

## Editorial



# Public Health and Field Epidemiology Case Studies

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FETPs are a competency based learning program where the target audience is mainly a public health officers of the Ministries of Health. The learning model is focusing on problem-based learning exercises. Case study method is a powerful student-centered teaching strategy that can impart fellows/ participants with critical thinking, communication, and interpersonal skills. It is an effective tool for simulating real-life public health functions and services in public health training programs [1].

Having fellows / participants work through real world problems engages fellows with the course material, encouraging them to “see it from an action perspective, rather than analyze it from a distance” [2].

In EMR, field epidemiology as well as public health curricula have relied on fewer local specific case studies or exercises owing to the dearth of examples tailored to EMR contexts. In the past FETP residents, graduates and other public health professionals were using various case studies from outside the region which don't necessary match the public health situation in their countries and EMR. The writing of a new case study requires considerable time, effort, and access to the original data and few FETPs have taken the initiative to develop such project. To offset this gap, GHD/EMPHNET developed a Case Study Design and Development Course using didactic and hands-on training to develop competency in case study design and development. During the one-week course,

participants learnt the format, process, and guidelines for developing a public health case study, then created case-studies based on a relevant public health issue. The course used didactic and hands-on training to develop competency in case study design and development, as well as other pedagogical skills. Its aim was to help trainees design and develop a thoughtful, detailed, and culturally tailored public health case study that addresses a health concern in the local geographical context of the trainee.

This supplement includes 17 case-studies in various areas of public health. They are developed in different formats, from a simple “What would you do in this situation?” question to a detailed description of a situation with accompanying data to analyze. Most case assignments require fellows to answer an open-ended question or develop a solution to an open-ended problem with multiple potential solutions. Requirements can range from a one-paragraph answer to a fully developed group action plan or decision. They tell a good story, include dialogue, create empathy with the main characters, are relevant to the reader, serve a teaching function, require a dilemma to be solved, and have generality. Working on these case-studies requires fellows to research and evaluate multiple sources of data, good organizational and time management skills. It is expected that these case-studies will increase fellows proficiency with written and oral communication, as well as collaboration and team-work. Moreover, these case studies are from EMR countries where this supplement offers a great opportunity for public health professionals to use data from the region and to be closer to real scenarios and events. Language: english.

## Competing interest

The authors declare no competing interest.

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