

## **Instructions for the assignment of course MPH610 Introduction to Public Health**

As described in the Instructions of the first course assignment, seeking funding from governmental agencies or local authorities to support programmes and interventions to protect and promote public health, involves the presentation of a problem, as well as the proposed solution and anticipated benefit.

As already mentioned in the first assignment, this process usually consists of the following four steps:

- 1. Description of the population affected by the specific public health issue and list of key health indicators**
- 2. Description of the specific public health issue, affecting health and well-being or increasing mortality in the population**
- 3. Description of a proposed public health programme aimed at resolving or mitigating the effects of this public health issue**
- 4. Evaluation of the anticipated impact and benefit of the programme in the population**

As you have already been informed, our coursework consists of two parts with different submission dates. Part A, comprises the first two steps above and has already been submitted.

In the **second course assignment (PART B)**, you are requested to cover the last two steps of the above process:

- (3) Description of a proposed public health programme** aimed at resolving or mitigating the effects of this public health issue
- (4) Evaluation of the anticipated impact and benefit** of the programme in the population

**PART B Description of a proposed programme to effectively address a predetermined important public health issue in a specific population**

Word limit: 1000 words ( $\pm 15\%$ )

Weighting: 20% of the total course grade

Method and deadline for submission: Online via Blackboard (**Monday 9 January 2023**)

**Section 3. Description of a proposed public health programme aimed at resolving or mitigating the effects of this public health issue (*500 words  $\pm 15\%$ , 9 points*)**

In this section, you are asked to describe the **proposed intervention programme** that aims to resolve or mitigate the impact/burden of the specific public health issue you have described on the specific population you have identified, as presented in Part A of the assignment, previously submitted.

The first and most important thing to note is that your programme should consist of a Public Health intervention that focuses on prevention not treatment. An example can be found below:

- Example topic: High prevalence of stroke in Greece
- Intervention 1: Improved care for diagnosis and management of strokes (**NOT APPROPRIATE** topic, concerns treatment / management and not prevention)
- Intervention 2: Educational programme to reduce blood pressure through lifestyle modification, such as reducing salt consumption in the community (**APPROPRIATE** topic, concerns prevention)

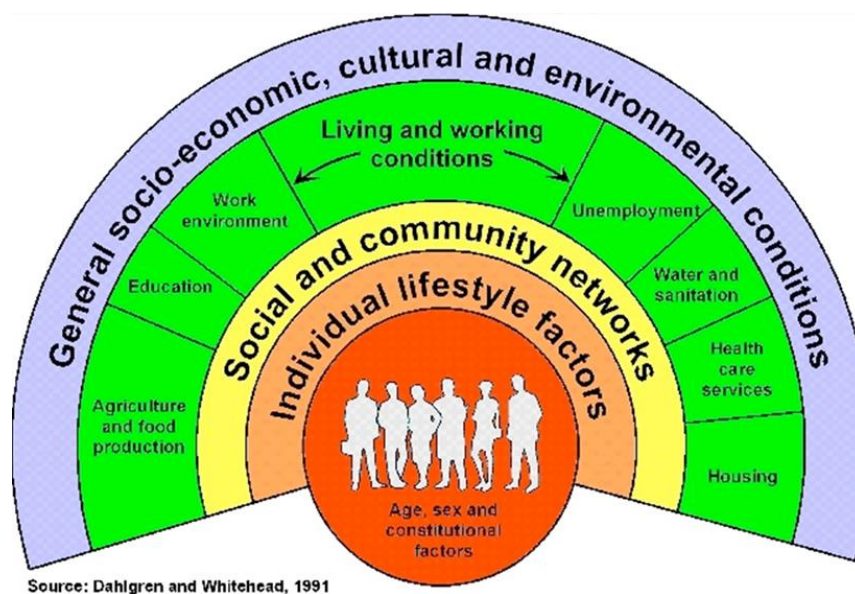
The only cases where a topic related to treatment/management of a disease rather than prevention could be chosen are:

- (a) The intervention aims at tackling inequality in access to health care (e.g. improving access to appropriate primary/secondary care for early stroke management in people living in remote and isolated areas).
- (b) The intervention aims at improving quality of life or enhancing independent living among patients (e.g. people who have suffered a stroke) but not the medical/clinical management of the disease.

Another important point to consider is the 'layer' to target in the hierarchy of the determinants of health (please refer to week 4 lecture). For example, the proposed intervention programme may aim to tackle the immediate or the wider determinants of a disease. Using the example of stroke, acceptable interventions at different levels, could be:

- (a) A programme to reduce blood pressure in the population by reducing the salt content of high-salt foods (i.e. addressing a significant immediate risk factor)
- (b) An educational programme to increase health literacy, particularly concerning the crucial role of diet in reducing the risk of stroke (i.e. addressing a broader factor that in turn determines a direct risk factor for disease).

The image below depicting the various 'layers' of the determinants of health, will help you in the search for the factors that you decide to target. Further details can be found in week's 4 lecture.



Another point to note is that the proposed programme should not be already in place in the specific population to address the particular public health issue of choice. The only case where the choice of an existing programme is allowed, is in case this is proven to be insufficiently implemented or is not effective/efficient in its current form. In such a case, evidence of non-implementation / poor performance of the programme should be provided, in which case your proposed public health intervention could be an improved version of the existing programme.

Choosing an existing programme used in a different population is also acceptable. For example, using the topic mentioned above, if a dietary intervention programme to lower blood pressure has been implemented successfully in a different population (e.g. England), you could recommend and describe its application in your population of choice (e.g. Greece).

If you are proposing a completely new (innovative) programme, then you need to ensure that what you are proposing is realistic and feasible. Do not forget that Public Health is a practical and not a theoretical field, so if a programme cannot be implemented, no matter how thorough and well-designed, it will unfortunately be of no value.

#### **Section 4: Evaluation of the anticipated impact and benefit of the programme in the population** *(500 words $\pm$ 15%, 9 points)*

In this section, you are requested to **prove that your proposed intervention is effective** in dealing with the specific public health issue, by presenting valid and relevant scientific evidence. This can be done in the following three ways:

**(a)** Evidence for the effectiveness of your intervention from the scientific literature (i.e. peer-reviewed published research studies). Research in the field of Public Health very often evaluates the effectiveness of various programmes and presents tangible results that prove whether an intervention is (and to what extent) effective in addressing a health-related issue in a given population. Based on this, you are requested to briefly present a few studies and the relevant evidence for the effectiveness of the intervention, as reported in these studies.

For example, a study by Feng et al (2018), proves that a healthy diet reduces the risk of stroke by 12%.

(<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6160167/>).

**(b)** For several public health programmes, there is no research evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention. In such cases, you will have to rely on other evidence, such as the documented successful application of an existing relevant programme in other populations.

For example, the UK Salt Reduction Programme

(<https://publichealthengland.exposure.co/salt-reduction-programme>) proved to be highly successful and could be cited as an indication of the effectiveness

of a similar intervention in another population. In this case, you should list some indicators for the success of the programme (e.g. in the case of this example, there was an 11% reduction in salt consumption in the population).

**(c)** If the programme you are proposing is completely innovative, then there is a possibility that there is neither scientific research evidence nor examples of similar programmes in other populations. In such cases, you will have to rely on official Statements, Reports, or Guidelines from international public health organizations (e.g. WHO, ECDC, CDC, etc.), stating the expected effectiveness of certain interventions.

For example, Guidelines from the CDC titled 'Preventing Stroke: Healthy Living' ([https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/healthy\\_living.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/healthy_living.htm)), highlight the effectiveness of dietary interventions for reducing the risk of stroke and calls for the implementation of such approaches.

Finally, it should be noted that the topic of stroke and its prevention through dietary modification has been used as an example in these Instructions, so you are requested to avoid choosing this topic for this assignment, for obvious reasons.

**General appearance of assignment:** Should follow the recommended structure in these Guidelines (e.g., correct use of sections, appropriate referencing, etc.) *(2 points)*

Your assignment file should be saved as in the example below:

Course code section\_Name\_Surname (e.g. MPH610X\_George\_Georgiou).

**Wishing you all a successful submission!**