

HIA Exercise

Town X, population 20,000, has seen a rise in child obesity rates and has had some recent high profile traffic accidents involving motor vehicles striking pedestrians. While the recent economic downturn has affected the community, the major factory in town continues to operate successfully, and the community has been fairly resilient.

Within the town, there has been growing community interest in developing a Safe Routes to School program, and the school system has been supportive. One of the town's five elementary school received national level funding for SRTS. Sidewalks and crosswalks near this school have been constructed, and educational and encouragement campaigns are underway.

On the other side of town from the SRTS elementary school, a bridge in a less prosperous part of town has fallen in disrepair. This bridge provides the only connection between two neighborhoods, and, importantly for the school children on one side of the bridge, provides the only direct connection to their 350-student elementary school. Currently, about 30 kids walk over the bridge to school.

The bridge, a two lane structure with a 1 _ foot sidewalk, is nearing the end of its life, and the town has secured funding for its replacement.

There are three possibilities for replacement:

1. Replace the structure as it is.
2. Build a four-lane bridge to accommodate future growth.
3. Build a 2-lane bridge with widened sidewalks and bike lanes.

The town council will make the final decision on the design.

A working group has been formed to conduct a health impact assessment of the bridge. Representatives from planning, education, and public health are involved, as well as community representatives.

Are these groups appropriate for the HIA process? Who else should be involved?

Possible answers include decision-makers (who are they?), PTA, economic development representatives, transportation department, etc.

The group identifies appropriate members and is able to obtain support for the HIA process from decision-makers (in this case, the town council).

Screening

**What evidence exists that this project would be worthwhile for the HIA process?
What additional information is needed?**

Briefly discuss why appropriate and additional evidence. Key is to make sure that the HIA will be useful.

Scoping

What groups would be a good source of information for health effects to consider?

Health department, community, school, decision-makers, etc

What health effects should be considered within the HIA?

Injury, physical activity, exposure to pollution.

Social capital, abduction/stranger danger, etc.

The HIA group decided to focus on injuries, stranger danger, physical activity, environmental health, and social capital.

Risk Assessment

During the risk assessment process, the HIA workgroup identified subpopulations that might be affected by the bridge.

What populations might be affected?

Could be any – but should go beyond the students

What data might be important to obtain? Where would it exist?

No right answer.

Student enrollment, traffic count, physical activity level of students, crime rates in community, pedestrian injuries.

The workgroup created a matrix help with the evaluation.

Break into groups to fill in the matrix. Can add columns.

Option 1

	Injury	Physical Activity	Pollution exposure	Social Capital	Stranger Danger
Students					

Option 2

	Injury	Physical Activity	Pollution exposure	Social Capital	Stranger Danger
Students					

Option 3

	Injury	Physical Activity	Pollution exposure	Social Capital	Stranger Danger
Students					

Recommendations

What proposal would the HIA workgroup support?

Likely the third

Are there any changes to the other proposals that would improve health?

Widening the sidewalk of the first proposal may be a compromise.

Reporting

To what groups would you report the HIA findings?

City council. Also school, parents, etc.

Evaluation

The HIA workgroup interviewed a city council member, education officials, and other stakeholders to determine if the HIA was influential and how they could make it better.