

◀ Goal of the Concentration

The goal of the concentration in Maternal and Child Health is to improve the health status of mothers and children, through educating leaders in MCH, through basic and applied research, and through involvement in advocacy and community service.

The MCH curriculum includes courses on maternal and child health problems of public health significance; the physical, social, and cognitive stages of human development; MCH health services; the role of governmental, private, and voluntary health agencies; relevant research methods; and the methodology of policy formation, and program planning and evaluation in maternal and child health.

All concentrators in MCH are expected to acquire an understanding of normative growth and development; research in maternal and child health; maternal and child health services; the legislation which supports health and social services for mothers and children; and the planning of such services.

◀ Current MCH Research

Infant Mortality and Morbidity: Risk factors for fetal, neonatal and post-neonatal mortality; methods for confidential perinatal inquiry; outcomes of high-risk infants such as low birth weight infants; efficacy of early intervention; variations in NICU practice; and evaluation of perinatal interventions.

Nutrition: Determinants of intergenerational patterns of growth during critical periods in populations undergoing the epidemiologic transition; interventions for simultaneously targeting risk factors for over- and undernutrition in low income, multi-ethnic populations; domestic and international nutrition surveillance systems.

Reproductive Health: Reproductive health care systems and health sector reform; the design and evaluation of programs and obstetric practices to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality and morbidity; women's preferences for contraceptive technologies and the improvement of family planning delivery systems.

◀ Degree Programs in Society, Human Development and Health

As described below, the department offers both 80-credit and 40-credit master of science (SM) programs, a dual-degree master's program for nurses, and a doctoral program leading to the doctor of science (SD) or doctor of public health (DPH) degree. Within the doctoral program and both the 80-credit and 40 credit master's programs, students may follow a concentration in maternal and child health (MCH).

Doctor of Science/Doctor of Public Health. The doctoral program provides a common core education addressing issues of society, human development, and health at the same time as developing expertise in one of the four areas of interest (health and social policy, human development, planned social change, and the social determinants of health). Students select one of the four areas of interest as their major. Students in the MCH concentration complete the normal requirements for the doctoral program. They select one of the four areas of interest as a major and complete a minor in maternal and child health.

Domestic Violence: The origins of family violence; the risk and resilience of children who face adversity; the mental health impact of family violence and child abuse; family origins of crime and antisocial behavior; child and adolescent mental health; the design and evaluation of mental health interventions.

Special Needs Children: Assessment of health services providing care for children with chronic illness or disability; health care expenditures and utilization patterns of these services; development of standards of care for children with special health care needs; criteria for assessing proposals to reform the financing of health care.

High Risk Youth: Longitudinal studies on the risk factors for delinquency, violent behavior, substance abuse and suicide; community characteristics and programs fostering healthy youth development; policies and strategies for preventing high-risk adolescent behaviors.

MCH Services: Planning and evaluation of international, federal, state, and local public health agencies, their policies and their programs.

Master of Science in Society, Human Development and Health (80-credit and 40-credit programs). The 80-credit, professional SM program prepares students for a variety of positions in community, public, and private settings. These roles include the design, management, and evaluation of programs, particularly health promotion and disease prevention programs, health communication programs, and those providing services to women, youth, and children. Other roles include work in research, public policy, and advocacy. Students in the MCH concentration are prepared for careers in maternal and child health practice, research, planning, policy development, and advocacy.

Students must earn at least 20 credits in departmental courses. They are not required to declare an area of interest within the department but are encouraged to take course work in all four. In addition to fulfilling HSPH, SHDH, and practice core requirements, students are expected to delineate professional goals and to develop an area of expertise. They often focus on a subject area (such as AIDS; addiction; cardiovascular or cancer risk reduction; the health of children, adolescents or women; and mental health) and/or a skill area (such as program design and evaluation, communication, policy analysis, or marketing). Students must complete a practicum, which consists of skill development in a practice setting, a seminar, and a final paper.

Students in the MCH concentration elect one of two focus areas, each of which has specific requirements in addition to the basic master's degree curriculum. The epidemiology focus is for those wishing to develop research skills for work in research, advocacy, or policy organizations; the MCH program planning and policy focus is geared toward those interested in policy formulation or program design and management.

The 40-credit SM program is intended to prepare students for research careers in public and private agencies. Students in this program must fulfill the schoolwide requirements and earn 15 credits in departmental courses. Students who are interested in maternal and child health will do their required SHDH electives in MCH courses. They should work closely with their advisers to develop a study plan to meet their particular academic and career goals.

Master of Science in Society, Human Development and Health (HSPH 40-credit program) and Parent-Child Nursing or Women's Health (Simmons College 40-credit program). This professional, dual-degree program, which requires that 40 credits be earned at HSPH and 40 at Simmons, is designed to prepare nurse practitioners for leadership roles in child, youth, women's, or school health programs. Students enroll in half-time study at both Simmons College and HSPH for two academic years, in addition to studying at Simmons for one summer session. The curriculum of the HSPH portion of the program is the same as that for the 40-credit SM program. Continued matriculation is dependent on maintaining satisfactory academic progress in both programs.

Master of Public Health. Established health professionals who wish to broaden their knowledge of public health with an interest in MCH should apply for the Family and Community Health concentration of the MPH program. *See school catalog for details.*

◀ **Background of Applicants**

Doctoral degree Most students enter the doctoral program with a strong foundation in the social, behavioral, clinical, public health, or natural sciences and with an earned master's degree in a social science (such as sociology, psychology, economics, political science, public policy, and anthropology); clinical health (such as nursing and social work); public health (such as epidemiology and health education); or natural sciences (such as biology, physiology, and neurosciences).

For the SD the department accepts a small number of students without a master's degree directly into the program. Applicants to the DPH program must hold an MPH and a prior doctoral degree.

The 80 credit professional SM degree Applications are encouraged from students who have a strong social sciences and/or natural sciences background, public health experience, and defined public health goals. Solid mathematics and writing skills and successful experience with course work requiring critical reading and writing, drawing of inferences, and rigorous analysis are crucial. Previous graduate work is not required.

The 40 credit SM degree Applicants eligible for the 40-credit program are established practitioners or investigators holding prior master's or doctoral degrees in the social/behavioral sciences, health care, or a public health field.

HSPH 40-credit SM program and Simmons College 40-credit Parent-Child Nursing or Women's Health program Applicants to this dual degree program should hold a bachelor's degree from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing, a license to practice nursing, and the equivalent of at least three years of full-time nursing experience. International nurses with equivalent backgrounds are eligible to apply. Applicants must meet the general admission requirements of both HSPH and Simmons College.

◀ **Career Opportunities**

Graduates of the master's program generally obtain professional positions in local, state, national or international health agencies; others have gone on to earn doctoral degrees. Graduates of the doctoral program pursue careers in academia, government and nonprofit organizations as leading researchers, teachers, policymakers and program developers.

◀ **Financial Assistance**

See school catalog for details

For more general information, contact:

The Admissions Office
Harvard School of Public Health
677 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115-6096
Telephone: (617) 432-1031

For more specific information, write to:

Patricia M. Lavoie
Department of Society, Human Development and Health
Harvard School of Public Health
677 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115-6096
or e-mail: tlavoie@hsph.harvard.edu

Please visit us at our web site:
www.hsph.harvard.edu/Academics/shh

Concentration in Maternal and Child Health

- *Education*
- *Research*
- *Service*

**Harvard School of Public Health
Department of
Society, Human Development
and Health**



2004-2005