Student’s Name

Professor

Course

Date

Case Study: Public Health Data and Communication

1. **You read that the rate of use of cocaine among teenagers has fallen by 50% in the last decade. You wonder where that information might come from.**

There is a wide variety of ways through which public health information is collected, commonly known as public health surveillance. The public health surveillance collects, publishes and distributes data, but does not identify specific individuals. There are currently many sources of public health information, and the number keep growing each year.

1. **You hear that life expectancy in the United States is now approximately 80 years. You wonder what that implies about how long you will live and what that means for your grandmother, who is 82 and in good health.**

The health of a given population is summarized using the measure of the health status of the population. The status of health of big populations such as that of females, males or a given racial group, are collected and then summarized to provide projections like the life expectancy of humans. For example, the measurement of life expectancy and infant motility rate depend only on the birth and death certificates, and probably census data. An individual can live past the 80 years life expectancy, in fact many people do; the number is just a statistic showing the furthest age that most people make it to.

1. **You hear on the news the gruesome description of a shark attack on a young boy from another state and decide to keep your son away from the beach. While playing at a friend’s house, your son nearly drowns after falling into the backyard pool. You ask why so many people think that drowning in a backyard pool is unusual when it is far more common than shark attacks.**

People use various information to make decisions concerning their health, and there are two important questions that if we ask ourselves, can give an understanding of how information is used in making health decisions:

* How do the risk taking attitudes of humans affect their way of decision making?
* How is information incorporated into people’s decisions?

The way people make decisions can be affected by various attitudes. The most important one is the risk-taking attitude. Some people can take risks while others cannot.

1. **“Balancing the harms and benefits is essential to making decisions,” your clinician says. The treatment you are considering has an 80% chance of working, but there is also a 20% chance of side effects. “What do I need to consider when balancing the harms and the benefits?” you ask.**

There are always chances of side effects in the treatment of various illnesses. Therefore, the most important thing is to focus on the chances of success of procedures. If a medical procedure has a greater chance of success and little chance of side effects, it should be considered a good option in decision making.

1. **You are faced with a decision to have a medical procedure. One physician tells you there’s no other choice and you must undergo the procedure, another tells you about the harms and benefits and advices you to go ahead, and the third lays out the options and tells you it’s your decision. Why are there such different approaches to making decisions these days?**

The three approaches of decision making described in the chapter are available because of several reasons. However, the main reason is to let the patient make their own decisions and become responsible for the procedure’s outcome. It is also a way of increasing the patient’s control over their lives. These approaches also ensure that the patients gain information as well as the understanding about the nature of their illness and the treatment.