

Activities and Homework Snapshot: Introduction to Environmental Public Health

Provided below is a list of all in-class activities, discussion, and homework ideas for the Introduction to Environmental Public Health lecture.

Activities and homework are optional. You may also choose to assign in-class activities as homework if time isn't available to complete them in class or if you prefer them to the provided homework ideas.

ACTIVITY 1: Research Your Disease (Slide 10)

- What is known or being studied about the environment's connection?

NOTE FOR INSTRUCTOR: Assign students a disease and give them ten minutes to research it online and report back to the class on what is known or being studied about the environment's connection to the condition. Consider assigning health conditions represented on the Tracking Network.

ACTIVITY 2: Public Health Surveillance (Slide 20)

- Research a public health surveillance system and report back to the class.
 - Provide an overview of the system.
 - What data does it provide?
 - What are the data sources? How are they collected?
 - What is the value to public health? How are the data used?

NOTE FOR INSTRUCTOR: Give students ten minutes to research online and report back to the class on a public health surveillance system, answering the questions above.

ACTIVITY 3: Environment and Health Laws (Slide 27)

- Find another federal environment or health data law and share it with the class.

NOTE FOR INSTRUCTOR: Give students ten minutes to research online and report back to the class.



DISCUSSION: Environmental Health in the News (Slide 30)

- Evaluate how environmental public health is reported in the media:
 - Have any of you read anything lately about how the environment may be affecting public health?
 - What was the environmental hazard and exposure?
 - What was the health impact?
 - Who are the sources for information?
 - Was the link between hazard and health condition reported as fact?

NOTE FOR INSTRUCTOR: Scan headlines and pull a recent article reporting on environmental public health (perhaps in your state) to help make the connection and drive a discussion with students about the study of environmental public health and how it is used and interpreted in the real world. Have students read article.

DISCUSSION PROBES: Is the article balanced? Accurate? What are the sources? Does it create public concern? Does science prove or suggest the link between hazard and health effect?

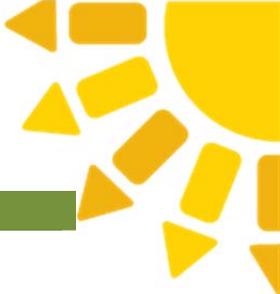
Or, ask some students to respond to the article as a member of the public might, and others to respond as a public health professional might, when first hearing about the issue. Then start a conversation about framing, how issues become politicized, what professionals need to know about the public's typical use of media, public reactions to health-related news, and how that all plays in to public health's goal to solve issues through individual behavior change, stronger regulatory policies, etc.

ARTICLE IDEAS:

- http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=environment-and-our-health&WT.mc_id=SA_syn_huffpo
- <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/>

HOMEWORK 1: What's Your Issue?

- Choose an environmental public health issue you care about.
- Research and read one recent news or journal article about a study related to this issue.
- Oral assignment: Summarize article, why is it important to know about this topic, and its impact on public health.
- Writing assignment: three to four paragraph summary with analysis



HOMEWORK 2: What Does Science Tell Us About Cr-6?

- Research studies and articles in journals and the news media throughout recent years and write an executive summary about your findings. Include data and evidence when possible.
- Questions to consider:
 - How are individuals exposed to the hazard?
 - Is human exposure being monitored? In what ways?
 - Are there any population characteristics to consider?
 - What is the data source?
 - Have the data been used to protect public health? If so, how?
 - Have federal, state, or local laws been enacted as a result of data linking Cr-6 to health issues?
 - Are there any surveillance systems with data on Cr-6?
 - What do we not yet know about Cr-6?