



**Hawler Medical University**

**College of Medicine**

**Department of Community Medicine**

**Women' Health**

## **Course Plan**

### **1. Course Details:**

**Course title: Women's Health**

**Study level: Postgraduate Students and Faculty Staff**

**Instructors: Nazar Shabila**

**Year: 2016**

### **2. Teaching Activities**

**15 hours theory**

### **3. Introduction:**

The principles of women's health involve a holistic approach to the physical, mental and emotional health of women, their families, and their relationships. We need to understand women's health in the context of their psychosocial and cultural environment. The purpose of this training course is to examine topics in women's health and wellbeing in Iraqi context; the programs, services, and policies that affect women's health and wellbeing and methodological issues in research about women's health and wellbeing. This course focuses on the social, cultural, behavioral, environmental, economic and political factors associated with women's health. It will particularly examine how the epidemiology, measurement and interpretation of these factors can be translated into interventions, programs, and policies. The course will also discuss in details the role of enhancing life in improving women's health and status in the Kurdish culture. The role of human being's aspirations to move the Kurdish women to a better future will be particularly emphasized in this training course. The course will also address the harmful practices existing in the society that affect women's health and well-being and will examine the role of the cultural and traditional values in combating these practices and thus improving the life of women. This training course approaches issues related to women, gender and health from various interdisciplinary and theoretical perspectives. Throughout the course, we will examine the role of the medical profession, public health professionals, activists, and various social institutions in constructing discourses and knowledge about women's health and the well-being of the society.

### **4. Course participants**

The course is appropriate and available to all postgraduate students and the faculty staff from the relevant departments at Hawler Medical University. These departments include community medicine and family medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, maternity and community nursing, midwifery, and sociology.

### **5. Course objectives:**

At the end of this course, the course participants should be able to:

- Understand medical and public health practices directed at women
- Identify the major health conditions that affect women.
- Analyze women's health problems regarding their public health implications
- Understand the role of enhancing life in improving women's health and status in the Kurdish culture
- Understand the role of human being's aspirations to move the Kurdish women to a better future

- Understand how to use cultural, traditional and religious values and norms in a positive way to improve the life of the women and prevent harmful practices
- Identify major demographic, behavioral and environmental factors that are associated with women's health
- Recognize how social and cultural factors can be incorporated into public health interventions, programs, and policies related to women's health

## **6. Course Format:**

### **Teaching pattern**

This is primarily a lecture course. We will also devote some time to seminar-style class discussions.

### **Assessment**

Course participants must complete all the assigned readings to complete the course successfully. Participants need to make a 10 minutes presentation at the end of course individually or in groups.

## **7. Course Readings**

Course participants will be provided with copies of course readings, a copy of the syllabus, copies of course lecture slides. Since the lectures build upon assigned readings, it is important to pace your reading to keep up with the lectures.

## **8. Course Schedule:**

<b>SN</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>No. of hours</b>
1	Introduction - Defining women's health	1
2	Women's health and well-being, the holistic model of well-being	1
3	Overview of women's health in Iraq	1
4	Gender differences in consequences of health	1
5	Disparities in women's health across ethnicity and socio-economic status	2
6	Exposure of women to physical environments	1
7	Women and relationships	1
8	Violence against women	1
9	Female genital mutilation	1
10	Emotional/mental health and well-being	1
11	Suicide and honor killing in Kurdistan	1
12	Stigma in Kurdish society	1

13	Building the evidence base for policy change	1
14	Creating a better world for women: Developing an idea for a policy, program or research study	-
Total		15

## **9. Course syllabus**

### **1. Introduction - Defining women's health**

- Participants and instructor introductions.
- Review of syllabus.
- What is women's health and why women's health?
- What is enhancing life in the prospect of women's health?

#### ***Required readings:***

- Davidson PM, et al. The health of women and girls determines the health and well-being of our modern world: A white paper from the International Council on Women's Health Issues. *Health Care Women Int* 2011; 32(10): 870–886.
- Varkey P, Mbbs, Kureshi S, Lesnick T. Empowerment of women and its association with the health of the community. *J Womens Health* 2010; 19(1):71-76.

### **2. Women's health and well-being, the holistic model of well-being**

- Social, economic, environmental, behavioral, and political factors associated with women's health, well-being and status

#### ***Required readings:***

- Supranowicz P, Paż M. Holistic measurement of well-being: psychometric properties of the physical, mental and social well-being scale (PMSW-21) for adults. *Rocz Panstw Zakl Hig* 2014; 65(3):251-258.

### **3. Overview of women's health in Iraq**

- Major health conditions and exposures to risk factors: ways of measuring magnitude and impact.
- Women health indicators in Iraq
- The health services and programs related to women's health.

#### ***Required readings:***

- Iraq Woman Integrated Social and Health Survey (I-WISH). Central Statistical Organization, Iraq. 2012.
- Madeleine White. Health rights in Iraq for women: Considerations and consequences. 2015. <http://nina-iraq.com/2015/03/17/health-rights-in-iraq-for-women-considerations-and-consequences/>

### **4. Gender differences in consequences of health**

- What is gender? What is sex?
- Differences between the health of men and women
- Differences in determinants and consequences of health and illness
- Variation in the major indicators of health between women and men

#### ***Required readings:***

- Carol Vlassoff. Gender differences in determinants and consequences of health and illness. *J Health Popul Nutr* 2007; 25(1):47-61.
- KD Bertakis et al. Gender differences in the utilization of health care services. *J Fam Pract* 2000; 49(2):147-152.

### **5. Disparities in women's health across ethnicity and socio-economic status**

- Ethnic and socioeconomic variation in women's health
- Understand the social determinants of health
- Historical and current uses of "ethnicity" and "socioeconomic status" in research.
- Can assumptions about ethnicity and class influence public health interventions, policies, and medical practice?
- What are ethnicity and class differences in major women's health outcomes?
- Effect of the socio-economic class over the life course on risk for disease
- Trends in health by traditional socio-economic status variables

#### ***Required readings:***

- Gee GC, Walsemann KM, Brondolo E. A life course perspective on how racism may be related to health inequities. *Am J Public Health* 2012; 102:967-974.
- United Nations 1981. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In: *Ethical Codes and Declarations Relevant to the Health Professions*, 4th Edition. London: Amnesty International; 2000:104-115.

### **6. Women and exposure to physical environment**

- Physical and chemical exposures of non-occupational environments.
- Women's responses to toxic exposures over the life course.
- Variation of toxic exposure between men and women.
- Understanding and measuring toxic exposures.
- Occupational risks: ergonomic conditions and reproductive risks.
- Job-related stress:
  - Usefulness of traditional measures
  - The possible behavioral and chronic disease correlates of work-related stress
- Interaction of job-related and family-related stresses

#### ***Required readings:***

- Figà-Talamanca I. Occupational risk factors and reproductive health of women. *Occup Med* 2006; 56(8):521-531.
- Chandola T, Brunner E, Marmot M. Chronic stress at work and the metabolic syndrome: a prospective study. *BMJ* 2006; 332:521-525.
- Rebecca Gasior Altman RG, et al. Pollution comes home and gets personal: Women's experience of household chemical exposure. *J Health Soc Behav* 2008; 49(4): 417-435.

### **7. Women and relationships**

- Family, social networks and exposure to intrapersonal violence
- Domestic and intimate partner violence:
  - Measurement
  - Suspected health correlates
- Association of violence with pregnancy outcomes
- Definition of social networks
  - Implications for health

- Influence of women as caregivers on health care, health status, and stress

**Required readings:**

- Umberson D, Montez JK. Social Relationships and Health: A Flashpoint for Health Policy. *J Health Soc Behav.* 2010; 51(Suppl): S54–S66.
- Adimora AA, Schoenbach VJ, Taylor EM, Khan MR, Schwartz RJ. Concurrent partnerships, nonmonogamous partners, and substance use among women in the United States. *Am J Public Health* 2011; 101(1):128-136.
- Cable N, Bartley M, Chandola T, Sacker, A. Friends are equally important to men and women, but family matters more for men's well-being. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2013; 67(2):166-171.

**8. Violence against women**

- Intimate partner violence: prevalence and trends by ethnicity and socio-economic status
- Domestic violence: prevalence, causes, presentations
- Health consequences
- Interventions
- Health sector response
- Legislations and law enforcement structure
  - Barriers to access legal services: stigma, fear
  - Knowledge, skills or social support to seek services
  - Women's ability to exercise their health rights
  - Supportive laws and policies at all levels
  - Violence against women where restrictive laws are in place.
  - Advocate for policy reforms

**Required readings:**

- Al-Atrushi HH, Al-Tawil NG, Shabila NP, Al-Hadithi TS. Intimate partner violence against women in the Erbil city of the Kurdistan region, Iraq. *BMC Womens Health* 2013; 13:37.
- Jewkes R. Preventing sexual violence: a rights-based approach. *Lancet* 2002; 360:1092-1093.

**9. Female genital mutilation**

- Roots of female genital mutilation practice in the Kurdish community
- Prevalence
- Geographical distributions
- Causes
- Role of religion
- Role of cultural traditions
- False beliefs
- Actionable barriers that have allowed this harmful practice to survive
- Legislations and law enforcement structure
- Aspiration potentials of the community to combat this practice

**Required readings:**

- Al-Zalmi MI: [Female genital mutilation: Side effects and its banning in Quran]. Erbil: Shahab Press; 2011. Arabic.

- Yasin BA, Al-Tawil NG, Shabila NP, Al-Hadithi TS. Female genital mutilation among Iraqi Kurdish women: a cross-sectional study from Erbil city. BMC Public Health 2013; 13:809.

#### **10. Emotional/mental health and well-being**

- Social support and its relationship with mental health
- War and mental health of women
- Social position, poverty and poor mental health

##### ***Required readings:***

- Srivastava K. Women and mental health: Psychosocial perspective. Ind Psychiatry J 2012; 21(1):1-3.
- Murthy RS, Lakshminarayana R. Mental health consequences of war: a brief review of research findings. World Psychiatry 2006; 5(1):25-30.

#### **11. Suicide and honor killing in Kurdistan**

- Female self-immolation in Kurdistan
- Suicide by self-burning in Iraqi Kurdistan

##### ***Required readings:***

- Othman N. Suicide by self-burning in Iraqi Kurdistan: description and risk factors. Arch Suicide Res 2011;15(3):238-49.

#### **12. Stigma in Kurdish society**

- What is stigma?

##### ***Required readings:***

- Kreyenbroek PG, Sperl S. The Kurds: A contemporary overview. Routledge; 2005.

#### **13. Building the evidence base for policy change**

- How researchers can help making the case for banning FGM policy reform through a series of studies of the magnitude and impact of FGM complications.

##### ***Required readings:***

- Hakim SA. The role of health research in guiding health policy and practice in Iraqi Kurdistan. PhD thesis. Hawler Medical University; Iraq 2015.

#### **14. Creating a better world for women: Developing an idea for a policy, program or research study**

- 10 minutes presentation by each participant (or groups of participants)

## 10. Student Evaluation Questionnaire

**Study Year: 2016**

**Department: Community Medicine**

**Level: Postgraduate students and faculty staff**

**Study Course: Women's Health**

Please answer the questions below, using the following scale.

1 = none/very low

5 = a lot/very high 1.

1. To what extent has the course / class enabled you to see the general importance of the theme of enhancing life?

1      2      3      4      5

2. To what extent has the course / class enabled you to connect your own discipline / field of study with the topic of enhancing life?

1      2      3      4      5

3. After taking this course / class, how would you measure the importance of the topic of enhancing life

- a) for your discipline

1      2      3      4      5

- b) for the academy

1      2      3      4      5

- c) for society, in your specific context and globally

1      2      3      4      5

4. To what extent has the course / class enabled you to see the topic of enhancing life as a bridge between your discipline / field of study and other disciplines / fields of study in the academy?

1      2      3      4      5