Border Health: Concepts, Models, and Applications for the Greater Mekong Subregion

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Outline of Presentation

- Borders and boundaries
- Border health in relation to migrant health
- Frameworks for a “Healthy Borders” model
- International models of border health
- Recommendations for further discussions
Border Health

- Border Health can be defined as “a broad term that is characterized by the health care markets, regulatory environments, health laws, environmental factors, and health care consumer and individual behaviors (risk and protective) that shape the health of immigrant and other populations living in the region intersected by the geopolitical boundaries of two or more nations” (Zúñiga (2012))
Defining a Border Region

- A boundary is a line between two countries, generally a line of division, while a border region is an area adjacent to that line, that can be an area of exchange and interaction.

- Example: U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission defines as 100 km north/south of international boundary

- Proposed in paper for GMS:
  First-level administrative division that includes a geopolitical boundary of two or more nations
Border Health and Migrant Health

• Border health
  ○ Encompasses migrant health, but is a broader concept
  ○ Focus is on all populations living in the border region on both sides of a boundary line, including migrants as well as non-migrant populations (who are neither internal or external migrants)
  ○ Generally does not include migrants who move beyond border region

• Migrant health
  ○ Moving toward broader population-based, border region orientation
  ○ Shifting away from a focus on communicable disease control
  ○ Focus on collaboration through cross-border and regional partnerships
Seven Concerns of Health and Development in Border Areas (Kamel, 2009):

- Neglect and marginalization of border areas/communities/people impact community beyond the borders
- Crucial entry points for communicable diseases that can affect country’s population
- Lack of health care, poor access to preventive health services, emergency services, and health promotion
- Prevalence of substance abuse, preventable injury, violence and behavioral health problems
- Refugees and migrant workers, particularly due to political and ethnic conflicts, economics, and natural disasters
- Environmental problems and occupational hazards
- Women, children and elderly more at risk – food security and malnutrition
Social Determinants of Health

Dahlgren & Whitehead's “Policy Rainbow” or Social Model of Health
Migrant Health and Non-Health Sector Factors

- World Health Assembly 2008 Resolution on “health of migrants” (2008)
  - Promote migrant-sensitive health policies
  - Promote equitable access to health promotion and care for migrants
  - Analyze trends in migrants’ health, disaggregated by category
  - Identify gaps in services to improve health migrants’ health
  - Document and share best practice for migrant health
  - Increase cultural and gender sensitivity to migrants’ health issues
  - Train health workers to deal with issues associated with population movements
  - Promote cooperation on migrants’ health issues
  - Promote strengthening of health systems
Potential Healthy Border Policy Framework

Replace “migrant” with “border region populations”

- Promote **border region** population-sensitive health policies
- Equitable access to health promotion and care for **border region** populations
- Analyze trends in **border region** populations' health, disaggregated by category
- Identify gaps in services to improve **border region** population health
- Document and share best practice for **border region** population health
- Increase cultural and gender sensitivity to **border region** population health issues
- Train health workers to deal with issues associated with population movements
- Promote cooperation on **border region** population health issues
- Promote strengthening of health systems
Inclusion of Other Sectors

- **Health-in-All-Policies” (HiAP)**
  - WHO in 1990s
  - “approach to public policies across sectors that systematically takes into account the health implications of decisions, seeks synergies, and avoids harmful health impacts, in order to improve population health and health equity...improves accountability of policymakers for health impacts”

- WHO adaptation of Dahlgren and Whitehead
  - Model of social determinants of migrant health
  - Demonstrates relevance of HiAP approach to addressing migrant health
Policies need to go beyond improving health services to encompass actions addressing social exclusion of migrants.
Border Health Models

- “Health of Migrants – The Way Forward” (WHO, 2010) identified key priorities and actions
- Adapting language from “migrant health” to “border health” provides approach for identifying priorities and actions for building border health models
  - Monitoring Border Health
  - Policy & Legal Frameworks
  - Border Region Sensitive Health Systems
  - Partners, Networks, & Multi-Country Frameworks
GMS Border Health Models

- Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance (MBDS)
  - 6 Ministries of Health formally established in 2001
- Thailand’s Bureau of Vector-borne Diseases and the electronic Malaria Information System (eMIS)
  - 7 Thailand-Cambodia border provinces since 2009
- Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases (APSED)
  - Common strategic framework to strengthen capacity of countries in region to manage and respond to emerging diseases launched in 2005
GMS “Healthy Border” Framework

- “Healthy Border” framework should incorporate full dimensions of “social determinants of health” model
- “Place-based” organizing framework developed by *Healthy People 2010* may be appropriate for GMS
  - 5 key areas of social determinants of health
    - Economic Stability
    - Education
    - Social and Community Context
    - Health and Health Care
    - Neighborhood and Built Environment
GMS “Border Health” Framework

- Additional focus on labor migration, refugees, and displaced
  - Economic Stability
    - Cross-border trade and development
    - Workplace safety
  - Education
    - Access for migrants, refugees, displaced and/or stateless people
  - Social and Community Context
  - Health and Health Care
    - Appropriateness of services
    - Availability of health information systems to analyze trends in border health
  - Neighborhood and Built Environment
    - Food security
    - Border security
  - Policy and Legal Frameworks
    - Pre-arrival screening, border screening, and communicable disease control policies
    - Immigrations (including labor migration) and refugee laws and policies
    - Nationality laws and regulations, vital registration systems
    - Border control, detention, and deportation laws and policies
    - Bilateral and multilateral cooperative mechanisms
GMS “Border Health” Framework (2)

- Social Determinants of Border Health
  - Economic Stability/Trade and Development
  - Neighborhood & Built Environment
  - Education
  - Social & Community Context
  - Health & Health Care
  - Policies & Legal Framework
“The border can be an area of division and demarcation or alternatively of contact, exchange and integration. Borders can separate or they can connect”

- Comelli et al., 2006