



Bergen Summer Research School

› Global Development Challenges

Global Health in Bio-medical, Social and Cultural perspectives
Bergen, 21 June - 2 July 2010

PhD-Research Course: Severe HIV epidemics and
multidisciplinary research challenges in prevention

Course leaders:

- [Knut Fylkesnes](#), Professor, University of Bergen, Centre for International Health
- [Ingvild Fossgard Sandøy](#), Researcher, University of Bergen, Centre for International Health

Invited Guest lecturer:

- James Hargreaves, Researcher, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Diseases

Organising institutions

Centre for International Health, University of Bergen
Research group on Global Health: ethics, economics and culture, University of Bergen
Bergen University College (Faculty of Health and Social Science)

Course description, goals and objectives

Course description

The course will put the main focus on research methods relevant for the massive preventive challenges related to HIV. It will involve a multidisciplinary team coming from epidemiology, medical anthropology, psychology, medicine and economy. The research methods being presented and discussed will thus be mixed. Examples of actual research projects where mixed methods are employed will be presented. Participants will also be given an assignment consisting of a literature review on "What works in prevention" where participants can work individually and in groups.

Objectives

The overall objective is to present and discuss roles and research challenges in the generation of knowledge of HIV preventive factors relevant to local contexts (epidemiological, cultural/social/structural) and economic evaluation for fair and cost-effective priority setting.

Learning objectives

At the end of the course the students should be able to

1. Demonstrate understanding of the proximate determinants conceptual model and epidemiological contexts of HIV,
2. Demonstrate understanding of socio-economic and cultural contexts of HIV epidemics and relate them to preventive, support and treatment challenges;
3. Compare global patterns of HIV transmission, their possible explanations, categorise the main methods used in surveillance and research and their strengths and weaknesses;
4. Critically assess the evidence for different preventive approaches and design appropriate studies to evaluate preventive interventions
5. Debate priority setting challenges related to HIV interventions and key ethical issues involved;

Components of the core teaching module

- The conceptual framework of HIV transmission: underlying and proximate determinants
- The HIV epidemiological contexts: relevance of and methodological challenges in establishing knowledge about the local epidemiological contexts in order to put priorities right in HIV prevention.
- The social and cultural contexts: relevance and methodological challenges in generating knowledge on social and cultural factors of major importance in prevention
- Economic evaluation as a tool for fair and cost-effective priority setting
- Literature review of "What works in HIV prevention"

Cases for illustrations of research

- Prevention of mother-to-child transmission: from research which has involved teams composed of different disciplines.
- A cluster randomised trial on home-based voluntary HIV counselling and testing: getting the social mobilization right, qualitative and quantitative approaches in research.
- HIV epidemiology: e.g. lessons learned from measurement of HIV prevalence trends; Factors affecting transmission risk at both individual and community levels.
- Cultural-specific interventions: intervention & evaluation

Learning methods

Literature review, interactive presentations by lecturers, group work (limited to a particular literature review of one major topic), and essay writing after the 2 weeks (also acting as the major assessment tool). The literature to be used will comprise scientific papers, reports, and handouts.

Targeted students, Prerequisites and ECTS

PhD students who are involved in HIV-related research or issues related to health and development. The course is open to students from different professional backgrounds.

It is assumed a total of 24 contact hours (about 12-14 sessions) over 8 days. Students are given proper time for essay writing after the course.

Course literature, which will be ready by May 1st 2010, must be read prior to the course. Group work and presentations will be set during the course. After the course the students are expected to present a written essay. Deadline for delivery will be specified by the course leaders, and the papers will be graded according to pass/not pass.

Students are required to attend all the sessions of the course and participation is also mandatory in the plenary events of the overall programme of the Bergen Summer Research School 2010 (the programme will be published on the web in June 2010).

10 ECTS will be awarded upon successful participation and completion of the full programme, including the delivery of a research paper which is approved by the course leaders.

Course literature

Will be available by 1 May 2010