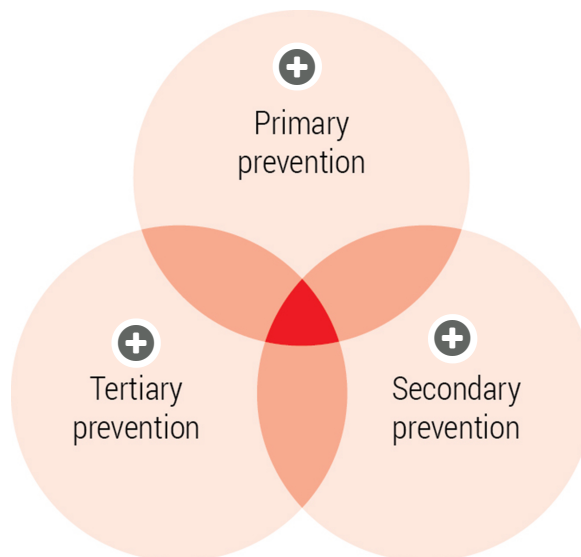


Topic 2: Disease prevention: primary, secondary and tertiary

According to the WHO (1984) disease prevention 'covers measures not only to prevent the occurrence of disease, such as risk factor reduction, but also to arrest its progress and reduce its consequences once established'. The WHO outlines that disease prevention and health promotion share many goals but at a conceptual level it is useful to characterise disease prevention as those services that primarily engage the health care sector and health promotion as the work that depends on intersectoral action and/or are concerned with the social determinants of health ([WHO 'About us'](#)).

Click on the plus signs in the interactivity below to reveal more information about the three levels of prevention:



It's time to focus on health prevention and promotion [14:47 mins]

Watch the TedX talk 'It's time to focus on health prevention and promotion.'

'We need to make prevention of disease and health promotion greater priorities in the way we think about health and health care.'

There are a number of challenges to disease prevention and health promotion outlined in the video. The presenter calls for us to put disease prevention and health promotion at the centre of our work and that we should be ensuring that we make the healthy choices the easy choices. What does he mean by this?

It's Time to Focus on Health Prevention and Promotion | Derek Yach | TEDxM...



One of the key challenges in disease prevention and control is human nature — we tend to make choices that are not consistent with good health in the longer term. The kinds of decisions we make are more likely to favour short-term rewards rather than what might happen in 10 or 20 years time.

Who is involved in disease prevention?

As we can see from our discussion on the role of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, a wide range people and organisations are involved. Unlike health protection, many of the functions sit within formal health systems or organisations with a mandate to prevent poor health outcomes at individual, community and population levels. The following table provides a sample of organisations and job titles that provide primary, secondary and tertiary disease prevention functions. This is by no means an exhaustive or comprehensive list and often the roles contribute to multiple levels of disease prevention. For instance, a Gender Equity Officer employed by a local government authority is involved in shaping local government policies and programs (primary prevention of family violence) and also involved in supporting the delivery of men's behaviour change programs for those at risk of family violence (secondary prevention), and works in partnership with local domestic violence crisis support services to ensure services are responsive to the needs of victims (tertiary prevention).

Disease prevention: primary, secondary and tertiary prevention

	Primary prevention	Secondary prevention	Tertiary prevention
Examples of organisations, government departments or institutions involved at the local, state, national and international level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary health networks • Community health services • Local municipal government authorities • Federal and state government departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary health networks • Community health services • Hospitals • Non-government organisations • Federal and state government departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and university health and wellbeing services • Hospitals • Domestic violence crisis services • Federal and state government departments
Example job titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Equity Officer • Falls Prevention Officer • Suicide Prevention Officer • Alcohol Prevention Policy Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men's behaviour change program officers • BreastScreen Promotion Officer • Physical Activity and Nutrition Educator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Practitioner • Domestic violence service officer • Diabetes Educator • Chronic Disease Management Planner • Postnatal Depression Support Group Facilitator • Allied Health Practitioner

Note: In many instances these organisations and roles work across multiple levels of prevention.

Review this list and consider other roles that can be added. You may wish to document this on your private notebook or workbook.

As noted for the table in Topic 1, not all of the jobs listed in the table above would be available to someone solely on the strength of their Masters of Public Health qualification; some may require additional qualifications.

The prevention paradox



One of the biggest challenges for public health is that treating people who are sick or at high risk does not have a huge impact on the health of the population overall. However, when the focus is shifted from individuals to communities and populations, changing a risk factor by just a small amount can have a great impact on the incidence of a public health problem. This is known as the 'prevention paradox', a term used by Geoffrey Rose to explain this concept. Rose (1985, p. 38) argues, 'a preventive measure which brings much benefit to the population offers little to each participating individual'. It is clear that focusing on individuals might be appropriate for understanding how a disease or some problems manifest, but this approach may miss the influence of broad structural factors on health (Marmot 2001). A small change in the whole population has a larger impact than a large change in an individual – thus public health approaches can and do save thousands of lives. This also means that evidence-based approaches are essential to address public health problems.

Prevention paradox: why we are failing to prevent disease [03:27 mins]

Watch the following short videos which explain the prevention paradox. Understanding the prevention paradox is essential for public health practice.



The prevention paradox [04:17 minutes]

The second video provides an example of binge drinking and the prevention paradox. It clearly demonstrates the need for universal prevention approaches in public health. The same intervention approach has been adopted locally in Victoria to address youth alcohol use.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qg-Qk4agpyk>



Required reading

The following readings will expand on and reinforce your understanding about disease prevention principles and public health practice.

- World Health Organization 2023, [Health promotion and disease prevention through population-based interventions](#).
- Ellis, N 2012, 'Global concept: Health', in Health and Safety Professionals Alliance (ed.), [Core body of knowledge for the generalist OHS professional](#), Safety Institute of Australia.

Recommended reading

To learn more about the prevention paradox, read this seminal public health article by Rose.



- Rose, G 1985, 'Sick individuals and sick populations', [International Journal of Epidemiology](#), vol. 14, pp. 32–38.



Discussion: The differing roles of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention

Task 1: Class Padlet

- Prepare and share an infographic on the Week 2, Topic 2 class Padlet. The infographic needs to visually demonstrate the differing roles of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in relation to one of the following public health issues: cervical cancer, heart disease, COVID-19, thunderstorm asthma, obesity, diabetes.

Tip: You can use PowerPoint or free online infographic production software tools to help you with this task, and then share the link or image on the Padlet. Some free tools include Canva, Venngage and Piktochart. Public health professionals are often asked to prepare infographics to communicate health information; this is a chance to practice your skills.

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Share



2023 PHE5PUH T2 Week 2, Topic 2: The differing roles of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention

Prepare and share an infographic on the Week 2, Topic 2 class Padlet. The infographic needs to visually demonstrate the differing roles of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in relation to one of the following public health issues: cervical cancer, heart disease, COVID-19, thunderstorm asthma, obesity, diabetes.



Empty

Anonymous 14d

Cardiovascular disease
infographic

♡ 0 This post has 0

Made with :Padlet

Guidelines

- This activity is not graded but is an essential part of your learning. Your submission will be reviewed by your tutor, though you may not receive specific feedback.
- Spend about 30 minutes on this activity
- Complete this activity by Monday before 12:00 midday of Week 3

Last modified: Thursday, 16 March 2023, 10:02 AM

