

Background

Josephine Appiah is currently a lead graduate teaching assistant in the College of Health and Human Services, where she is completing her doctorate in health services research. She holds a Master of Public Health from Texas A&M University, a BS in Community Health and a graduate certificate in non-profit management. She has worked in healthcare systems in the US and as a health policy intern in Winneba, Ghana, where she evaluated policies and proposed changes to improve patient outcomes. Josephine is currently a student representative to the Student Wellness Action Group at UNC Charlotte, where she helps to identify gaps and develop solutions within university health services for students.

Research Topics

“My research may be described as an evaluative process of highlighting and intervening through barriers to substance abuse treatment and mental health services, primarily through modes of access and utilization,” she notes. “I want to close the disparities present. Substance use, misuse, and abuse are very prevalent during the adolescent stages of life and can continue well into adulthood. For us to provide successful interventions, it is essential to engage the entire community. We have seen that while research can provide an educational component and show the intensity of issues to the community, it is up to the community to advocate for positive changes. My work provides a component that can initiate a stage of change that will improve the lives of women and girls at all socio-economic levels.”

Relevance

Unfortunately, “oftentimes, substance misuse can and is more likely to have negative outcomes on both the physical and mental health of women and/or girls. I hope that my research will encourage all women and girls to work within the community and address the issues of substance abuse, decreasing the negative outcomes and promoting a healthy environment for all women and girls.”