

## Breakout Session II: Health Sciences/Gerontology

### Title: Quality of Life and Pain in adolescents

Author: **Åshild Slettebø**, Professor, UiA

*Background:* Pain in children and adolescents is a major public health challenge that affects as many as 15 to 30% of the population. Already in childhood and adolescence, pain may lead to school absences, limitations in activities, poor sleep, poor economy and increased social activities for the family. A review of the literature showed that self-reported pain increases with age, and older children report more pain than younger children. The most commonly reported pains in children are headache, abdominal pain, backache, and limb pain conditions (Perquin. 2000; Roth-Isigkeit et al., 2004; Petersen et al., 2007).

WHO has emphasized well-being and Quality of Life (QOL) as goals for public health, especially in adolescence. WHO thus underline the need for research to identify the key determinants of ill health and decreased QOL in this age group, supported by resources to enable effective interventions to be developed. There is a need for work to enable a better understanding of the links between socioeconomic factors, health, pain and well-being among young people. Identifying potential family patterns with regard to HRQOL and pain might reveal new knowledge within the topics. This knowledge might further be used in interventions within families to weaken a potential negative social heritage.

*Aims:* The overall aim is to study HRQOL and pain in Norwegian adolescents and their families. Secondly, the aim is to develop and evaluate interventions to enhance coping with everyday pain.

- The project's main empirical source to collect data on young people's experience of pain will be *focus group interviews* with nurses and teachers in secondary schools. The focus of the interviews will be public health nurses and teachers' experiences with pain problems in adolescents.
- For a complete overview of the research that deals with young people and everyday pain a parallel *meta-synthesis* (qualitative studies) and *meta-analysis* (quantitative studies) of previously published primary studies will be conducted (Pope C. et al., 2007). Data collection will be done through systematic literature searches in relevant databases.
- A *cross sectional study* will be conducted in adolescents and their parents. The aim is to study HRQOL and pain in children and their families. Furthermore the aim is to assess the validity and reliability of the questionnaires EQ5DY and "Life Goal Scale» which will be translated and validated according to international guidelines (Guillemin et al., 1993; Beaton et al., 2000).
- Associations and findings revealed from the present studies will be used as a starting point for a *planned intervention study*, which aims to develop and evaluate interventions to enhance coping with every day pain and promote health related quality of life in adolescents with pain and their parents.

## **Breakout Session II: Health Sciences/Gerontology**

**Title: A comparative study to examine women's access and use of reproductive health care**

**Author: *Sofia Jawed-Wessel, Ph.D., MPH, UNO; Jason D. Coleman, Ph.D., MSPH, UNO***

The purpose of this comparative study is to understand how women access and utilize reproductive health resources in the State of Nebraska and the country of Norway. The project will include research to identify laws, regulations, and practices related to women's reproductive health, including, but not limited to, access to contraception, STI treatment, gynecological exams, prenatal care, childbirth support, and postpartum care. Further, this study will examine each region's health outcomes related to reproductive health including unintended pregnancy/unwanted pregnancy, childbirth outcomes (e.g. C-sections, use medical interventions, health of mother and baby), and abortion rates. The second phase of this project will include collection of data on women's attitudes about access to reproductive health care needs and quality of care. Outcomes from this project may lead to improvements in reproductive health care.

## **Breakout Session II: Health Sciences/Gerontology**

### **Title: A comparative study of the attitudes, expectations, and childbirth outcomes of American and Norwegian women**

**Author: *Sofia Jawed-Wessel, Ph.D., MPH, UNO; Jason D. Coleman, Ph.D., MSPH, UNO***

Pregnancy and childbirth are treated very differently in the US when compared to other industrialized countries, especially Scandinavian countries. The use of medical interventions and C-sections is approximately twice as common in the US than in Norway. Studies have also found that attitudes toward sex vary between these two regions. It is likely that attitudes and expectations about sexuality during and after pregnancy also vary significantly due to cultural norms and differences in medical practices surrounding pregnancy. This project will examine in detail individual's attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and experiences with regard to prenatal, childbirth and postpartum medical practices and sexuality during pregnancy (e.g. safety of sexual behaviors during pregnancy and sexual and relational satisfaction). The purpose of this project is 1) to understand how underlying cognitive structures affect sexuality and 2) determine if there is a relationship between attitudes toward medicalization of pregnancy and childbirth and attitudes toward sexuality during pregnancy.

## **Breakout Session II: Health Sciences/Gerontology**

### **Title: Linkages to Treatment and Care for HIV-Positive Patients: A Comparative Study**

**Author: *Jason D. Coleman, Ph.D., MSPH, UNO; Sofia Jawed-Wessel, Ph.D., MPH, UNO***

This proposed study will examine linkages to treatment and care for persons diagnosed with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in the state of Nebraska in the United States and the country of Norway. The mixed-methods study will use a phased approach, which will employ the following methods and achieve the following results:

- Case studies will be used to identify characteristics of health care system related laws, regulations, guidance, and practices within each unique jurisdiction.
- Following case studies, a qualitative research phase will determine, from multiple perspectives (patients, providers, and governmental agents), processes used to link HIV-positive people to treatment and care. Qualitative research methods will also be used to determine strengths and weaknesses in each unique jurisdiction.
- Following the qualitative phase, a quantitative phase will use surveys developed using data from the case study and qualitative phases. Surveys will be used to collect quantitative, generalizable data.

The overall goal of this project will be to determine ways that health systems for HIV-positive patients may be strengthened in each jurisdiction. Future research may examine the role of systems-level variables on health outcomes for HIV-positive patients.

## **Breakout Session II: Health Sciences/Gerontology**

### **Title: Determinants of Stigma: An Investigation of the Underlying Causes of Stigma Related to Sex and Sexuality**

**Author: *Jason D. Coleman, Ph.D., MSPH, UNO; Sofia Jawed-Wessel, Ph.D., MPH, UNO***

This proposed study will examine the determinants of stigma related to sex and sexuality. The study will investigate the underlying causes of stigma (e.g., social and structural determinants) using a comparative methodology between residents of the mid-western United States and the country of Norway. The study will employ a quantitative survey-based design to allow for statistical analyses to determine the predictive value of individual determinants. A preliminary qualitative phase will also be used to gather location-specific data on perceived determinants and develop the survey tool. The overall goal of this study will be to identify causes of stigma related to sex and sexuality, which may be used to develop future programs for stigma reduction.