

Clinical Topics in Global Health:

What is “global health”?



Brett D. Nelson, MD, MPH, DTM&H
Division of Global Health
MassGeneral Hospital *for* Children
Harvard Humanitarian Initiative
brett.d.nelson@gmail.com

Photo by Brett Nelson. No permission needed.

Brief discussion

- Some images and questions to explore dimensions of GH
- Your definition of “GH”
- Others’ definitions of “GH”



Photo by Brett Nelson. No permission needed.

What is “global health”?



Image retrieved from <http://phil.cdc.gov/phil/details.asp>. Image is in the public domain.

...tropical diseases?...

What is “global health”?



Photo by Brett Nelson. No permission needed.

...common causes of mortality and morbidity?...

What is “global health”?



Photo by Brett Nelson. No permission needed.

...refugees and IDPs?...

What is “global health”?



Photo by Brett Nelson. No permission needed.

...humanitarian assistance?...

What is “global health”?



Photo by Brett Nelson. No permission needed.

...disaster response?...

What is “global health”?



Photo by Brett Nelson. No permission needed.

...traditional/community practices and partners?...

What is “global health”?

[Non-public photo of a new brick
hospital building in Rwanda]

...building infrastructure?...

What is “global health”?

[Non-public photo of a hospital's
medical records office in Rwanda]

...health information systems?...

What is “global health”?



Photo by Brett Nelson. No permission needed.

...introducing technology?...

What is “global health”?



Photo by Brett Nelson. No permission needed.

...short-term trips?...

What is “global health”?



“What you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

-Matthew 25:40

Image retrieved from http://www.who.int/whr/2010/media_centre/photo4.jpg on Nov 7, 2012. Image is in the public domain. Text added.

...medical missionaries?...

What is “global health”?



Image retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/features/MedicalTourism/index.html> on Nov 7, 2012. Image is in the public domain.

...medical tourism?...

How do you define
“global health”?

Other definitions of GH

“Global health is an area for study, research, and practice that places a priority on improving health and achieving equity in health for all people worldwide. Global health emphasizes transnational health issues, determinants, and solutions; involves many disciplines within and beyond the health sciences and promotes interdisciplinary collaboration; and is a synthesis of population-based prevention with individual-level clinical care.”

- Consortium of Universities for Global Health

Other definitions of GH

It is more than the study of diseases of the developing world: it is the study of the many factors that contribute to health and disease world-wide. It is conceptualizing health as the end point of such complex processes involving economic, cultural, historical, political, commercial, and environmental factors on a global scale.

- International Health and Medical Education Centre (London)