

GLOBVAC student conference - Evidence and Reality - Mind The Gap

The 2017 GLOBVAC (Global Vaccination and Health Research) student conference seeks to explore *The gap between evidence and reality*. To examine this theme we want to deconstruct and highlight structural mechanisms such as trade and economics, as well as cultural norms and beliefs that inhibit the successful implementation and adoption of health improving and promoting initiatives. The student conference seeks to explore questions such as, “why are aren’t innovative and research based solutions to global health challenges put into place?” and “what are the obstacles limiting the implementation and realization of research based evidence in global health initiatives?” We have chosen 3 areas to highlight the theme of the conference, mental health, gender equality and global equality, and the relationship between quantitative and qualitative research.

The GLOBVAC student conference will be held on March 13th in Trondheim, Norway and is a student focused division of the larger GLOBVAC programme and conference which will be held March 14th-15th. GLOBVAC is a branch of the Research Council of Norway, which is funded by the Norwegian government. The GLOBVAC conference is a biennial event to showcase and discuss the research funded and supported by the council. The Research Council exists to develop and support research groups and institutions in Norway with potential for a sustainable and international impact. GLOBVAC specifically supports research which aims to, “contribute to sustainable improvements in health and health equity for poor people in low- and lower-middle income countries (LMIC)”¹ GLOBVAC also focuses on creating international research collaborations and partnerships, especially between Norway and LMIC countries. With this model, GLOBVAC aims to achieve a larger goal of increasing awareness of global health issues among policy makers, researchers and the public.

Nmf (The Association for Norwegian medical students) is the student organization responsible for the organization of the GLOBVAC student conference. Nmf is a part of the Norwegian Medical Union and the International Federation of Medical Student Associations (IFMSA). It is a non partisan organisation advocating for medical students’ social and educational needs, as well as global health and human rights.

The student conference is held the day before the GLOBVAC conference. This year we have chosen the following 3 topics that will center on the larger issue: “The gap between evidence and reality.” The three themes are, equality, mental health in the global health debate, and the balance between qualitative and quantitative research. We are inviting one expert as well as one young academic to present and elaborate on each topic. After

¹ http://www.forskningsradet.no/prognett-globvac/About_the_programme/1224697869303

the two presentations, there will be an open discussion where everyone will be able to take part and challenge the ideas that have been presented.

1. **Equality:** Whether we are discussing equality in relation to gender, socioeconomic background, race, ethnicity, sexuality or religion, it has been proven time and time again that a society with a high degree of equality is favorable for everyone. So what is the rationale behind upholding the inequalities we observe in the world today? Gender based violence, human rights' violations, migrant health, access to medicines, mobilisation when a disaster strikes - who you are and where you are from matters. But why?
2. **Mental health in the global health debate:** Mental health as a global health concern is finally getting on the radar of global health policy makers. In 2015 the United Nations included mental health and substance abuse in the Sustainable Development Agenda. As policy makers are mapping out innovative ways to provide successful mental health treatment and prevention, what might the non-economic barriers that inhibit the introduction on mental health treatment be? What role does the stigma of mental illness play and could a culture's values and views on mental illness be one of the greatest barriers to treatment?
3. **More than numbers- qualitative methodology in global health research:** How can qualitative research and quantitative research better complement each other in global health policy? Why is it important to understand politics and culture in relation to statistics and variables. How can we build bridges between qualitative and quantitative research in planning and implementing health initiatives? Are researchers successfully considering the reality in which their health initiatives will be put into practice, and if not how can they improve?

The GLOBVAC student conference calls on Norwegian and international students and experts who are passionate about global health issues to join in on the debate and contribute their knowledge to the debate on the gap between evidence and reality in global health research.

Time: March 13th

Time: 13:00-19:00

Place: Trondheim, Norway