Introduction

- Ibis Reproductive Health provides:
  - Social Science research on outcomes in women’s health in order to influence policy and cultural understanding
  - Information and coalition building for pregnant teens

Objective of Internship

This internship provided the opportunity to learn extensively about the sexual and reproductive status of South Africa and help women in South Africa in both direct and indirect ways by means of conducting and publishing research and working with government officials and other partners.

Work profile

- Edited and aided in composition of scholarly articles.
- Research relevant topics in women’s health for literature reviews and website content.
- Conducted studies, including interviewing, with South African women to assess understanding of medication abortion.

Reflection

- Ibis Reproductive Health advocates for women through research and promoting visibility for all South African women to address the serious short comings in reproductive health.
- Working most often with the poorest communities in the country, Ibis focuses research on understanding networks of women and their relationship to sexual health.
- I interacted with these women through study interviews and helped the work at Ibis become more visible with social media content and push for more scholarly articles to be published.
- Through my time at Ibis, I have taken many lessons, but none so meaningful as the importance of education, not only for students, but entire communities as a way of changing cultural practices in order to lessen the struggles people face in regard to their sexual health.
- I’ve also seen the importance of coalition building to create and achieve attainable goals. The Mmoho project started by Ibis has successfully reached hundreds of teens facing pregnancy using its many partners.

Looking ahead

I plan to use the relational skills and perspective learned from the internship in my future in medical school and beyond, hopefully working internationally on issues related to women’s health.

Questions

- How can I bring back the lessons I’ve learned from South Africa into a United States context?
- What can the international community do to affectively impact women’s health and gender equality in terms of education?

Conclusion

Ibis Reproductive Health pursues research that brings real change to South African women and supports the country by dedicating their service to bettering the lives of women.

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