

Pan American Health Organization Experiences & Opportunities

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is the regional office of the World Health Organization located in Washington, D.C. The role of the organization is to provide assistance to countries in the Region of the Americas, to improve the health of their populations. Some of the activities of the organization include providing technical support to develop health systems, monitoring disease trends and outbreaks, and developing regional health policies and tools that countries can use in forming their own national health policies and strategies.

Four students from the McMaster University Masters of Science in Global Health program completed practicums at PAHO: Sarah Bryson, Ario Mirian, David Oldenburger, and Anthony Quiang.

Based on PAHO's Strategic Plan 2014-2019 strategy to prevent and control chronic non-communicable disease, Sarah worked on a publication to be published in a peer-reviewed journal on national success cases in hypertension control. The purpose of her research was to understand why and how certain countries have met targets for controlling hypertension. This could help identify key elements that should be part of a national framework to help improve prevention, awareness, treatment, and control of hypertension. In the same department, Anthony edited a paper on the economic cost of diabetes in Latin America and the Caribbean, and also co-authored a paper reviewing the quality of clinical practice guidelines for diabetes management.

Furthermore, Ario conducted a study on premature stroke mortality between 1998 and 2003 in the Americas using the PAHO mortality database. His analysis revealed current premature stroke mortality rates for eligible countries, trends within the time period, and disparities among countries.

Finally, David's practicum took place on the Health System and Services department, working on the development of an implementation strategy for advance practice nursing in primary health care of Latin America and the Caribbean. This role included a thorough review of current literature on APN implementation, and guiding policies, as well as consulting experts in the field. The objective was for



the strategy to be used as a tool for countries who plan to use the implementation of the advanced practice nursing role to help in strengthening primary healthcare, and move towards Universal Health.

This summary has been a brief overview of some of the many activities that PAHO coordinates, and its role in the Region. It also helps to shed light on the opportunities that are available to McMaster Global Health students wishing to do their practicum at the organization. Furthermore, it is important to note the advantages of students associating with organizations such as PAHO and WHO for their future careers.

Beyond the organization, living in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area provides the opportunity to visit the many Smithsonian museums, listen to live jazz at the sculpture garden while sharing a pitcher of Sangria, watch the July 4th fireworks, or walk by any of the many monuments and opulent federal buildings that line the D.C. streets.

For these reasons and more, taking a student practicum at PAHO is invaluable, as it is an excellent opportunity to learn new skills, network with global health experts, and explore the U.S. Capital. To participate in a PAHO practicum, students must be willing to commit a minimum of 8 weeks, and understand that no remuneration is available, and the capital city is very expensive place to live (\$800+/month rent for a room). Students hoping to do a practicum at the organization should seek out contacts within the McMaster community who may know PAHO staff looking for summer interns and apply as early as possible.

The Hospital for Sick Children (Sick Kids): Centre for Global Child Health

Knowledge Synthesis, Translation & Advocacy



Address: 525 University Avenue, Suite 702
Toronto, ON, M5G 2L3
Contact: globalchild.health@sickkids.ca
Website: <http://www.sickkids.ca/globalchildhealth/>
Supervisors: Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta & Michelle Gaffey



About The Centre for Global Child Health:

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), affiliated with the University of Toronto, is Canada's most research-intensive hospital and the largest centre dedicated to improving children's health in Canada. As innovators in child health, SickKids improves child health by integrating care, research and teaching. With professionals from all disciplines of health care and research, SickKids provides the best in complex and specialized care by creating scientific and clinical advancements, sharing knowledge and expertise and championing the development of an accessible, comprehensive and sustainable child health system.

The SickKids Centre for Global Child Health provides a dedicated hub for global child health-focused activities and connects researchers and health-care professionals around the world. The centre is dedicated to improving the lives of children and their families in resource-poor environments through collaboration in ground-breaking research, sustainable capacity-building through education, the active communication of results through advocacy, and through promoting improved child health through knowledge and networks.

Student Perspective, by: Iqra Effendi

Practicum objective: To conduct a situational analysis on adolescent health issues and non-communicable diseases youth and to assist in UNICEF's framework development for these two aspects of global health.

Working at Sick Kids has been an extremely eye-opening experience. Thankfully, I was fortunate enough to share this novel experience with four of my fellow M.Sc. Global Health classmates. My project required a collaborative effort to conduct a broad literature review, map and extract data, develop country profiles, and produce high-quality reports that we would present to UNICEF by the end of the summer. The nature of the practicum required our team to be quick and efficient with each of the tasks we were assigned, while also being flexible. There were many instances where our prior work didn't feel productive as the project started heading in a new direction, and initially this was frustrating to all of us. However, we soon realized that it was our initial work that actually helped the project gain a better direction, indicating the value of every step in successfully completing a project. Furthermore, working at one of the top global health institutions in the world allowed for valuable interactions with world-renowned global health professionals such as Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta and Dr. Stanley Zlotkin. These networking opportunities allowed for me to learn from the best, while also establishing life-long connections that will assist in building a strong foundation for my future goals within global health.

Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research



CCGHR CCRSM
 Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research
 Coalition canadienne pour la recherche en santé mondiale

Address: 569 ch Riverside,
Wakefield, QC J0X 3G0

Contact: ccghr@ccghr.ca
(819)-459-2494

Website: <http://www.ccghr.ca/>

Supervisors: Dr. Victor Neufeld & Dr. Charles Larson

About CCGHR:

The Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research (CCGHR) is a not-for-profit organization promoting better and more equitable health worldwide through the production and use of knowledge. To achieve this vision, the Coalition networks, facilitates, coordinates and strengthens capacity with the ultimate aim of advancing equitable solutions to priority health challenges worldwide. Since its founding in 2003, the Coalition has linked the like-minded across borders and disciplines, in the process building a fluid, diverse and connected global health research community.

The Coalition encompasses the following strategic directions and priorities: 1- Strengthen the capacities of global health researchers, institutions and systems 2- Develop and promote mechanisms to influence the policy process through Knowledge Translation and communication. 3- Facilitate collaboration among global, national and local researchers, institutions and systems.

McMaster Student Chapter, by: Christine Wang:

With the aim of promoting networking and knowledge exchange amongst global health researchers at McMaster and students across all disciplines, the Student Chapter hosts a variety of events, ranging from speed-mentoring sessions with CCGHR faculty members to the Global Health Forum

with Student Chapters across the province. Along with helping to plan and coordinate events, MSc students are invited to join the Global Health Agora, a community-engagement platform funded by McMaster's *Forward With Integrity* grant that explores emerging global health issues.

Student Perspective, by: Sherif Saleh

Practicum objectives: 1. Assessing the value of the HI to the Coalition and potential funders; 2. Exploring strategies to promote the HI while encourage active collaboration; 3. Predicting and outlining the future goals of the HI; 4. Examining the role of 'institutional hubs'

The Harmonization Initiative (HI) is an online database developed to improve communication, coordination, and collaboration amongst global health researchers by identifying who is doing what and where with Canadian global health research dollars.

HARMONIZATION

A Canadian Response

Communication = Knowledge-Sharing

Coordination = Efficiency, Not duplicating

Collaboration = Working together

This pilot is a response to the 2005 Paris Declaration, and subsequent reports and acknowledgements that there is a lack of communication, coordination, and collaboration within the field of global health. Specific to Canada, this pilot is attempting to respond by gathering information on current research projects, and sharing that information, in order to encourage an awareness amongst researchers as to who is out there, what projects they are working on, and what institutions they are working for and/or with.

Working with CCGHR has truly been an extremely rewarding experience and a great stepping-stone into the global health field. During my placement with CCGHR I had the privilege to work with Dr. V. Neufeld (Special Advisor) and Dr. C. Larson (Current National Coordinator). In order to explore the practicum goals, I had the chance to interview different CCGHR institutional member representatives and members in major funding agencies. I also had the opportunity to prepare various documents for the Coalition along with a final consultation report outlining a few recommendations & defined stakeholder roles for the promotion & expansion of the database going forward.

Working at one of the best Canadian global health institutions allowed for valuable networking opportunities that will assist in building a strong foundation for my future goals within global health.

Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital



Address: Corner Fuel and Oudtshoorn Street,
Coronationville, Johannesburg,
Gauteng, South Africa
Website: <http://www.esru.co.za>
Supervisor: Dr. Ashraf Coovadia
Contact: ashraf.coovadia@wits.ac.za



Student Perspective, by: Melanie Bisnauth

Thesis Research: Evaluation of the New Option B+ Pregnant Mother to Child Transmission Program for HIV infected women at hospital facilities: Case Study at the Rahima Moosa Mother & Child Hospital.

About Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital

The Empilweni Services and Research Unit (ESRU), situated at Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa is comprised of a research clinic as well as a clinic offering routine services. With a focus on HIV, the unit has increasingly acquired the skills and appetite for research in other areas, such as childhood infectious diseases and infectious diseases in pregnant women.

With the unit seeing itself as being the ‘home’ of the Paediatric Infectious Disease sub-specialty training programme within the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of Witwatersrand, the future looks set to ensure that there is a natural convergence of training, service and research within the ESRU site.

Empilweni is one of the largest Paediatric treatment clinics in the Gauteng province and country with over 1600 children in active follow up. ESRU continues to conduct research projects to help find solutions to better improve the lives of women and children living with HIV in conjunction with its international collaborators and the South African National Department of Health.

My experience in completing my thesis research under my local supervisor Dr. Ashraf Coovadia, (Director of ESRU, and Department Head of the Paediatric and Child Health Unit) was extremely valuable and provided me with transparency and continuous support to pursue my passion in policy research for HIV & PMTCT. For my thesis I conducted key informant interviews with both healthcare professionals and pregnant women at Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital to further analyze the initiation of the World Health Organizations envision of a “one size fits all” approach to enable pregnant women access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) through the Option B+ policy integration into South Africa for pregnant mother to child transmission programs.

Dr. Coovadia and my committee were incredibly supportive throughout the entire process, and I was able to shape my research to suit my own interests, while still contributing to the novel research being conducted at the ESRU.

Relevance to Global Health

Policy often excludes the voices of people most impacted by the implementation of it. Little thought has been given to pregnant women’s attitudes towards the policy to better understand how they feel about adherence to ART for life and can act as a way of informing and strengthening healthcare service delivery.

Innovative Canadians for Change: Alberta

Address: 8540 109th Street NW
Edmonton, AB T6G 1E6
Contact: (416) 351-3732
icchange.ca
Supervisor: Jessica Hogan

About ICChange

ICChange is a Canadian Non-Profit Organization run by a group of highly efficient and bright young professionals. The organization focuses on local and international development initiatives, and its mission is to improve the quality of life and security of vulnerable populations by implementing successful global initiatives through sustainable and scalable models. They solve problems through systems thinking, and use disruptive innovation, agile management, and strong local partnerships to achieve their ambitious goals. The Executive is made up of mostly physicians, but also includes nursing, business and computer technical experts. They have cross-country branches in Edmonton, Vancouver, and Toronto, each with a different focus for project work.

ICChange has a strong partnership with the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), the University of Alberta, and AMREF, among others. The organization helped establish the Office of International Surgery at the University of Alberta. They currently work with the KRCS on disaster management and injury prevention in Kenya, including establishing an Emergency Medical School, developing a pre-hospital data management system, and delivering the first Advanced Trauma Life Support course for health professionals in East Africa. They have implemented an Electronic Medical Record system in Kibera slum in Nairobi. Their first project as a group was to manufacture and distribute household ceramic water filters for vulnerable communities in Kenya and East Africa.



Student Practicum Experience, by: Gina Bischoff

I worked as an intern with ICChange from May until July this summer, helping the Executive with various jobs, but focusing mostly on the Kenya Trauma and Injury Program. Some project work included helping to establish a partnership agreement with the research branch of the KRCS, applying for grants, and conducting a literature review of frontline trauma care in low-resourced settings. Most of my contributions were done remotely, and this allowed me to practice self-driven initiative and deductive communication like never before. My supervisor and the rest of the Executive gave me the opportunity to put my own spin on tasks in an effort to promote creativity and leadership.

ICChange is a really unique organization. The Executive and their partners delivers complicated interventions in the most difficult settings possible (low-resourced nations, slums) and they tackle all project work in addition to their consuming, primary jobs. All are volunteers and the organization has minimal overhead, adding to their unique and effective approach. It was brilliant to be exposed to the knowledge and leadership these young professionals possess and radiate naturally. They have bold ideas and take action quickly and efficiently. It was an inspiring experience and I hope to continue working with them in a primary or supportive role as my global health career advances.

The Women's College Hospital / The Women's College Research Institute



Address: 76 Grenville St.
Toronto, ON M5S 1B2

Contact: (416) 323-6400
<http://www.womenscollegehospital.ca>

Supervisor: Dr. Paula Rochon

About Women's College Hospital

The Women's College Hospital (WCH) is a prominent ambulatory and academic hospital in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. With an emphasis on improving the health of women, the hospital develops, educates and delivers novel treatments and integrated care models¹. The work done by the hospital is rooted in the following values: equity, safety, innovation, relationships, leadership and collaboration¹.

The Women's College Research Institute (WCRI) is a world leader in the area of women's health¹. The WCRI's highly esteemed scientists and adjunct scientists have garnered attention from across the globe for their work in a variety of research areas. These areas include Aging, Cancer, HIV, Mental Health, Musculoskeletal, Reproductive Health, and Systems Solutions¹.

The full affiliation with the University of Toronto is just the beginning of the academic training initiatives undertaken by the WCH and WCRI¹. These initiatives include awards and fellowships; graduate programs; volunteer opportunities; undergraduate programs; mentorships, and more¹.

Student Perspective, by: Manpreet Lamba

Practicum objective: Research in the factors associated with Longevity/ Aging

My experience in completing both my scholarly paper and my practicum under Dr. Paula Rochon, (Senior Scientist at the WCRI, and Vice President of Research at the WCH) was nothing short of a great learning opportunity. Given my interest in the global aging population, both of my projects allowed me to explore this area further. For my practicum I had the opportunity to participate in research relating to the factors related to longevity in centenarians, and for my scholarly paper I had the opportunity to research non-pharmacological treatments for the Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia. I gained a lot of practical research experience and am looking forward to continuing to do so. Dr. Paula Rochon and her team were incredibly supportive throughout the entire process, and I was able to tailor my projects to suit my own interests, while still contributing to the goals of the WCH.

Relevance to Global Health

Given the aging of the global population, it is important to study the factors associated with healthy aging, as well as the ways to manage morbidity in later life. A focus on women's health is also significant given their marginalization in various settings across the world.

1. Women's College Hospital. *This is the future of healthcare: WCH strategic plan 2011-2015*. WCH 2011.