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***Sanitation and Health Education in Village communities through improved Awareness and Knowledge of Prevention/Management of Diseases and Health Promotion (SEVAK) Project***

SEVAK Project: Improving Access to Care in Rural India

**Background and Significance:** India is undergoing an epidemiological transition with both non-communicable and chronic diseases are the leading causes of death. Four studies in the state of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat showed marginalized access to health care. Seventy per cent of India lives in the villages (700 million people) and the importance of educating and delivery of healthcare to this large base of India in its resource-poor settings becomes an urgent and viable issue. Large-scale efforts to improve general awareness about diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, its risk factors, and to promote healthy lifestyles were lacking.

**Purpose:** SEVAK project is a statewide intervention of chronic disease prevention and management. Further, it is an evidence-based project to improve sanitation and health education in rural communities through improved awareness and knowledge of chronic disease prevention and management. It uses the Community Health Worker (CHW) model. The project is based in the State of Gujarat, and one village per district (or county) was selected. CHWs were trained at Baroda Medical College, Varodara with emphasis on lifestyle intervention and health screening for diabetes, hypertension, obesity, immunization and chronic diseases. CHWs also received information on sanitation, environment, water purification and infectious diseases.



**Practicum Agency Contact Information:** American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, 600 Enterprise Dr. Suite 108, Oak Brook, Chicago, IL 60523, 630-990-2277; [www.aapiusa.org](http://www.aapiusa.org) .

**Practicum Objectives:** MPH student will (1) learn and understand the need for primary and secondary prevention in resource poor settings; (2) have hands-on experience in screenings for obesity, diabetes, and hypertension; (3) learn how to provide lifestyle intervention to improve rural health. Learn about how Sevak Project is the solution to rural health and keep farmers at work and prevent chronic diseases. Understand the problems of clean drinking water, sanitation, drainage and village environment. The student should be able to look at the data collected and come out solutions to help the villagers stay at work free of diseases. The student will work in the village of Karakhdi and the mentor will be at Baroda Medical College in the Department of Preventive Medicine. Student will be given

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opportunity to visit other villages in the project and learn about differences in the villages.

**Major Tasks:** Work with the Sevak in the village, collect data, analyze the data and help set up long term outcome of the project and merits of such a project.



**Final Project or Outcomes:** Collection of data with analysis and recommendation to improve the health, sanitation and if possible develop innovative ideas to improve life in the village such as ventilates the cooking stove to the outside and how to store insulin without the availability of refrigerator in the home. Consider publication of paper from the results of the study.

**Skills Required:** MPH student with computer skills, knowledgeable in collection of data and willing to live in a village.

**Funding:** None: To be provided by the sponsoring institution. Student will be responsible for lodging and boarding funds, but all arrangement for the same will be done.

**Application Instruction:** A letter of intent with recommendation to be submitted to: Thakor G. Patel, MD, MACP, Chair, Sevak Project, American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, 10980 Rice Field Place, Fairfax Station, VA 22039. 703-425-7573 (H); 571-213-5393 (C); thakorg@gmail.com.