

Population Health Branch- Queensland Health

Research Priorities suitable for MPH Dissertations

2007

Public Health Research

Public health research plays a critical role in informing decision making and priority setting, and facilitating continuous improvement in public health policy and practice. Research represents a significant investment in the delivery of public health services. This requires expenditure to be well focused and priority driven. Investment ranges from longer-term evaluations into the effectiveness of policies and programs, to short-term projects allowing the capacity for fast response to issues of immediate or emerging concern.

Population Health Branch Research Priorities

Population Health Branch research priorities are identified in the context of our strategic planning and review process. This enables us to identify priorities for action within the context of government and departmental priorities and resource constraints. It is acknowledged, however, that these areas do not encompass the full range of potential public health action areas. Thus, the research priorities reflect those areas of particular interest to informing future policy and practice initiatives within Population Health Branch.

The Importance of Research to Population Health Branch

Research is critical to Population Health Branch to enable improvements in the health of the Queensland population by informing the development, implementation and evaluation of innovative public health policy, planning and interventions. Research is also fundamental to achieving and maintaining an evidence-based approach to public health action. Specifically, research is needed to:

- identify determinants of health (especially population health)
- identify and articulate the relationships and interactions between determinants
- quantify the impact of determinants on health
- address gaps in knowledge in the development of public health policy and practice
- inform decision-making about priority setting and relative resource investments to maximise health gain within available resources
- evaluate the effectiveness of public health interventions
- review current and develop new surveillance methodologies and systems.

Intent of the Priorities List

The research priorities identified within this document reflect the commitment of Population Health Branch to:

- improving the quality and applicability of public health research
- encouraging collaboration with other agencies
- providing public health students and researchers with information about and opportunities to undertake research of practical relevance to Queensland Health

- strengthening the workplace relevance of postgraduate training in public health by articulating and promoting research topics of particular interest to public health policy making and practitioners
- providing opportunities for students not already in public health positions to be exposed to and demonstrate their public health skills and to be exposed to public health roles and type of work
- promoting multidisciplinary approaches to public health research and the integration of research outcomes into policy development and service delivery.

Only those projects that are considered to be suitable for dissertation topics have been included. This document provides an overview of research topics of particular interest and relevance to Queensland Health's public health policy making and service delivery functions. The list is not exhaustive and reflects priorities at a point in time. Population Health Branch managers and staff are happy to discuss the potential relevance of other research ideas which may be of interest to students. Academic staff have a complete contact list of relevant Population Health Branch staff, and may follow up regarding the potential for collaboration on your behalf.

As Population Health Branch is not responsible for funding research, this list of priorities is not intended to imply that we have the capacity to fund research. However, the potential to provide in-kind support (eg assistance with survey mail-outs, photocopying, etc.) may be able to be negotiated. Where specific funding is potentially available, this has been indicated. The Population Health Branch is also keen to support funding applications to research bodies where the research is of practical relevance to Queensland Health.

Contact Person

The Population Health Branch contact for dissertation topics is an initial contact point for further information. Population Health Branch also welcomes suggestions from students about other possible topics not listed here. The contact is Beata Zimkowska, A/Project Officer, Planning and Development Unit, Population Health Branch. Telephone: 07 3234 1683, e-mail: beata_zimkowska@health.qld.gov.au

Workplace Mentors

The potential for Population Health Branch staff to function as workplace mentors needs to be negotiated on a case by case basis. As the topics identified are priority interests of the Population Health Branch, we are keen to provide support to dissertations, particularly in terms of policy and practice context and implications and content expertise. However, it should not be assumed that the contact officers will automatically undertake this role. Their primary purpose is as an initial contact point for further information.