

Hello all and welcome to the second issue of the Virginia Journal of Public Health in our new Digital Commons platform.

In this, our (as usual) much-delayed Spring/Summer issue, we are pleased and proud to host posters from the combined Virginia Public Health Association/Virginia Rural Health Association meetings on March 26th. You'll find several interesting topics including health disparities and health equity, COVID-19, and diverse public health research. By all accounts, it was a fine conference and the scholarship of the posters reflects the same.

In addition to the VPHA/VRHA posters, we present five fine manuscripts on a wide variety of topics by a wide variety of public health scholars. A narrative literature review illuminates the relationship between climate change and inequality in low-income countries, finding that while first-world countries contribute the most to climate change, it is more vulnerable populations who suffer the resulting changes in communicable disease epidemiology, in addition to flooding and droughts. Similarly, another fine review illustrates the problem of oral health and its impact on pregnant women and their children in the United States. This particularly vulnerable population can benefit from interprofessional models of practice and care delivery that address oral health during the pre-and post-natal periods, as well as during pregnancy. And a final study using the Health Opportunity Index reveals the relationship between diabetes and social determinants of health in the Hampton Roads area. Surprisingly 64% of diabetes prevalence in this part of Virginia may be explained by years of schooling, employment, and income. Each of these three studies points public health practitioners to the importance of addressing social inequality and vulnerable populations as a matter of global health.

For this issue, COVID-19 practitioners and researchers finally found the time to write about their experiences: Authors of a third review find that learning modalities may be linked with mental health conditions during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic among kindergarten through 12th graders. "In-person" learning appears to be associated with better mental health outcomes, while "hybrid" (in-person/on-line) learning appears promising. A nice study conducted among public health and human services providers in Richmond reveals the relationship between loneliness, substance abuse, and increasing mental health issues in general, with loneliness apparently driving the other two factors. These results are consistent with findings across the country regarding the psychological impact of social isolation in general, as well as that specifically associated with the pandemic. For those of you in practice, if you were wondering whether your individual experiences reflect a larger pattern of COVID-19-related assaults on mental health, these two studies will substantiate your feelings.

Last but certainly not least, Ben Barber's Policy Forum is devoted to an introduction of the "All of Us" database, and Kim Baskette has contributed experiences of researchers who are using this database now. Both VCU and UVA are engaged in the use of this collection of health data. Nationally, the AOU database has been used to explore hypertension in diverse populations and to revisit the debate over the "Latino Epidemiological Paradox." We are excited to see what the database will contribute to understanding population health and diversity in the Commonwealth. The VPHA and VJPH are thrilled to spotlight this game-changing database and policy-changing research.

Thank you as always to the 4VA Foundation (who pays the bills), JMU libraries (who does the technical work), and new and special thanks to Longwood University students and faculty who formatted manuscripts and gave us our new, scholarly-looking front page. We would like to recognize and thank Longwood University's Dr. Heather Lettner-Rust for facilitating that relationship. We look forward to future collaboration with the students.

Stay tuned to the VJPH for new and detailed submission guidelines; manuscript development "lessons;" and the Fall issue, which with luck, volunteer elbow grease, and YOUR submissions will be out in late September. Join us in shouting out the voice of public health in Virginia!

Happy writing,

Maria and Jen

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