

Health and Society Seminar Series



The Syndemic Approach to Prevention: Reflections on more than 20 years of Research and Practice to Redress Connections between Substance Abuse, Violence, and HIV/AIDS

Dr. Merrill Singer
University of Connecticut

Wednesday, November 19, 2008
12:00 - 1:00 P.M.

Room G384
Health Sciences Centre,
3330 Hospital Drive NW, Calgary

This talk presents the concept of syndemics as an emergent biosocial synthesis in public health prevention and intervention. Defined as the concentration and deleterious interaction of two or more diseases or other health conditions in a population, especially as a consequence of social inequity and structural violence, the development of the syndemic perspective emerged from community-based efforts to respond to the intertwined and mutually reinforcing triple threats of substance abuse, street and interpersonal violence, and HIV/AIDS among low-income primarily ethnic minority populations. More broadly, it has become evident that syndemics, involving many different diseases and health conditions, have played an important role in human disease history (and hence, in human history generally), are having a significant impact on diverse populations around the world currently, and are likely (in part because of global warming and other health-related ecocrises) to have consequential influence on the health profile of the 21 century. As a result, the concept has received a growing level of attention in public health and among health social scientists, as well as in other disciplines concerned with the health effects of social relations and environmental conditions.

Merrill Singer, PhD is a Senior Research Scientist at the Center for Health, Intervention and Prevention and Professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut (UConn) and is a Research Associate at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS at Yale University. He is affiliated with the Center for the Elimination of Health Disparities among Latinos (UConn), and the Institut Interuniversitaire de Recherche (Haiti).

The Seminar Series is hosted by the Population Health Intervention Research Centre (www.ucalgary.ca/PHIRC) We'd like it to reflect a range of perspectives and interests. We welcome participation. Please contact Lindsay Bradshaw, at ph (403) 210 9316; or by email bradshaw@ucalgary.ca if you have any ideas or suggestions.

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