

# Teaching a Course on Violent Conflict and Health

Unite For Sight  
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- Trained as an infectious disease epidemiologist
- Research interests:
  - Epidemiology and prevention of HIV/AIDS in U.S, China, Russia and Middle East
  - Research ethics, particularly ethical issues in student-led global health research and research with vulnerable populations
  - Violent conflict, displacement and health

- Why a course on violent conflict and health for MPH Students?
- Course overview:  
“Responding to Violent Conflict: Epidemiological Methods and Public Health Interventions”
- Future directions for my course

My motivation was driven by this question:

- How do we as epidemiologists and public health professionals respond to the devastation and human suffering caused by violent conflict (VC) ?
  - Specifically, what can we do to prevent the likelihood of VC and to mitigate its negative health impacts?
- To train a new generation of public health professionals interested in careers in humanitarian health

- Apply and evaluate epidemiological methods to analyze and measure population-level health effects of violent conflicts.
- Describe and analyze acute and long-term health consequences of violent conflict with a focus on specific populations; including refugees, internally displaced and other vulnerable populations.
- Describe and evaluate public health interventions in humanitarian settings; identify gaps in evidence and propose areas for further research.
- Identify and analyze ethical challenges of conducting research with conflict-affected populations.

**Course prerequisite:** An introductory course in epidemiology

## **I - Foundational topics**

- Typology of violence
- Violence as a public health problem
- Use of epidemiological methods:
  - Estimating excess mortality in civilians
  - Population-level prevalence estimates of various conflict-related morbidities
  - Sampling strategies for recruiting displaced populations
  - Estimating size of displaced populations
  - Evaluating humanitarian interventions
- Use of qualitative and mixed-methods
- Architecture of humanitarian assistance, UN cluster system and standards
- Ethical dilemmas in conducting research in humanitarian settings and with conflict-affected populations

## II - Specific Topics

- Civilian-military coordination in humanitarian response
- Substance use and HIV/AIDS
- Sexual and gender-based violence
- Nutrition and food insecurity
- Mental health issues
- Non-communicable diseases
- Global health diplomacy and health as a bridge to peace

## **III – Understanding refugee experience**

- Refugee resettlement in U.S. – Focus on New Haven
- Meet refugee families in class and hear their stories
- Health of resettled refugees

## **IV - Case Study**

- The Syrian crisis and its public health implications (focus on Lebanon)

## **V – Table-top Interactive Simulation Exercise**

- Responding to Cholera outbreak in Yemen – A simulation exercise

- “Active-learning” – seminar style
  - Brief student-led discussion of assigned readings followed by class discussion
- Expert Perspectives:
  - Guest speakers from American University of Beirut (via Skype), Johns Hopkins and elsewhere
- Table-top simulation exercise (Cholera in Yemen)
- Meeting with resettled refugee families in classroom

- Develop a detailed, scientifically rigorous, ethically sound and feasible research proposal to be potentially implemented in partnership with a humanitarian organization with conflict-affected populations
- Goal: To contribute to evidence-based humanitarian response

- A pilot study of diabetes care among Syrian diabetic refugees in Lebanon
- A retrospective analysis of diphtheria outbreak among Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, September – December, 2017
- The effects of the Israeli/Palestine conflict on child mental health: a mix-methods study
- Reproductive health needs of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

- Cervical cancer awareness, prevention, and screening for Syrian refugee Women in Jordan's Zaatari refugee camp
- Assessment of knowledge and attitudes towards refugees and low income Jordanians living with HIV
- An analysis of the mental health of elderly Rohingya refugees in the Palong Khali settlement in Bangladesh
- Evaluation of an ultrasound training program for community health workers and midwives in the Kharaz refugee camp for Somalis displaced to Yemen

- More focus on primary prevention of violent conflict
- Develop a jointly taught course between Yale School of Public Health and a “Frontier University” using remote technology
- Addition of a “field-component” to the course midway through the course as well as post-course internship possibility for some students
- Formal partnership with humanitarian organizations

**THANK YOU !**

For more information,  
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