

## ELECTIVE (SSC5c) OBJECTIVES

### OBJECTIVES SET BY SCHOOL

**1 Describe the pattern of disease/illness of interest in the population with which you will be working and discuss this in the context of global health: What are the most significant health risks that affect women's health in Belize?**

There are many different issues that affect women's healthcare in Belize. Females in developing areas are often challenged with multiple social and cultural factors that impact negatively on their physical and mental wellbeing. As well as having difficulties to access adequate services for healthcare, other barriers in education and economy can also inhibit standard of living even in comparison to their male counterparts. With particular focus on obstetric medicine, the problems that face women in pregnancy include miscarriage/stillbirth, infection and complications of delivery that include prematurity and caesarean sections. The figures for total fertility rates is three births for every female and maternity mortality is 62.3/100,000 live births. As with most developing countries in central america the indigenous cohorts are at significant higher risk for morbidity and mortality due to poorer access to healthcare. There are also difficulties in transferring patients to areas where facilities and provisions are available for them, as well as having the adequate physician and specialist care. Despite this, emergency transfers are usually low and the majority of pregnancies are completed at home in absence of medically trained professionals. However, HIV still remains a major problem, where its prevalence is the highest in Central America and the leading cause of death in the aged 15-49. Although prevalence has fallen by almost 15% since 2008, more focus groups and government initiatives have been developed to further tackle this major issue.

**2 Describe the pattern of health provision in relation to the country which you will be working and contrast this with other countries, or with the UK: How are healthcare provisions delivered in Belize with regards to women's health and how does this differ to the NHS in the UK?**

The healthcare provisions in Belize are significantly different to that of the UK. Being still an economically developing country, the hospitals in Belize are still in need of further funding to develop access to medical care. Without the finance to provide more beds and medical equipment there is growing pressure to support a large population, where a single hospital such as San Ignacio must serve a large surface area. This can lead problems in decision making in who can be admitted and accommodated for as the wards become saturated very quickly. As a result, swift medical care must be provided in treating and shifting patients adequately in and out of hospital. Due to shortages in equipment, not all patients may receive similar care and this may cause delays in treatment and further clogging of wards. From observation this has been a lot different to the care in the UK where there is better access to hospitals, equipment and physicians. Although hospitals serve a larger population there are a lot more facilities and beds available and the system allows patients to be

admitted a lot more efficiently.

#### **OBJECTIVES SET BY STUDENT**

**3 Health related objective: How has the healthcare system in Belize evolved and how will this continue to change?**

The MDG Report (Millennium Development Goals) in 2005 provided in depth information of the progress in development of Belize, identifying the main goals set to be achieved by this year, 2015. One of the main targets of reducing poverty is still underway, where a study in 2002 showed that 33.5% of the population were under the poverty line. MDG objectives 3-5 state to improve gender equality and empowerment of women through education and healthcare. There have been improvements to these MDGs through government spending in child and maternal health, water/sanitation and investments in research and medicine. MDG 6-7 focusses on tackling HIV/AIDs, malaria and other prevalent infective diseases, however it has been identified that more attention needs to be placed with other main causes of mortality such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases. These objectives are still continually being moulded and the government are still looking to find ways of improving spending on healthcare provisions in these particular aspects.

As well as the MDG report, the PAHO (Pan-American Health Organisation) and WHO have developed a program titled the Strategic agenda in Belize 2008-11 with other members of states and partners to promote health equality in the country. It also aims to combat prevalent diseases and improve quality and longevity of lives of the population. They will look to build on good quality of practice as well as highlighting the health challenges and inequities of the most vulnerable groups in Belize and by identifying and implementing the adequate strategies through health promotion and gender-human rights groups

**4 Personal/professional development goals.: What skills have I gained from my experience in Belize and how will I utilise these effectively upon my return**

There are many skills that I will take home with me from my time in Belize. I have experienced and understood the value of team work in multi-disciplinary teams, where the burden of healthcare is divided between other professionals to deliver more effective and efficient quality of care. Working quickly but effectively will be important when I start my

job as an F1 and I will gain this first hand from my experience. Delivering excellent quality of care is also through understanding and listening to patients closely and attentively. This falls in line with the GMC objectives and this is something I will focus on when I am on the wards myself. Through shadowing professionals, I will also try my best in time keeping skills and to prioritise tasks more effectively to make sure the most important work gets completed first. I have seen how valuable this skill has been in hospital settings.