

Chronic Disease/Alcohol Epidemiology

The Chronic Disease, Injury, and Environmental Epidemiology (CDIEE) Section assesses the public health impact of the leading causes of death and disability among Georgians, the prevalence of key risk behaviors related to these health outcomes, and the effectiveness of prevention and control strategies for these health outcomes and risk behaviors. Located in the Epidemiology Branch in the Georgia Division of Public Health, the Branch includes a highly skilled and highly motivated staff of over 100 professionals who are engaged in all aspects of epidemiology. Senior staff and Branch management are among the best in the country, and include physicians and veterinarians with graduate degrees in epidemiology as well as doctoral-level epidemiologists.

The CSTE fellowship position in the Chronic Disease, Injury, and Environmental Epidemiology Section will specifically focus on one of the leading causes of death and disability in Georgia and in the U.S.: excessive alcohol consumption. The CSTE Fellow who fills this position will play a vital role in strengthening the science base for the prevention of excessive drinking, including binge and underage drinking, while building their epidemiologic expertise. Furthermore, since excessive drinking is related to many other public health problems, the CSTE Fellow will have the opportunity to collaborate with many other state programs as well.

During the two-year assignment, the CSTE Fellow will learn principles of chronic disease, injury, and environmental epidemiology; gain experience working with large datasets that are managed by the state health department, including vital statistics, hospital discharge data, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS); develop expertise in alcohol-related health effects and prevention strategies; and have the opportunity to work collaboratively with scientists in other state health agencies and at CDC.

Potential projects:

The CSTE Fellow will have the opportunity to analyze trends in binge drinking episodes among Georgia adults using BRFSS data and new data on the usual type of alcoholic beverage and the source of the alcohol consumed by Georgia high school students using 2007 YRBS data. Other studies could include an assessment of total and beverage-specific alcohol consumption among adult binge drinkers in Georgia using data from a new 2008 BRFSS binge drinking module; deaths and years of potential life lost due to excessive drinking in Georgia Counties using Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI) software; an assessment of the impact of increasing alcohol excise taxes on the total price of alcoholic beverages by drinking patterns (e.g., binge vs. non-binge drinking); an assessment of state trends in alcohol-impaired driving using BRFSS and other state data (e.g., crime statistics on arrests for driving while impaired and emergency medical services data); and an evaluation of the impact of changes in server training on alcohol sales to underage youth.

Surveillance Evaluation:

The CSTE Fellow will evaluate the usefulness of state or county Medical Examiner data for assessing alcohol-related injuries. This will involve an assessment of the completeness and timeliness of the reporting of alcohol data in the Medical Examiner

system(s), and the development of recommendations to improve the reporting of this information as well.

State Emergency Preparedness Planning:

The CSTE fellow will be able to work with the Chief Environmental Epidemiologist, who is a member of the CDIEE section and is responsible for developing and coordinating environmental health components of the State Emergency Preparedness plan.

The fellow will also be able to participate in other CDIEE Section activities, such as chronic disease and injury burden assessment; monitoring breast and cervical cancer screening; and the analysis and reporting of data from the cancer registry, the stroke registry, and the violent death registry. There will also be opportunities for short-term assignments working in infectious disease, maternal and child health, or STD epidemiology.

Assignment Location:	Atlanta, Georgia
Primary Mentor:	John Horan, MD, MPH Chief of Chronic Disease, Injury, and Environmental Epidemiology Section, Georgia Division of Public Health
Advanced Degrees:	MD, State University of New York (1979) MPH, Johns Hopkins University (1984)
Secondary Mentor:	Lydia Clarkson, MPH Cardiovascular Health Epidemiologist Georgia Division of Public Health
Advanced Degrees:	MPH, Emory University (2005)