

Escola D'Estiu de Salut Pública de Menorca, 2008

C2. Social Epidemiology

Instructors:

Course co-director:

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Course co-director:

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Cardiovascular, Madrid, Spain**

& Adjunct Faculty Department of Epidemiology, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of
Public Health, Baltimore, USA

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Language: English

Dates: 22-24 September 2008

**Time: Monday 22nd and Tuesday 23th, from 9.00 h. to 13.00 h. and 15.00 h. to
18.00 h., and Wednesday 24th, from 9.00 h. to 14.00 h.**

Location: Llatzeret de Maó - MENORCA

Places: 25 (maximum)

Course description:

This 3-day course provides students with a systematic and selective overview of conceptual approaches and research findings related to the impact of social context on the health of various populations. The course is divided into 5 sessions; each highlights a different area of research on the frontier of this emerging field. Lectures and large-group discussions will be in English, however small-group discussions will take place in both English and Spanish. The topics to be addressed include:

1. The concepts, theory and history social epidemiology
2. Social class, inequality and health (the case of cardiovascular disease)
3. Neighborhood conditions and health (the case of environmental stress and cardiovascular disease)
4. Social integration: from social networks to social capital (the case of cognitive decline)
5. NATURAL EXPERIMENTS IN Social Epidemiology (the case of economic crisis in Cuba)

Emphasis will be placed on extending the causal chain thought to be associated with patterns of acute and chronic disease to include "upstream" factors related to social context. This

includes discussion of methods related to the study of social factors across multiple levels; however, this is not intended to be a methods course. The course will be taught as a seminar with brief lectures followed by small-group discussion of assigned readings.

Organization:

Each of the five sessions of the course will be organized similarly. For each session, there will be 1 or 2 required readings. In order for this course to be successful, **it is important that all students read the required readings carefully before each session**. This is especially true for the first session. Optional reading materials are offered for each session for those who are interested, but these papers will not be discussed in depth.

Each session will begin with a lecture in English (about 45 minutes) by the course instructor, followed by 15 minutes of discussion. Students will break into small groups to discuss answers to questions about each day's readings. Discussion questions will be provided before class. Class-wide discussions will be in English, however, each small group will have the option to choose between English or Spanish. After a break, the entire class will get back together to discuss the answers to questions. A 90-minute lunch break will divide the morning (10:00-13:30) and afternoon session (15:00-18:00).

Intended audience:

This course is open to professionals who work in Public Health. Some previous exposure to graduate-level courses in epidemiology and/or social/behavioral science is recommended.

Course Program:

Day 1:

Session 1: Concepts, theories and history of social epidemiology

Topics:

- Definition and history of the field of social epidemiology
- The two epidemiologies: cases vs. population rates
- The problem of *distality* and elongated causal chains
- Importance of theory in social epidemiology
- Problems of causal inference for “upstream” social factors

Session leader: Glass and Franco

Readings:

(Required readings)

Rose, G. 1985. Sick individuals and sick populations. *Int J Epidemiol*, 14:32-8.

Kawachi, I. 2002. Social epidemiology. *Soc Sci Med*, 54:1739-41.

(Optional reading)

Glass, TA and McAtee, MJ. 2006. Behavioral science at the crossroads in public health: Extending horizons, envisioning the future. *Soc Sci Med*, 62:1650-1671.

Session 2: Social class, inequality and health: the role of theory

Topics:

- Comparison of different definitions and measures of social class
- Competing theories for the association between social class and health
- Can social class be a “cause”?
- Previous studies of social class and cardiovascular health

Session leader: Glass

Readings:

Marmot, M. 2006. Health in an unequal world. *The Lancet*, 368:2081-2094.

(Optional reading)

Regidor, E, et al. 2006. Association of adult socioeconomic position with hypertension in older people. *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 60:74-80.

Day 2:

Session 3: Neighborhoods and health: Cardiovascular disease

Topics:

- The role of the social environment in CVD
- Definitions of places and neighborhoods
- Measuring neighborhood conditions
- Neighborhoods and causal inference

Session leader: Franco

Readings:

(Required readings)

Augustin, T, et al. 2008. Neighborhood psychosocial hazards and cardiovascular disease: the Baltimore Memory Study. *Am J Public Health*, 98:1664-1670.

(Optional reading)

Diez Roux, AV. 2003. Residential environments and cardiovascular risk. *J Urban Health*, 80:569-89.

Session 4: Social integration and health: family caregiving and dementia

Topics:

- Defining social integration, social networks and social cohesion
- Social facts and Durkheim
- Review of theories and findings on social integration and cognition in older persons

Session leader: Glass

Readings:

(Required readings)

Zunzunegui, MV, et al. 2003. Social networks, social integration, and social engagement determine cognitive decline in community-dwelling Spanish older adults. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci*, 58:S93-S100.

(Optional readings)

Berkman, LF, et al. 2000. From social integration to health: Durkheim in the new millennium. *Soc Sci Med*, 51:843-57.

Day 3:

Session 5: Natural experiments in Social Epidemiology. The case of bodyweight and mortality in Cuba during the Special Period

Topics:

- Large scale social and economic processes and health
- Economic crisis: determining causal relations
- Natural experiments in social epidemiology

Session leader: Franco

Readings:

(Required readings)

Franco, M, et al. 2007. Impact of energy intake, physical activity, and population-wide weight loss on cardiovascular disease and diabetes mortality in Cuba, 1980-2005. *Am J Epidemiol*, 166:1374-80.

Franco, M, et al. 2008. Obesity reduction and its possible consequences: What can we learn from Cuba's Special Period? *Canadian Medical Association Journal April 8, 2008 178(8) 1032-34*

(Optional readings)

Tapia Granados JA. Recessions and Mortality in Spain, 1980–1997
European Journal of Population (2005) 21: 393–422

Grading policy:

This course will offer 2 credit hours. Formal evaluations (grades) will not be given.

Textbooks and reading materials:

No textbook will be used in this class. Instead, required readings for each class will be emailed to registered students by the course liaison. Students will be required to print and carefully review the required readings (and the syllabus) prior to the start of class.

Nota Bene: All students are expected to have read all required readings before class on the first day of the course. Because this is a discussion-oriented course, careful review of the articles is necessary to allow for meaningful discussion.

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