Theresa Majeski: Making A Difference, One Article at a Time

By: Michael Diamond

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Meet Theresa Majeski. Theresa is the voice behind the blog, Global Contagions. Theresa is making a difference in the battle against infectious disease by writing about lesser-known diseases, or emerging details about more commonly-known diseases.

Upon completing her undergraduate degree, Theresa headed to Ghana to volunteer in hospitals and get a sense of what medicine was like in a place outside of the United States. While there, she says she learned an incredible amount, but two of the most impactful memories were: 1) observing a surgery to repair typhoid intestinal perforations in a young woman with typhoid fever; and 2) working in the hospital laboratory diagnosing typhoid using some reagents and a white bathroom tile. "I saw firsthand the impact of diseases I had never seen before, and it made me want to learn everything I could about these diseases and figure out ways to help communities leverage their resources to overcome these diseases," she said. She calls her experience in Ghana her "aha moment": the point at which it became clear that her career path and passion would be in global health.

I Like To Focus On New Ideas And Methods

Theresa started her blog to both help other people understand the complexities of global infectious diseases, and to give herself a platform to learn more about these diseases. She had found that common infectious diseases (like HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, etc.) got covered quite frequently, but that those that may only affect a small population (for now) did not receive the same level of global attention. It is on those lesser-known diseases that she likes to focus. "I do still write about the more common diseases and when I do, I like to focus on a newly emerging aspect of that disease, such as work being done to genetically modify mosquitoes to decrease malaria transmission", she said. "Emerging infectious diseases remind me that as far as humanity has already come in our efforts to eradicate disease and live longer lives, we still have a ways to go."

In her articles, Theresa tries to find a new way of looking at infectious diseases. "Anyone can find the basic statistics about incidence, prevalence, etc.," she said, "but I like to focus on new ideas and methods." As emerging infectious diseases are spreading globally in ways that most may not have thought about before, she aspires to help her readers understand that these diseases are not happening a world away to other people, but are right on our doorstep. While her intent is not to scare people, she does want to increase awareness. As she puts it: "We all occupy the same planet, so we need to start paying attention to what is happening to our neighbours and figure out how to help each other overcome these challenges."

We All Occupy The Same Planet, So We Need To Start Paying Attention To What Is Happening

In addition to her day job and her blog, Theresa is also currently serving as Chair of Global Health Connections Group for the American Public Health Association, International Health Section.

You can follow Theresa's efforts on Twitter (@theresamajeski) and on her blog, Global Contagions.