



2024 PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

MCH RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

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Research Project Management

Professor: Collette N. Ncube, DrPH MPH MS
Department: Epidemiology
Email: ncube@bu.edu
Number of Fellows: 1
Timeframe: February – December 2024
Location: Hybrid (remote and in-person option)

Overview

The Ncube Lab is looking for a BUSPH Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health (MCH) research fellow with interests in program management. Dr. Ncube’s research examines the social and structural drivers of racial and ethnic disparities in maternal and infant health. She has active research projects examining preterm birth and severe maternal morbidity, to which she applies diverse participatory and quantitative methodology.

Fellowship Description

This position would accord the fellow the opportunity to develop or hone skills in accountability, strategic thinking, problem-solving, budget management and forecasting, and time management, while simultaneously immersing themselves in the research. Working closely with Dr. Ncube, the fellow would manage the timeline of multiple projects including grant-funded research projects and grant proposals utilizing project management tools and strategies. They would also conduct budget reconciliation and forecasting, and spearhead research-related administrative tasks such as assisting with institutional review board applications, scheduling meetings and notetaking during meetings. A central responsibility of the fellow would be to revise and develop protocols for project management and coordination. This would include developing a Lab Policies and Resources guide and revising the project coordinator/manager manual. A strong candidate will include someone who is interested in learning more about maternal and child health, health and racial disparities, and project management and coordination. Prior experience with project management is a plus, but not required. The time commitment for this position will be 8-10 hours a week with hybrid work flexibility.

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BUSPH Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health C² Podcast Fellowship



The C² Podcast Fellowship offers an opportunity for a fellow to launch their podcasting journey in public health and at the intersection of maternal and child health. The C² Podcast Fellowship will support the Center's first podcast [C²: Critical Conversations that Lie at the Heart of Health Justice](#). The fellow will be essential in supporting the goal of C² - highlight conversations that inform and educate our audience of MCH students/professionals, public health students/professionals about health issues and highlight how these issues are impacting BIPOC/historically under-resourced communities. The BUSPH curriculum in combination with the Center's extra-curricular opportunities will give you the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience you need for your chosen area of practice.

Duration: February – December 2024

Time Commitment: Roughly 8-10 hours a week, however, the nature of the work allows for remote work, nights, evenings, and small segments of time throughout the week.

Supervisor: Anisa Saleh (MCH CoE Deputy Director) will check in with fellow bi-weekly, including monthly strategy meetings. Dr. Lois McCloskey (MCH CoE PI/Director) and Elisha Manandhar (Podcast Production Advisor) will provide additional supervision as appropriate.

Duties:

- In partnership with the Deputy Director and the Podcast Production Advisor, build a plan for the continuation of Center's podcast, [C²: Critical Conversations that Lie at the Heart of Health Justice](#)
- Create monthly episodes featuring guests that highlight important health justice topics and how it relates to historically under-served communities
- Coordinate scheduling potential guests to feature on the podcast
- Create interview guides
- Conduct and edit podcast interviews
- Publish episodes on specified platforms (Spotify, SoundCloud, Anchor)
- Design cover art for episodes
- Build a promotion and outreach strategy for the podcast episodes

About MCH CoE: We are one of 13 Centers of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health (MCH CoEs) in the United States, funded by the [Maternal and Child Health Bureau \(MCHB\)](#) of the Health Resources Service Administration (HRSA 2 T76 MC00017). As a Center, we offer specialized educational, leadership, research, and practice programs to give students pursuing an MCH education a leg up in their ultimate aim: to prepare for a dynamic career in MCH, be it designing and managing community programs, advocating for national policies, developing communication strategies, or participating in research with an international NGO.

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Our Bodies Ourselves

Supervisor & Mentor: Judy Norsigian
Gene Declercq

Location: Virtual, with opportunities for State House visits

Timeframe: February – December 2024

Number of fellows: 2

Overview

[Our Bodies Ourselves Today](#) is an initiative of the Center for Women’s Health and Human Rights at Suffolk University. Our Bodies Ourselves is a nonprofit organization that has been active in the feminist health movement since 1969. Together, we educate and advocate for health and reproductive justice for women, girls, and gender-expansive people. We strive to advance the rights of women, girls, and gender-expansive people to health and medical care, to control decisions about our bodies and sexuality, and to have access to research informed by our lived experiences. Our Bodies Ourselves Today is responsible for the health and sexuality information and resources on this website, some of which are updated from the iconic book, “Our Bodies, Ourselves.”

Fellowship Description

Our Bodies Ourselves, in collaboration with the Bay State Birth Coalition, is offering two MCH fellowships opportunities during 2024 that involve working on several projects in some capacity. The MCH Fellows will work with OBOS to:

1. Promote better understanding of the advantages of licensing and regulating Certified Professional Midwives in MA
2. Contribute to creating the policy conditions conducive to more freestanding birth centers in MA
3. Assist, as needed, with the planned reopening of the Cambridge Birth Center, located on the grounds of Cambridge Hospital
4. Possibly work with a community group seeking to open a new freestanding birth center in its area.

A strong candidate will include someone who has an interest in women’s health, midwifery, and is open to learning more about gender-expansive medical care. Prior experience in women’s health is a plus, but not required.

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Community Research Project

Asian Women for Health

Supervisor & Mentor: Naheed Esar, Executive Lead and
Eric Braun, Design Thinking Advisor/Coach

Overview of Asian Women for Health

[Asian Women for Health \(AWFH\)](#) is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the health and well-being of Asian Women and people from diverse, underrepresented backgrounds through community engagement, education, and representation. We envision a world where Asian Women and underrepresented community members are well-informed, have access to care that is culturally appropriate and high quality, and inspired to live happy, healthy lives.

Community Research Project 2024

Understanding is a foundational element of the work we do and the impact we make at AWFH. Connections, conversations, and collaborations with the communities we engage with need to be continuous for meaningful impact. To accomplish this, we need to have a network that grows and evolves like the web of the Internet.

The Community Research Project team will conduct ethnographic research within select Asian communities in Eastern Massachusetts. These will include the Chinese and Cambodian communities and may include Vietnamese and Afghan communities, depending on funding and resource availability.

Project Goals

The goals of the project should focus on health equity for people meeting demographic criteria that are defined in advance. The goals include the following:

1. Conduct in-depth, “guided” conversations with at least 20 people meeting our defined demographic criteria in the Chinese community
2. Conduct in-depth, “guided” conversations with at least 20 people meeting our defined demographic criteria in another Asian community
3. Analyze conversational data and use it to determine opportunities for impact in health equity
4. Define a plan of action for creating content in documents and/or videos to share with the communities in their native languages
5. Define a plan for workshops to educate the communities on findings and solutions to overcoming barriers for greater healthy living and health equity

Fellowship Description

The MCH Fellow will work with the team to:

- Conduct research through in-depth guided conversations among Asians communities
- Perform qualitative data analysis from in-depth conversations with community members.
- Oversee and guide the results from the in-depth interviews.
- Contribute to the development of action items and lessons learned that will be shared back with community members.
- Develop an outreach strategy for the dissemination of findings and lessons learned.

Preferred skills:

- Conversant in an Asian language, preferred but not required.
- Experience with interviewing or qualitative research, preferred but not required.

Team

The MCH fellow will work closely among the following team members:

- Naheed Esar, Executive Lead
- Eric Braun, Design Thinking Advisor/Coach
- Natalie Ng, Research Intern in the Chinese communities (Mandarin), BU

Additional Information About AWFH

Developing Asian Communities

Developing a community is a multifaceted process that requires careful planning, inclusivity, and sustained effort. To initiate this process, we start by identifying the common interests, causes, and goals that align between the community and our mission to help advance health equity. This brings us together, where we learn about them and create bonds of trust. Clear communication is essential, and it must begin with local in-person meetings. In-person conversations are the best way to learn about people. Later, it can continue through social media or online platforms. We encourage open dialogue and actively listen to the needs and ideas of potential community members. In addition to learning for understanding, we have a goal to establish a sense of connection and belonging that can provide opportunities for community members to connect and build relationships among themselves. We always want to make sure we do our best to foster a culture of inclusivity by embracing diversity and promoting a welcoming environment.

After our initial conversations, we want to look for ways to organize regular events, workshops, and activities that cater to the community's shared interests, especially around health and wellness, both physical and mental. Ultimately, building a thriving community involves a commitment to creating meaningful connections, fostering a sense of belonging, and working collaboratively towards common objectives.

Although we provide executive leadership in this research, we believe in decentralized decision-making among the team and shared responsibilities to empower members of the research team to have a sense of ownership.

Design Thinking Approach

In our approach to conducting ethnographic research within Asian communities, we have embraced Design Thinking as a guiding framework to gain deep insights and develop empathetic solutions. We recognize the diversity within Asian communities, spanning cultural, linguistic, and social dimensions. Design Thinking allows us to approach ethnography with a human-centered mindset, emphasizing understanding, empathy, and collaboration. We start by immersing ourselves in the cultural contexts, engaging with community members to grasp their values, behaviors, and needs. This iterative process involves conducting interviews, participant observations, and co-creation sessions. We leverage the principles of Design Thinking to synthesize and analyze our findings, identifying patterns and uncovering latent needs. Importantly, the iterative nature of Design Thinking enables us to continuously refine our understanding based on feedback from the community. By integrating Design Thinking into our ethnographic research in Asian communities, we aim to develop solutions that are not only culturally sensitive but also resonate deeply with the lived experiences of the individuals within these diverse and dynamic communities.

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