The Geography of Cancer: An Analysis of Cancer Risk Factors in the State of NJ

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Introduction
• The CINJ Community Outreach and Engagement (COE) team works to reduce the cancer burden of NJ
• Diverse set of public health workers partner with local community and healthcare organizations to promote cancer screening & preventative behaviour

Objective of Internship
I wanted to gain a better understanding of what public health work looks like and the especially regarding reducing health disparities

Work profile
• Work with healthcare organizations and community partners to increase cancer screening through the ScreenNJ initiative and promote healthy behaviour
• I undertook a data analysis project to help identify community cancer screening needs
• I aided in the development of the NJ Catchment Area survey to obtain baseline data for the organization’s work

Reflection
• I worked with the COE team’s drafting of the NJ Catchment Area survey. This survey was meant to help provide data on cancer screening habits and cancer risk factor prevalence in the state
• I also had the opportunity to present a flash talk on the survey project at the CINJ Cancer Health Equity Retreat

Looking ahead
• This experience has fueled an interest in data-driven public health research and has solidified my plans to complete an MPH before going to medical school

Questions
• Given the remote nature of my internship, a lot of the work I did was very removed from the communities I was analyzing. I am curious to see how the trends I analyzed actually play out in the day-to-day lives of Camden County and NJ residents.

Conclusion
• Public health research is, by necessity, all-inclusive and multifaceted and community outreach work must be creative and customized to the needs of each community.

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