

Fall @ Tulane School of Public Health

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New Orleans weather may finally be cooling off, but my internship is just heating up! I am so grateful for the opportunity to continue my work with Dr. Lederer at the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine this semester, and for Newcomb College Institute's Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health Internship for continuing to fund this work. In the hustle and bustle of the academic year, it is so rewarding to have such meaningful work to turn to every week that reminds me of why I chose to study public health in the first place.

As I mentioned in my summer blog posts, my area of focus is a qualitative analysis of the Check It program, which is a Tulane-based community intervention program that provides free STI testing and treatment to African-American males aged 15-24 (and their partners!) in the greater New Orleans area. Much of my work thus far has consisted of transcribing interviews with men that tested positive for an STI through Check It and have completed the program entirely. I am excited to announce that we will soon begin the qualitative analysis portion of my project, working to find themes amongst the interviewees' responses that will allow us to better understand and address the high rates of gonorrhea and chlamydia in the Gulf South.

Perhaps my favorite part of this work is the contribution I can make as a transcriber to program improvement overall. In recent meetings, I was able to use what broad themes I was hearing in the interviews to recommend changes to the interviewing style, and the team will soon begin to interview those that underwent the Check It program but did not test positive for an STI in order to obtain a bit more unbiased feedback surrounding the program logistics. I am looking forward to seeing where the qualitative research around Check It moves in the near future, as Dr. Lederer and I have discussed writing a manuscript and presenting at a public health research conference. I will also be putting together a poster about my work for the Conceiving Equity event at NCI in January, all of which will be invaluable professional experiences.

In addition to my work at the downtown campus, Dr. Clare Daniel and Amy Irvin have some wonderful things in store for us interns through the more structured part of the internship. Interns that are involved in research will continue our journal club that was started in the summer, which is a great opportunity to ask questions and learn how manuscripts surrounding reproductive rights and health are published in scholarly journals. I am also very excited about the program's new focus on career development and resume building; they've already brought in an inspiring female career coach to discuss the many paths we as college students can take to achieve our goals as young professionals and activists. The women in this program are diverse, passionate, and incredibly intelligent, and I look forward to learning alongside them as we continue to advocate for reproductive rights, health, and justice (in an era that needs as many advocates as ever).