Faculty-led Small Group Experiences

Community Based Cohort Study in the Western Region of São Paulo

Faculty Mentor
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This research project partnered with the Pediatrics Department at the Faculdade de Medicina of Universidade de São Paulo (FMUSP) to examine the social determinants of health in a subpopulation of mothers and infants in São Paulo. Led by Dr. Heisler and her FMUSP colleague, Dr. Alexandra Brentani, the summer team of 3 UMMS students, a Harvard college student, and a social worker from USP's Hospital Universitario (HU), developed a thorough, semi-structured interview protocol and a home observation survey.

One project team identified 100 babies (from a cohort of 3,000) who were living in some of the highest-risk areas in São Paulo and conducted 12 home interviews with the mothers using questions structured to gain an understanding of the social determinants of health (i.e., access to healthcare services, extent of toxic stresses in the environment, health conditions of the mother and infant, living conditions in the home, development of the infant, and the mother’s resiliency and problem solving techniques). Local community health agents (CHAs) served as guides and facilitators.

Another team conducted over 40 home visits with about 20 CHAs based at Vila Piaui, a Sao Paulo health center. They observed and assessed the results of a pilot diabetes self-management intervention that trained CHAs to use motivational interviewing to improve patient outcomes. Evaluations were compiled using an adapted fidelity checklist. Data was also collected for the 50 patients participating in the study and for 50 control patients.

2014 UMMS students on this project were: Pooja Agrawal*, Marlon Bohorquez, Stephanie Chalifour, Simanjit Mand*, and Miquel Rovira*.

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