

Maternal and Child Health

The Family Health Research and Program Development Unit (FHR&PD), Office of Title V and Family Health, will provide administrative support and overall technical guidance for Fellowship activities. FHR&PD is the responsible for maternal and child health research in the Texas Department of State Health Services.

FHR&PD includes subject matter experts in women's health, perinatal health, and child and adolescent health and researchers who collaborate to create synergy between research and practice by collecting, analyzing and interpreting state and national data to identify trends and problem areas and researching and promulgating best practices and evidence-based interventions that have applications to public health. FHR&PD conducts research to inform policy development and programmatic decision-making and supports several programs throughout the Division of Family and Community Health Services. These programs include Maternal and Child Health and Children with Special Health Care Needs (Title V), Family Planning (Titles X and Title XX), the Texas EPSDT Program (Title XIX), and WIC.

The FHR&PD Fellow could have a unique role in preparedness activities through research and investigation to identify the unique needs of the MCH population during a disaster and suggestions for an appropriate response.

Daily activities will emphasize research priorities, but will include routine interaction with several MCH programs. The Fellow may contribute to routine data analyses or special epidemiological evaluations using data collected by these programs. The Fellow will interact with leaders throughout the Division of Family and Community Health Services and have an opportunity to present his/her findings at staff meetings.

Publication and presentation of original research is strongly encouraged. In 2007, FHR&PD had 13 abstracts accepted for presentation at the annual CDC MCH Epi Conference, three of which were submitted by a fellow.

Investigation of Maternal Mortality

By matching birth and death records, a dataset can be created to describe the prevalence and correlates of maternal mortality in Texas. This investigation will move beyond pregnancy-related complications that contribute to maternal mortality and explore other causes of death, for example, homicide. Improved understanding of maternal mortality will inform education initiatives that can be implemented through programmatic levers.

Investigation of Prevalence, Attitudes, and Correlates of Breastfeeding

From 2006 through 2007, Texas has collected a significant amount of data pertaining to breastfeeding. In 2007, Texas became the first state to include breastfeeding attitudes and knowledge questions to the BRFSS. These data will be available for analyses in May 2008. Also, in 2007, Texas completed one of the largest surveys on breastfeeding

prevalence, attitudes, and practices. In collaboration with the Texas WIC program, over 10,000 WIC mothers who were conducting their one-year WIC certification completed an eight-page survey focusing on breastfeeding. These data are currently being entered and will be available for analysis in May 2008.

Investigation of Adolescent Pregnancy in Rural and Border Areas

The majority of research on adolescent pregnancy focuses on urban, African American girls. To gain a broader understanding of adolescent pregnancy in Texas, analyses are needed that explore differences in adolescent pregnancy by geography – rural, urban, and border. These analyses may include linking birth record datasets to follow cohorts of adolescent mothers for subsequent births. These analyses will inform program development and contribute to the adolescent pregnancy literature.

Analysis of Matched Data Sets

Through the Texas SSDI project, Texas is currently matching data with the Department of Family and Protective Services. The matched data sets can answer questions and address topics that include differences in cause of death for children involved in child protective services compared to the general youth population, differences in SIDS rates for children involved in child protective services compared to the general youth population, and difference in adolescent birth rates for children involved in child protective services compared to the general youth population.

Age Patterns in Adolescent Pregnancy

A prevailing assumption in adolescent pregnancy prevention is that adolescents are believed to be impregnated by adolescents. However, limited studies exist that explore the role of adult paternity in adolescent pregnancy. Previous studies have not explored racial/ethnic disparities, geographic disparities, or acculturation. Using Texas birth records, analyses are needed that explore differences in age between mother and father among adolescents.

Access to High Risk Care

Analysis is needed to determine what proportion of high risk pregnant women, defined using birth certificate information, are delivering at high-risk facilities. Furthermore, analyses are needed that explain differences and identify the barriers between high-risk pregnant women who deliver at high risk facilities and those who do not. This information would have a direct impact on improving perinatal systems.

Infant Death and Child Welfare

Through analysis of child fatality review team (CFRT) data throughout Texas, an association between open child protective services cases and infant mortality. CFRT data are incomplete. A more thorough methodology is needed before drawing conclusions

from these data. A need exists to work with Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to match linked birth-death files to DFPS data to determine the prevalence and correlates of DFPS involvement among infant deaths.

Childhood Obesity

DSHS has several datasets that may be used to examine aspects of childhood obesity. These datasets include school-based data collected with funding from DSHS and national datasets such as the National Children's Health Survey. Upon review of the available codebooks, project(s) can be proposed and analyses completed and published.

Assignment Location:	Austin, Texas
Primary Mentor:	Kayan Lewis, PhD Research Specialist Texas Department of State Health Services
Advanced Degrees:	PhD, University of Southern California MA, University of Southern California
Secondary Mentor:	Brian C. Castrucci, MA Director of Family Health Research and Program Development Unit, Texas Department of State Health Services
Advanced Degree:	M.A., Columbia University (2006)