



Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit - 2020-2021

Drivers of Change in Global Health

Course Code	AB_1108
Credits	6
Period	P2
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Science
Course Coordinator	dr. ir. B.G.J.S. Sonneveld
Examiner	dr. ir. B.G.J.S. Sonneveld
Teaching Staff	dr. ir. B.G.J.S. Sonneveld, dr. U.O.C. Ilozumba, drs. A. Koster MSc, L.M. Darvey
Teaching method(s)	Seminar, Lecture

Course Objective

- Acquire knowledge and understanding of important drivers of change and how they influence health and health care globally
- Be able to apply several data collection and analytic skills, using tools of demography, anthropology, sociology and epidemiology
- Critically analyze scientific publications, theories, hypotheses and arguments, and justify and present findings both orally and in writing

Course Content

"Ours is a period of change - continual, multi-form, and multi-level - technical, scientific, economic and political." (Dan Smith, 2012)

The starting point of this course is that in every corner of our lives as individuals, communities and societies, there is change. These changes affect our health in many ways. We are for example confronted with new and emerging infectious diseases, an increase in non-communicable diseases, changing patient demand patterns and rising costs of health care. Changes in health and disease patterns and changes in health care are strongly influenced by the state of the world in terms of climate, demography, economic, politics, culture and technology. In addition, there is a trend of increasing globalization of the world, with a diversity of impacts on people in different parts of the worlds. The patterns and trends described above can be seen as drivers of change in global health as they bring along new problems and new opportunities regarding health and healthcare systems.

The course analyzes causality of the process of change and identifies subsequent responses that mitigate negative effects. We thereby aim to answer questions like: Can changes in health be attributed to a single driver or are multiple factors at play? Is the impact of the driver generic or

does it target local conditions? How can we isolate the effect of the driver amidst other factors? Indeed, identifying causality is a first step to support decision makers and design successful policy interventions. Furthermore, people normally do not succumb to damaging effects of changes; instead affected groups respond with mitigating measures by developing instant coping mechanisms, for the short term, and adaptation measures that anticipate future expected shocks, for longer periods. The controversial situation that short term planning of coping mechanisms undermines long term sustainable future adaptation measures should, of course, be avoided.

This course consists of a series of lectures which provide insight into a number of important drivers of change in different parts of the world, such as urbanization, climate change, migration, technological development, and how they affect health and health care. Each lecture is accompanied by reading materials in the form of scientific articles and complementary background information from the book. Furthermore, the course consists of an assignment and project groups. For the assignment you conduct a case study into one specific driver of change in an assignment group with fellow students. You make use of scientific publications in different sub-assignments to come up with an evidence-based call for action with respect to the driver of choice. At the end of the course you will present your work orally and in the form of a written report together with your team. In the project group meetings you work on your academic skills (data collection, reflection, analysis etc.) through various exercises related to the topic of this course. During these meetings you also receive feedback on sub-assignments.

Teaching Methods

Lectures: 20 hours

Assignment (project group meetings + independent group work): 75 hours (12 + 63)

Self study: 62,5

Exam: 2,5 hours

Method of Assessment

Written exam (50%) and group assignment (50%). Both the exam grade and the total group assignment grade should be 5.5 or higher in order to pass the course.

The assignment includes a written report (40%) and a presentation (10%). The two assignment components (report and presentation) can compensate for each other if one part is insufficient.

Literature

- Course guide
- Assignment manual
- Selected scientific publications (announced on Canvas).
- Recommended: The penguin state of the world atlas, 2012 (ninth edition). Dan Smith. Penguin Books.

Target Audience

This is a compulsory course in the bachelor minor global health

Additional Information

Guest lecturers will be invited for specific lectures.
Lecture attendance is strongly recommended.
Project group meetings and presentation attendance is compulsory.