community health theory and practice:

A survey on health and immigrant practices in Somerville, MA



Linda Sprague Martinez, M.A., M.A.

David M. Gute, PhD, MPH

American Public Health Association

Annual Meeting

November 7, 2007

Overview

- Background
 - Conceptualization of the project
 - Existing resources and partnerships
- Design
 - Seminar
 - Research
- Outcomes
 - Challenges
 - Facilitating factors

The Geneva Study

- ❑ The International Centre for Migration and Health (ICMH) designed and implemented a study to assess migrant experiences with health and social services in Geneva, Switzerland
- ❑ A community driven collaboration aimed at improving the health and social conditions for migrant communities
- ❑ As a result of the study, migrant service providers in Geneva were able to use the findings to advocate for improved health services for refugees and undocumented migrants living in Geneva

Existing infrastructure

- University
 - Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service
 - Tufts Community Research Collaborative
 - Immigrant Occupational Health Study
- Community
 - Immigrant Service Providers Group
 - Local community-based research institutes

Community Health Theory and Practice

□ Community Health Program

- As a multidisciplinary program, touching on diverse aspects of health and society, and encourages the exploration of health issues from a variety of perspectives
- Through courses and an internship, CHP students analyze the following:
 - the factors that determine health and illness,
 - how communities define and try to resolve health-related problems,
 - the formation of health care policy in the United States with a comparative look at other countries, and
 - the institutions that plan, regulate, and deliver health care services.

Community Health Theory and Practice

- In order to engage a greater number of students in community-based research initiatives the implementation of a Somerville immigrant health study has been placed in a context of an undergraduate research seminar entitled Community Health: Theory and Practice (CH182).

What makes course this innovative?

- Research Team Approach
- Interdisciplinary faculty
- Community members and students working cooperatively with community partners

Team Composition

- ❑ Faculty from: Community Health, The Freidman School of Nutrition, The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, The Fletcher School of Diplomacy
- ❑ Four local community members, recent immigrants from Brazil and Haiti
- ❑ Tufts students, with majors in Community Health, IR, Psychology, Child Development, Biopsychology, Spanish, and Engineering

Survey on Health and Immigrant Practices in Somerville (SHIPS)

Population

- Living in the community of Somerville, MA
- 18+
- Foreign born including the island of Puerto Rico
- Speakers of Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole or English

Survey on Health and Immigrant Practices in Somerville (SHIPS)

□ Recruitment

■ Snowball Sample

- Community Agencies
- Churches
- Local Businesses
- Health Care Organizations
- Social and Athletic Clubs

Survey on Health and Immigrant Practices in Somerville (SHIPS)

□ The Survey

- Socio-demographic Characteristics
- Migration History
- Family
- Housing
- Work History
- Health/Mental Health/Health care
- Sense Coherence
- Justice
- Child related services and institutions

Challenges and Facilitating Factors

□ Process

- Consensus
- Time constrains
- Translation
- Assessment
- Community politics

□ Assets

- Social capital
- Human capital
- Cultural capital

Next Steps

- Continued fieldwork
- Analysis
- Dissemination
 - Community Partners
 - Broader audiences
- Advocacy