

## **Society for Adolescent Medicine (SAM)**

### **Summary Trip Report**

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**This years annual theme was "eTeens" Incorporating Technology and Health  
March 25-28, 2009 Los Angeles, California**

### **WEDNESDAY**

The first session I attended was a workshop on **"Leadership is a Verb: Becoming a change agent in Adolescent Health"**. This explored Kouzes and Posners model of inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart in an attempt to improve ones competence as a leader. The challenge of 'doing things right'(managing) and "doing the right things"(leading) was discussed. I was able to understand better my own leadership style and areas for improvement as well as to consider some more of these leadership practices in the daily challenges of my work.

I then attended a lecture **"Media Technology and Healthy Adolescent Development"** by Ellen Wartella ,Phd. Executive Vice Chancellor of University of California . This was useful in further identifying the kinds of media adolescents are using today and to be aware of the developmental, social and health consequences of digital media use on teens. Adolescents are specifically targeted in the Digital Age using processes of Engagement, Immersion, Personalization, Peer to Peer constructs, Ubiquitous connectivity and Self Expression. Companies market products constantly to Teens and there needs to be a new conceptual approach to regulating adolescent advertising. Parents need to Monitor Teen Digital Media use and a suggested limit of 2 hrs/day is recommended although CONTENT is what is more critical than TIME spent. Media literacy programmes are essential BUT the key is that adolescents are still vulnerable and we cannot stop there. Research is clear that Exposure to sex is implicated in early sex. Media violence is related to real violence and Advertising and Marketing are highly influential.

Following this I attended the presentation of a wide variety of research papers.

I then attended a very interesting workshop facilitated by Father Gregory J. Boyle, SJ on **Los Angeles Gangs, Prevention and Intervention**. LA has a history of gang activity with more than 1100 different gangs. High risk behaviours like violence, drug use, criminal activity and truancy continue to make this a serious adolescent health threat. It is our task to assist adolescents, parents and communities to identify at risk youth and to initiate prevention and intervention strategies to help curb this tragic epidemic. 2 young men with former gang involvement shared their stories and thoughts. We discussed who is at risk for gang involvement, signs of membership, what is gained by gang involvement, associated morbidity and mortality and gang culture as well as the experiences of youth in gangs and the transition out of gangs.

## **THURSDAY**

I attended a plenary panel discussion on **Global Teens and E communication Technologies, Media Policy in the Age of the Internet and Wired Teens; Living Life Online**. This described adolescent's use of newer forms of e technologies and developmental issues (e.g. sexuality, identity, intimacy). We discussed global similarities in the social implications of e-communication technologies for intimacy and privacy and finally reviewed the current efforts made by states, Congress and governmental agencies to maximize youths access to media and minimize the potential dangers associated with excessive or inappropriate media use

I then attended a workshop on **Violence Prevention** in which we discussed the key epidemiologic findings on the effects of lifetime exposure to violence and described identified risk and protective factors for adolescent violence. We then explored prevention and intervention implications from research data on lifetime exposure to violence

I then attended various research presentations including "**Neighbourhood Risks and HIV risk among African American Youth**" "**Joining the Sex Club: Perceptions and Experiences of First Sexual Intercourse in Australian Adolescent Females**" "**Reducing Problem Substance Use in Asian Sexual Minority and Heterosexual Youth**" "**Just Do It; Daily Sports Participation and Students Sexual Activity**" "**Adolescent Women's affect and Condom Use associated with and following first Coitus**" among others

Finally I attended a workshop on **Positive Youth Development Intervention Programs** among Latinos which discussed integrating community controlled models of community-academic partnership in working with adolescents.

## **FRIDAY**

First I attended a workshop on **Qualitative Research** where we discussed a variety of qualitative research methods and analysis strategies being implemented in adolescent health. I was able to network with other researchers, exchange ideas and establish potential collaborative relationships.

I then attended a Plenary Panel discussion on **E-Tools for Adolescent Health Research, Improving Patient Health Management by providing access to their records online and using Mobile Technology to Empower Patient Self Care and Chronic Disease Management**

I then attended a workshop on **Shaping Public Health Strategies for Gang Youth** where we discussed how a public health approach to gang youth is conceived and developed and how this approach fundamentally differs from the traditional criminal justice approach toward youth in gangs

I then attended various research presentations including **"Positive Youth Development Programs that Promote Adolescent Reproductive Health"** **"Primary Care Practitioners Detection of Youth Violence Involvement"** **"Program Evaluation of the Fun and Fit School Based Intervention for Adolescents addressing Nutrition and Fitness"** **"Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine Uptake, Barriers to Vaccination and Predictors of Vaccination in Young Women."** **"Impact of School Health Services on Adolescent Health Care Use"** among others.

## **SATURDAY**

First I attended a workshop on **Spirituality** where we explored areas where spiritual and/or religious concerns influence patient's choices as well as our own practice of adolescent health. We also discussed the latest research findings regarding the relationship between spiritual factors and adolescent health outcomes.

I then attended a panel discussion with the Professor of Adolescent Health Research at the University of Melbourne, Australia, The Executive Director of the Communicative Initiative, BC Canada and the Chairman and President of Voxiva, Washington D.C where we discussed **How New Technologies are transforming Adolescent Health Strategies, The emerging role of the Internet and Mobile Technology as a setting for Mental Health Promotion and Practical lessons for using Mobile Phones to Improve Patients Health and Wellbeing.**

Finally I attended a workshop on **Adolescent Male Reproductive Health** issues to better able manage boys reproductive health concerns.

Overall this 4 day workshop was well worth attending.