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Clinical Public Health

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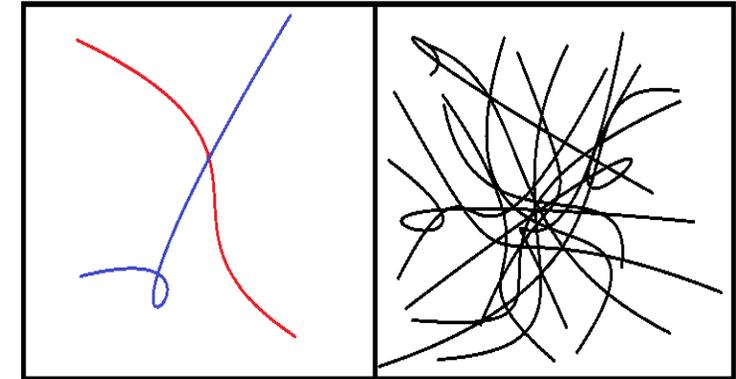
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Introduction

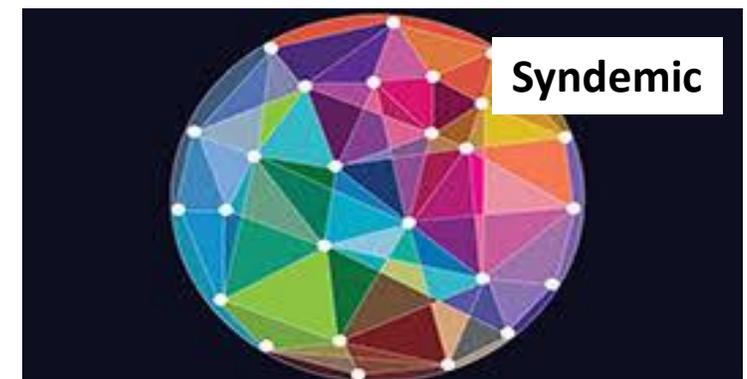
The world is full of

Wicked problems	Complex problem that is difficult or impossible to solve
Megatrends	Global trend that is slow to form, but once formed, has widespread impact which is difficult if not impossible to reverse
Syndemics	Synergistic epidemic; clustering of 2 or more diseases (e.g. infectious, chronic) in a population



Traditional Problem

Wicked Problem



Introduction

- In 2012, Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto was the first to create a Division of **Clinical Public Health** to foster collaboration of clinicians and public health practitioners
- The Division defines Clinical Public Health as **the integration of primary care, preventive medicine & public health**
- Objective of this study:
 - To determine if consensus could be achieved on the definition of **Clinical Public Health** among a diverse group of clinicians and public health professionals with the aim of conceptualizing, informing, and operationalizing a working model of this term to promote and address common health goals through collaborative efforts in research, practice, and education.

Methods

DESIGN

- A two-wave anonymous online opinion survey inspired by the Delphi method
- Feedback of wave 1 results to wave 2 participants
- All faculty members of the Division of Clinical Public Health were invited
- Members of the investigation team were also invited to participate
- Research Ethics Board approval from the University of Toronto

WAVE 1 - 14 QUESTIONS

- Demography
- Definition of the term Clinical Public Health with rationales
- Advantages, disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses of the term

WAVE 2 - 12 QUESTIONS

- Ranking of 6 proposed definitions from wave 1 with rationales
- Pros and cons, and personal identification with the term
- Suggested collaborative projects

Results

WAVE 1

- Response rate 47/187 (25%)
- Masters (66%), MD (55%), PhD (51%), other (21%)
- Diverse professional backgrounds: bioethics, business administration, clinical epidemiology, community health, ... urban health

• **WAVE 2**

- Response rate 42/192 (22%)
- Degrees and professional backgrounds similar to wave 1

Fig 1. Six Venn Diagrams summarizing 33 definitions from wave 1, ordered by ranking in wave 2

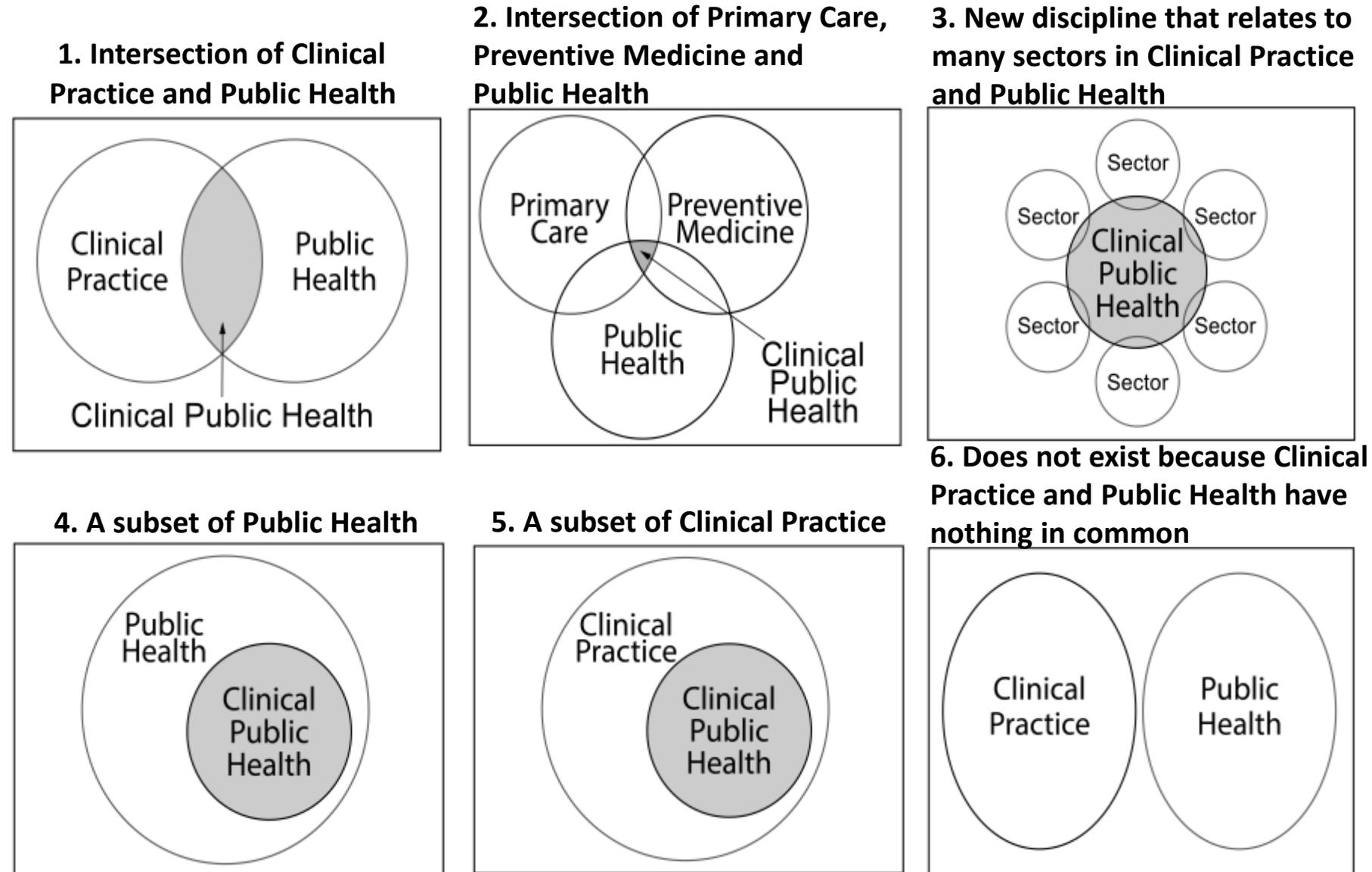


Table 1. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Clinical Public Health

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdisciplinary collaboration New field Forward thinking New insights Innovation Linking population and individual health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusion Too narrow in scope Too clinical Not inclusive enough Too inclusive Adjacent disciplines might feel need to stake their turf
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address non-traditional public health issues New approaches to health care challenges Raise profile of public health Merging of disciplines Investment and divestment opportunities Provide a space for non-traditional public health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclude potential collaborators De-emphasize role of non-clinical work in public health Too focused or too broad definition is counteractive

Table 2. Suggested collaborative projects

Category	Examples
1. Issues that require multidisciplinary collaboration and a broad systems approach	Mental health, Addictions, Autoimmune disease, Child abuse, Social determinants of health, Health disadvantage and health inequity, Tuberculosis, Salmonella outbreaks, Sexual health, Vaccinology
2. Methodology development to enhance collaboration of clinical practice and public health	Sharing approaches in clinical practice and public health Identification of gaps in clinical practice & public health
3. Development and utilization/uptake of policies and guidelines	Infection control policies/practices guideline Canadian Task Force for Preventive Health Care
4. Projects that involves patients	CIHR Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR) Diabetes Action Canada projects
5. Research on screening	Early childhood screening Cost effectiveness of primary care screening
6. New thinking outside the box	Think of a health issue and there is a project

Discussion

- Clinical Public Health could be useful for collaboration of clinicians and public health professionals on complex population health issues
- The term is gaining popularity, e.g. George Washington University, University of South Carolina
- Clinical Public Health, from our study, does not appear to be a new discipline, but a collaboration of existing disciplines
- Our study has identified a number of collaborative projects for Clinical Public Health
- Limitations: (1) We were not able to achieve a consensus on the definition which was the original objective; (2) Participants in the two waves were not necessarily the same individuals; (3) Some wave 2 participants may not have learned from wave 1

Conclusion

- We have identified 6 definitions of Clinical Public Health, with the most popular being the **intersection of clinical practice and public health**
- The lack of a full consensus on the definition is itself an interesting finding
- Our study is a starting point for putting different perspectives on the table, and identifying new opportunities to collaborate and cross disciplinary boundaries
- It is time that clinicians and public health professionals join forces to tackle and respond to emerging problems, such as obesity, diabetes, and other epidemics

Thank You