Job Task Analysis in Public Health: What are the Essential Tasks of Public Health Professionals?

Richard Kurz, PhD*, Laura King, MPH, CHES**, Ian Lapp, PhD***, James Yager, PhD****

*University of North Texas Health Science Center School of Public Health, **Council on Education for Public Health
*** Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, ****Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Background and Methodology

The National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE) completed a Job Task Analysis in 2014 to survey the domains and tasks identified by public health workers as the basis for refining the Certification in Public Health examination sponsored by the NBPHE. The survey instrument was developed with assistance from Applied Measurement Professionals and a panel of 18 individuals representing employers in various sectors of public health, including government, private sector, academia, and non-profits.

The survey included demographic characteristics and 200 tasks in 10 content domains. Respondents rated each task on a 5-point rating scale by its importance in their current job. Respondents were asked to first consider whether they actually perform the task in their job, and if not answer “Never Performed” (coded as 0). If they do perform the task in their job, they were asked to indicate how important the task is (coded as 1=Not very important, 2=Important, 3=Very important, 4=Essential). The survey was distributed directly to over 124,000 individuals and through 51 organizations.

Results

Of the 7,441 respondents to complete the survey, 4,392 provided usable survey responses. The tables and charts present the initial results on demographic data and domains by category, showing the domain means and standard deviations, along with the top ten specific tasks.

Next Steps

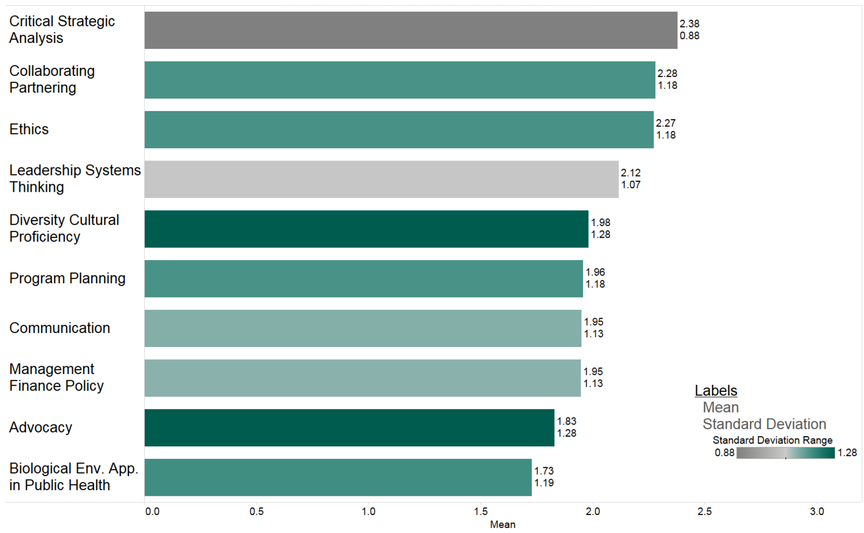
Further analysis will be conducted on the tasks within each domain and by the various categories, with all the possible correlates of the ratings of task importance. The findings will be disseminated to the public health profession.

Domains
Critical / Strategic Analysis
Biological & Environmental Applications in Public Health
Leadership & Systems Thinking
Management, Finance & Policy
Program Planning
Collaborating & Partnering
Communication
Advocacy
Ethics
Diversity & Cultural Proficiency

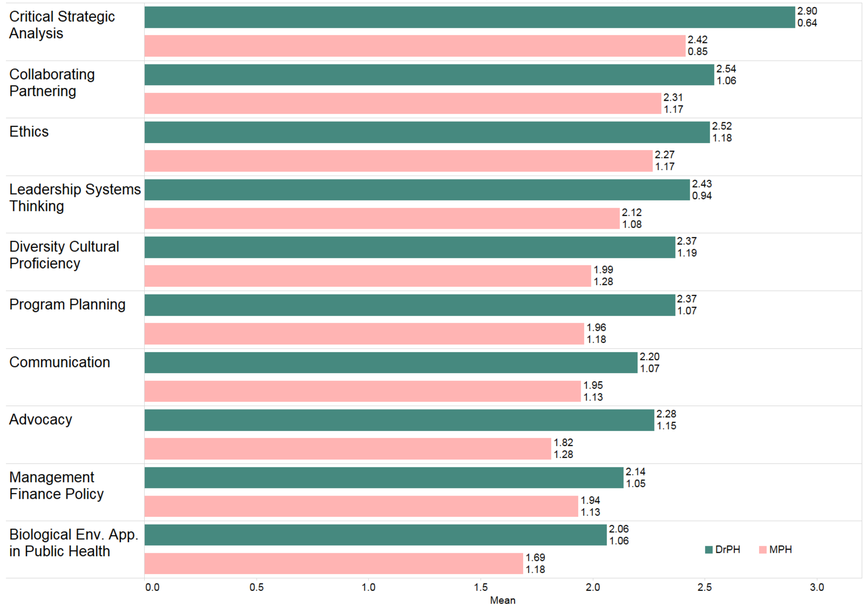
Gender	
Female	76.3%
Male	23.7%
Ethnicity	
White	64.0%
Black or African American	10.8%
Asian	10.6%
Hispanic	7.7%
Two or More Races	3.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.2%
Other	2.3%
Unknown	1.0%
Employment Setting	
Government	37.0%
Academic	23.9%
Non profit	15.4%
Clinic or Hospital	11.9%
Business or Corporation	8.0%
Other	3.8%
Employment Level	
Mid-level position	50.4%
Upper-level position	20.7%
Entry-level position	16.2%
Consultant	5.6%
Clinical	4.0%
Other	3.1%

Work Experience	
0-2 years	17.4%
3-5 years	20.8%
6-11 years	21.5%
12-20 years	19.3%
21+ years	21.1%
Public Health Experience	
0-2 years	26.3%
3-5 years	29.5%
6-11 years	19.1%
12+ years	25.1%
Primary Area	
Epidemiology	16.5%
Health Education/Health Promotion	11.8%
Environmental Health	6.4%
Health Care Administration	5.9%
Health Behavior/Behavioral Science	5.4%
Public Health Administration	5.2%
Health Policy	5.1%
Maternal & Child Health	5.1%
International/Global Health	4.9%
Communicable Disease	4.3%
Chronic Disease	2.8%
Public Health Preparedness	2.8%
Biostatistics	2.4%
Nutrition	2.4%
Health Disparities	2.3%
Reproductive Health	1.6%
Injury Prevention	1.1%
Immunization	1.1%
Adolescent Health	0.8%
Other	7.3%
No area of expertise	1.8%

Overall Domain Mean and Standard Deviation



Domain Mean and Standard Deviation by MPH and DrPH Degrees



Domain Mean by Employment Level

	Clinical	Consultant	Entry	Mid	Upper
Critical Strategic Analysis	2.08	2.51	2.18	2.35	2.66
Ethics	2.29	2.25	2.13	2.20	2.59
Collaborating Partnering	1.85	2.48	1.94	2.24	2.74
Leadership Systems Thinking	1.87	2.27	1.72	2.07	2.63
Diversity Cultural Proficiency	2.06	2.11	1.77	1.90	2.28
Communication	1.97	2.05	1.68	1.89	2.31
Program Planning	1.60	2.10	1.53	1.93	2.45
Management Finance Policy	1.53	2.05	1.42	1.93	2.57
Advocacy	1.68	2.03	1.49	1.75	2.32
Biological Env. App. in Public Health	2.08	1.76	1.53	1.62	2.05

Domain Mean by Employment Setting

	Academic	Business or Corporation	Clinic or Hospital	Government	Non profit
Critical Strategic Analysis	2.54	2.19	2.18	2.41	2.31
Collaborating Partnering	2.17	2.11	2.05	2.38	2.50
Ethics	2.42	2.12	2.27	2.32	2.04
Leadership Systems Thinking	2.00	1.99	2.03	2.17	2.32
Management Finance Policy	1.79	1.97	1.87	2.01	2.11
Program Planning	1.98	1.75	1.83	1.93	2.19
Diversity Cultural Proficiency	2.09	1.43	1.91	1.94	2.22
Communication	1.91	1.64	1.89	2.02	2.06
Advocacy	1.78	1.56	1.58	1.93	2.02
Biological Env. App. in Public Health	1.77	1.29	1.64	1.94	1.44

Top 10 Rated Tasks	Mean	Std. Deviation
Collect valid and reliable quantitative or qualitative data. (Critical / Strategic Analysis)	3.26	1.05
Use information technology for data collection, storage, and retrieval. (Critical / Strategic Analysis)	3.18	1.04
Ensure the application of ethical principles in the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of data and information. (Ethics)	2.92	1.32
Interpret quantitative or qualitative data following current scientific standards. (Critical / Strategic Analysis)	2.85	1.25
Identify regulations regarding privacy, security, confidentiality (e.g., personal health information, etc.). (Ethics)	2.82	1.39
Identify key stakeholders. (Collaborating & Partnering)	2.75	1.30
Identify opportunities to partner with health and public health professionals across sectors and related disciplines. (Collaborating & Partnering)	2.68	1.29
Interpret results of statistical analyses found in public health studies or reports. (Critical / Strategic (Analysis)	2.68	1.29
Identify the limitations of research results, data sources, or existing practices and programs. (Critical / Strategic Analysis)	2.67	1.27
Synthesize information from multiple data systems or other sources. (Critical / Strategic Analysis)	2.66	1.30

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