“Integrating mental health services with HIV prevention to improve health outcomes among women in sub-Saharan Africa”

Monday February 25, 2019
12-12:50 pm
51-279 CHS

About the Speaker: Jennifer Velloza, MPH, is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Washington. She received her BA in Neuroscience & Behavior from Columbia University and her MPH in Health Behavior from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research, teaching, and mentoring focuses on advancing the field of global mental health and the intersection with HIV prevention specifically for adolescent girls and young women. She is currently working on several NIH-funded trials and implementation projects to: 1) understand the potential effect of psychosocial factors including depression, trauma, and substance use on HIV risk; 2) integrate mobile health (“mHealth”) solutions into mental health, reproductive health, and HIV care; and 3) implement combined mental health and HIV prevention interventions for women in sub-Saharan Africa. For this work, she collaborates extensively with colleagues in Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Ms. Velloza utilizes a range of interdisciplinary methods including clinical epidemiology, behavioral science, causal inference, implementation science, and qualitative approaches to answer her research questions of interest.

About the Talk: Mental health conditions, including depression, traumatic stress, and alcohol and substance abuse, are associated with morbidity and mortality worldwide and are particularly prevalent among adolescent and young adult populations. In sub-Saharan Africa, these psychosocial factors are associated with poor adherence to HIV prevention options including antiretroviral therapy, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and condom use, which in turn leads to increased risk of HIV acquisition. This seminar will describe recent research examining links between depression, HIV risk, and adherence to PrEP among men and women in Kenya and Uganda. It will also highlight links between intimate partner violence, psychosocial factors, and the need for PrEP among adolescent girls and young women in South Africa and Zimbabwe, and will describe a novel randomized trial design to test an integrated mental health and PrEP delivery intervention for young women in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Lunch will be served