

COMMUNITY MEDICINE CLERKSHIP PROGRAMME



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY MEDICINE
FACULTY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF SRIJAYEWARDENEPURA

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Introduction

Community Medicine Clerkship Programme is designed to facilitate medical students to gain knowledge, skills and perspectives of community health that are necessary to practise as a doctor in any part of Sri Lanka. The specific educational objectives of the clerkship focus on exposing the students to preventive health care in Sri Lanka through an understanding of the community context of health, illness and health care. It is hoped that the clerkship will help to foster, in students, an informed sense of social responsibility, accountability and to develop skills and attitudes needed to become capable, empathic and caring doctors.

Objective of the Community Medicine Clerkship Programme

The objective of the Community Medicine Clerkship Programme is to provide students an opportunity to study the services available to a community for the improvement of its health status. Students will have the opportunity of meeting the personnel responsible for providing these services and to gain access to community field health services, data collection, monitoring, surveillance and health promotion activities. Students are expected to study each activity critically and be able to evaluate each in respect of its contribution to the health of the community.

Organization of the Clerkship Programme

Programme timing and duration

1. Timing : Fourth year
2. Duration : Four weeks

Organization

1. A group of 40 – 45 students will be attached to the Department of Community Medicine for 4 weeks during the fourth year. This group will be divided to 2 groups of 18 – 20 each.
2. An orientation on the clerkship programme will be given on the first day. Each group will receive a set of learning objectives for each of the activities they are expected to carry out.
3. All students should maintain a portfolio and should submit it to the Department of Community Medicine at the end of the appointment for assessment.
4. Faculty will provide transport only for certain visits.
5. The group leader will be given letters of introduction and other relevant documents addressed to the Heads of the Institutions of their proposed visits.

Student attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory for all clerkship related activities and presentations delivered at the conclusion of the clerkship. Absence from a scheduled examination or other learning activity requires medical certificate to be excused.

Assessment

The clerkship assessment will take place at the end of the appointment of four weeks. The assessment will comprise of the following

- a. Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE)
- b. A paper with Structured Essay Questions (SEQ)
- c. Portfolio Assessment

Total marks assigned is 10% at 3rd MBBS Part II Examination.

Clerkship Programme

Students spend four weeks in the field, which helps to reinforce what is learnt as didactic lectures during the fourth year. Through this appointment they are provided with opportunity to have first hand information on how health care is delivered at the community level with special emphasis on primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Activities/assignments the students should carry out are described under different areas as follows.

Maternal and Child Health Care

The **primary preventive** measures designed to promote general health, well-being and quality of life are accomplished via actions taken prior to the onset of the disease. One such measure is the antenatal care of a woman during pregnancy. This care begins with early identification of a pregnant mother by the Public Health Midwife (PHM) and provision of antenatal care at the field antenatal clinic and through domiciliary visits. There are various aspects concerning maternal health in which the PHM plays a main role. The students will learn, through hands on experience, about some selected aspects in the delivery of Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning services at the Boralesgamuwa Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area. The process of monitoring pregnant mothers, maintaining the pregnancy records, educating pregnant mothers, evaluating the services provided for the pregnant and post-partum mothers by the preventive staff and accompanying the PHM in the domiciliary visits are some of the identified learning experiences.

Child health services are provided at a MOH area by the MOH and his / her team. The grassroots level worker in the delivery of the child health services is the PHM and she begins it by registering the new born. The children are followed up at the Child Welfare Clinic (CWC) up to the age of 5 years. It is essential that the children are followed up at the CWCs for growth monitoring, developmental assessment of milestones and health promotion. The students would have the opportunity to follow up an infant or a child at the CWC and would be able to have hands on learning experiences on such activities. They have the opportunity to learn on implementation of the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) where they will learn all aspects relevant to immunization including the maintenance of the cold chain from the place of storage, transport of vaccines to the field and the procedures adhered to at the field posts. Learning opportunity on Family Planning will be provided by small group activities and through visits with the PHM and to the MOH office.

The care given to school children would be mainly through the school medical inspections conducted by the MOH and his / her team. The students would gain experiences in helping the MOH and specially the Public Health Inspector (PHI) to conduct a school medical inspection.

Environmental Health

Other than the Maternal and Child Health services provided by the preventive care team, another key issue is environmental health. There are various aspects concerning environmental health where the PHI has a key role to play. The term sanitation covers the whole field of controlling the environment with a view to prevent disease and promote health. The students will accompany the PHI on some selected field visits to enable them to learn the purpose of such visits and critically evaluate these aspects in environmental health.

Provision of safe food is a challenging problem and a direct responsibility of the MOH, and in particular, the PHI. The PHI is responsible in providing safe water, milk and food. He should follow up the eating places to observe that they maintain minimum standards of food safety and also health educate the food handlers. The students would visit an eating establishment (café/hotel etc.) with the PHI and observe and evaluate how the PHI carries out the inspection of such a food serving establishment.

One of the main vital environmental factors to all forms of life is water. Water should be provided to all in adequate amounts and should be safe and wholesome. The visit to the water treatment plant at Raddoluwa will provide the opportunity for the students to learn how large scale projects are involved in providing safe, wholesome water to the community.

Human excreta is an important cause of environmental pollution. The diseases which are caused by human excreta have a burden on the community in terms of morbidity and mortality. Therefore, proper disposal of human excreta is a fundamental preventive service to the community which the students would observe during their visit to the Sewage Purification Plant at Raddoluwa.

Occupational health essentially aims at protecting the workers during the course of their employment from risks. Occupational health, therefore, is the application of primary preventive medicine at their work place. The PHI is the responsible officer and the students would accompany him on an inspection of a factory and identify the hazards and evaluate the protective measures provided.

Secondary preventive care

By early diagnosis and adequate treatment, **secondary prevention** attempts to arrest the disease process and the communicability of an infectious disease. It, thus, not only provides secondary prevention for the individual but also protects others in the community from acquiring the infection. Secondary prevention is largely the domain of clinical medicine. The students will, therefore, follow up a patient subjected to physical pain and mental anguish and another patient with a notifiable disease.

According to the Quarantine and Prevention of Disease Ordinance of 1897 and subsequent amendments, all medical officers who attend to patients with a suspicion of a notifiable disease, should notify the disease to proper authorities. Making the notification early is of paramount importance which would enable the public health staff, particularly the PHI, to start immediately on necessary preventive and control measures. The students would have hands on experience on how to notify a notifiable disease, the notification procedures in the hospital and in the community and the ways the PHI implements control measures.

Tertiary preventive care

When the disease process has advanced and when the disease is irremediable, to prevent disability, rehabilitation plays a preventable role. The rehabilitation at the Ragama Rehabilitation Centre which the students would visit includes **tertiary preventive** care such as psychosocial, vocational and medical components based on teamwork aimed at reducing impairment and minimising suffering and thus promoting the patient's adjustment to irremediable conditions.

Estate visit

According to the national statistics, the vital indicators and other health status indicators are very high in the estate sector. The provision of health services in the estate sector is different to the provision of health services in other districts. Students would be visiting the estate sector to learn about the health provision, the health seeking behaviours of the people, health problems and some aspects of environmental health such as housing.

Community Health Survey

Another learning experience included in the clerkship is a Community Health Survey. A Community Health Survey is conducted by gathering data and assessing social and health problems in the community. Students will learn the common community health problems, the measures the community takes in preventing and treating these health problems and the impact of social and economical problems in the health and health seeking behaviours of the community.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CLERKSHIP PROGRAMME

Implementation of the clerkship programme is through

1. visits to the MOH office,
2. visits to Maternal and Child Health clinics,
3. participating in School Medical Inspections,
4. visit to the community with the paramedical staff,
5. visits to selected institutions (Ragama Rehabilitation centre, Water sewage and purification centre),
6. visit to the estate and
7. participating in community surveys.

ASSIGNMENTS DURING THE CLERKSHIP PROGRAMME

1. Preventive Health Care Team

Objectives

The students should be able to **describe**:

1. the administrative structure of the Health System
2. population information in relation to
 - a. Demography
 - b. Morbidity
 - c. Mortality
3. the basic sanitary facilities of the area
4. the main health problems in the area
5. the main health institutions in the area
6. the role and activities of each member of the field staff in the delivery of primary health care
7. the surveillance system (from the notification form to the weekly epidemiological reports)
8. how the cold chain for each vaccine is maintained

The MOH and his team will brief the students regarding their main activities.

2. Maternal Health

The assignments on maternal health activities are

2.1. small group activities on antenatal care

2.2. field visits with the PHM

2.3. antenatal care at the field clinic

2.1. Small group Activities on Antenatal Care

Objectives

The students should be **able to**

1. describe the importance of the pregnancy record
2. interpret the data provided in the pregnancy record
3. describe the clinic procedures and services provided for pregnant mothers
4. evaluate the services provided to the pregnant mothers

Each clerkship group will be divided into 4 groups with a resource person for each group. The resource person will brief the students for 45 minutes on the objectives of each learning experience. Thereafter, case scenarios will be given to the students under the following topics.

1. Communicating / educating on the pregnancy record
2. Communicating / educating on health promotion
3. Communicating / educating on common obstetric problems seen among pregnant women

The students will prepare their presentations according to the specific questions and objectives for 45 minutes.

2.2. Field Visit with the PHM

Objectives

The students should be able to **describe**:

1. the importance of providing domiciliary ANC in Sri Lanka
2. the birth rate in the area
3. the proportion of pregnant women in the area
4. the services provided to them
5. how these services are provided
6. who are the at-risk mothers and how they are referred and how to monitor these mothers
7. the importance of having post-natal visits and the activities carried out during the visit
8. how to assess services provided to pregnant women

Assignment

Students in small groups will accompany a PHM either from MOH area Borelesgamuwa or MOH area Dehiwala during her home visits and observe the activities of such visits to,

- an antenatal mother and
- a post-partum mother.

Report

Each student should write the details in the form of a case study together with a critical evaluation of the visit and include it in the portfolio.

2.3. Antenatal Care at the Field Clinic

Objectives

The students should be **able to**

1. describe the purpose of the antenatal clinic (ANC)
2. describe the pregnancy record and the importance of maintaining it
3. describe the activities conducted to monitor the pregnancy
4. describe the activities carried out to improve the health of the pregnant mothers
5. describe the health and the social risk assessment and the referral procedures
6. describe the immunization procedures
7. assess the usefulness of the ANC
8. prepare a critical appraisal report of the activities of the ANC

The students will work in small groups during their assigned visit to the ANC. A mother will be allocated to a student. Each student should follow up the mother from the time of registration at the clinic and take part in all clinic procedures in respect to this mother during her stay at the clinic. During this activity the student should observe the activities of the PHM, PHNS and the MOH in the clinic. The students should critically evaluate the activities in the clinic and prepare a report to be included in the portfolio.

2.4 Small Group Activities on Family Planning

Objectives

The students should acquire the skills on counseling on contraception.

The students will be briefed on how to advise a woman

1. on oral pills,
2. on an IUCD,
3. on condom,
4. on Depo-provera injection and
5. regarding LRT

and on what family planning advice would be given to a

1. nulliparous woman
2. multiparous woman
3. woman with 3 children and over 30 years
4. woman with 3 children between 20 – 30 years
5. lactating woman
6. woman 1 week after child birth
7. woman 3 months after child birth

Each clerkship group will be divided into 4 groups with a resource person for each group. The resource person will brief the students on the objectives of each learning experience.

3. Child Health Activities

The assignments on child health activities are

- 3.1. small group activities on the Child Health Activities and
- 3.2. a visit to a Child Welfare Clinic

3.1 Small Group Activities on the Child Health Activities

Objectives

The students should be **able to**

1. describe the importance of the Child Health Development Record (CHDR)
2. acquire skills to complete a CHDR and interpret the data on a CHDR
3. use the CHDR as a tool to educate the mother and health care provider
4. describe the methods of successful breast feeding
5. describe the importance and quality of complementary feeding
6. describe age-appropriate immunization
7. describe developmental stages of a child

Each clerkship group will be divided into 4 groups with a resource person for each group. The resource person will brief the students for 45 minutes on the objectives of each learning experience. Thereafter, case scenarios will be given to the students under the following topics.

1. Communicating / educating on CHDR
2. Communicating / educating on immunization
3. Communicating / educating on breast feeding and complementary feeding

The students will prepare their presentations according to the specific questions and objectives for 45 minutes.

3.2 Child Welfare Clinic

Objective

The students should be able to **describe**:

1. the main aim of child health care
2. the CHDR
3. the importance of maintaining the CHDR
4. how the growth of a baby is monitored
5. the importance of monitoring the weight of a baby
6. how “at-risk” babies are identified from the growth chart
7. the advice that should be given to a mother seen at a field clinic regarding the management of a child with one of the following conditions
 - I. Diarrhoea
 - II. Respiratory tract infection
 - III. Malnutrition
8. Thriposha
9. the Thriposha beneficiaries
10. how Thriposha should be consumed by the beneficiaries
11. the services provided to a neonate in the area
12. the immunization schedule for an infant/preschool child
13. the dose, mode of administration, contraindications for each vaccine
14. reasons why the DPT is not given for a child above 2 years
15. how the vaccines are prepared before administration
16. how the physical and mental development of a child is monitored
17. the services provided for a socially deprived child, and
18. prepare a critical report on the activities of the CWC to be included in the portfolio.

The students will be assigned to a CWC in small groups. Each student should follow up an infant/child from the time of registration and observe and take part in all activities concerning the child during the clinic visit. During this activity the student should observe the activities of the PHM, PHNS and the MOH in the clinic. The students are expected to critically evaluate the activities in the clinic and prepare a report to be included in the portfolio.

4. School Medical Inspection

Objectives

The students should be able to **describe:**

1. the health services available for school children in Sri Lanka
2. the objectives of a School Medical Inspection (SMI)
3. how frequently the SMI is conducted
4. the planning and implementation of SMI
5. the main activities of a SMI
6. how to follow up children with defects detected at SMI
7. the roles of teachers and parents at the SMI
8. how to evaluate and list the benefits of SMI with a view to offering suggestions for the provision of better School Health Services and
9. prepare a critical report on the activities of the SMI to be included in the portfolio.

The students should participate in the SMI conducted in the MOH area and during the SMI obtain information to fulfill the objectives.

5. Health Education Programme

Objectives

The students should **be able to**:

1. select an appropriate topic for a Health Education (HE) programme
2. organize and conduct a HE programme
3. write objectives for the specific HE programme depending on the target population
4. identify the appropriate audio- visual materials
5. deliver the HE message

The students will be divided into 2 groups and should organize a HE activity and carry out this health education programme in an approved setting e.g. school. The students will be briefed on the first day regarding this programme. They will be given certain inputs on the health education programme with the help of a resource person from the Department of Community Medicine. The identified topics are:

- Personal hygiene
- Nutrition
- Substance abuse
- Healthy life style
- Reproductive health
- Risk taking behaviour etc.

The audio – visual materials should be approved by a resource person from the Department of Community Medicine.

4. Environmental Health (EH) and Occupational Health (OH)

The assignments to be completed through field visits for EH and OH are

4.1 Provision of EH by the PHI

4.1.1 Field visit with the PHI on EH

4.1.2 Visit to a food handling establishment

4.2 Provision of Occupational health by the PHI (factory visit)

4.3 Provision of safe water for a community and mass treatment of sewage

4.1. Provision of Environmental Health by the PHI

4.1.1 Environmental Health Assignment with the PHI

Objectives

The students should be able to **describe**:

1. the available excreta disposal systems in urban and rural areas
2. the role of the PHI in the provision of sanitary latrines for the communities
3. how the Ministry of Health supports provision of toilets
4. the methods of disposal of solid waste in rural and urban areas
5. the health hazards of improperly disposed solid waste
6. how water in a well is chlorinated
7. the provision of safe meat and milk to the consumers

The students would visit a PHI area with the PHI and with the help of him they would obtain information which would help them to fulfill the objectives.

4.1.2 Visit to a Food Handling Establishment

Objectives

The students should be able to **describe the:**

1. Food Act No 26 of 1980
2. role of the PHI in the implementation of the Food Act
3. health hazards of an eating place

The students would visit a food handling establishment in the Borelesgamuwa MOH area with the PHI.

4.2 Factory Visit

Objectives

The students should be **able to describe the different steps in:**

1. conducting a factory visit in order to determine the occupational health hazards
2. relevant preventive measures that should be adopted

The students would visit a factory with the PHI and learn through him the procedure of carrying out an inspection of a factory.

4.3 Visit to Water Treatment Plant and Sewage Purification Plant

Objectives

The students will visit a Water Treatment Plant and Sewage Purification Plant.

The students should be able to **describe**:

1. the different steps taken to improve the quality of water
2. steps involved in sewage treatment
3. the advantages of a large scale sewage treatment plant

The students will visit the Water Treatment Plant and Sewage Purification Plant at Raddoluwa.

5. Estate Visit

Objectives

The students should be able to **describe**:

1. the social, economical and cultural factors in the estate sector and their influence on health and disease
2. the health problems and the health needs of the estate sector

The students would visit an estate and would learn about the estate community regarding the following and prepare a report to include these aspects of the estate population

- Health of the families
- Sanitation
- Financial problems
- Health care facilities

6. Secondary Prevention Assignments

6.1 Follow-up of a Patient

Objectives

To enable the student to learn the importance of observing a patient's physical, psychological and emotional health in his own environment and thus gain an appreciation of the need of including the social history into the medical history.

Assignment

Each student is expected to visit the Colombo South Teaching Hospital (CSTH) and select a patient who is admitted with one of the following diseases or conditions.

- An amputee: Disability after a Road Traffic Accident
- A patient with a non-communicable disease
 - Ischemic heart disease
 - Diabetes Mellitus
 - Cancer
 - Stroke
 - Epilepsy
- A mother after an abortion
- A mother after an Intra Uterine Death
- A child with a non-communicable disease
- A congenitally abnormal child
- An alcoholic patient

Presentation

The students should write a detailed case report taking into considerations the following relevant factors and present it at the seminar.

1. Social factors
2. Health factors
3. Disease situation
4. Patient's or care giver's satisfaction in the ward, on treatment etc.
5. Advice given at discharge
6. Factors available at home to prevent complications

6.2 Surveillance System

Objectives

The students should **be able to:**

1. list the notifiable diseases in Sri Lanka
2. properly fill a notification form
3. describe the procedure of the surveillance system in the hospital and in the field
4. describe how a notifiable disease is investigated by the MOH and the PHI

Students in small groups will be attached to the paediatric or medical wards in which they should identify a child/adult who had been admitted to the ward with a notifiable disease for more than a week preferably from Boralesgamuwa, Dehiwala or Nugegoda MOH areas. They are expected to follow up the notification procedures in the hospital and in the patient's PHI area and prepare a report for presentations at the seminar.

7. Tertiary Prevention Assignments

Ragama Rehabilitation Centre

Objectives

The students should be able to describe the short term or long term management of

1. a quadriplegic or a paraplegic adult and
2. a cerebral palsy or a differently-abled child

The students should visit the Ragama Rehabilitation Centre to learn about the facilities provided for the differently-able adults and differently-abled children.

8. Community Survey

Objectives

At the end of the community survey the students are **expected to**:

1. identify any health and social problems in the pregnant mothers, preschool children and youth
2. identify the problems of the elders and differently-abled people and identify solutions and rehabilitative measures for these individuals
3. identify the social problems affecting health
4. identify environmental problems
5. assess the nutritional problems in families

Students will be attached to a community with forty families in the MOH area Borelesgamuwa. Two families will be allocated to a pair of students. The students will be introduced to the families during the 1st week of the clerkship programme by the resource person. They are then expected to visit these families during their free time, during evenings or on weekends.

Presentation

Each pair of students is expected to write a report of not less than 500 words on the problems of the two families identified by them as stated under the objectives of the community survey. The group of students should pool the information collected during the community survey, analyze and are expected to present during the seminar under the following subheadings or sections.

1. Demographic profile of the community
2. Health and social problems of
 - a. pre-school children
 - b. adolescent/youth
 - c. women
 - d. elders and differently-abled persons, and
 - e. problems common to all

9. Clerkship Seminar Presentations

The students will prepare and deliver a presentation of their experiences individually or in groups according to the instructions provided under the assignments. Any student will be **selected randomly** to make a presentation on any one of the following assignments.

1. Community Survey (Section 8)
2. Follow up visit (Section 6.1)
3. Follow up visit (Section 6.2)
4. Estate visit (Section 5)

10. Community Medicine Clerkship Portfolio

A portfolio is a collection of written accounts of events and activities experienced by individuals, and kept in a form of a booklet. However, it is used not only as a piece of evidence but also as an effective learning tool. Therefore, portfolio-based learning is a process of reviewing, reflecting and learning from events.

Objectives

The portfolio writing will enable the students to achieve skills in

1. clinical and scientific writing and
2. critically evaluating the services provided.

The portfolio attachments should be prepared by the students critically evaluating the assignments. The students should critically appraise in not less than 500 words a report for the portfolio on activities undertaken by them under each of the following sections.

Section I - Home visit with the PHM

Section II - Antenatal activities of an antenatal clinic

Section III - Child health services in a child welfare clinic

Section IV - Environmental health provided by the PHI