

IEIP & GDD Partners Brief

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“Epi in Action” Comes to Cambodia

At a 10-day intensive course in applied epidemiology, 40 public health professionals from regional ministries of health studied a wide range of epidemiologic principles, including surveillance; outbreak investigation; survey design; biostatistics; scientific communication; disease control and prevention of global disease threats.

FETP advisor Dr. Michael O'Reilly, IEIP epidemiologist Dr. Julia Rhodes, and CDC epidemiologist Dr. Alden Henderson traveled from Thailand to assist in teaching the course, which was sponsored through CDC's Global AIDS Program. Other course instructors included Professor Philip Brachman from Emory University and Dr. Douglas Hamilton from CDC's Office of Workforce and Career Development.

Representatives from several agencies facilitated the course: Cambodia Ministry of Health, WHO, Asian Development Bank, U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit 2 (Cambodia), the Institut Pasteur du Cambodge, and Chiang Mai University.

- Julia Rhodes, Michael O'Reilly

Risk Communication Techniques Shared at National Workshop

Success or failure in handling public health crises often depends on public perceptions. Public health organizations must be seen as trustworthy and credible. Those were two of the headline lessons discussed at the Risk Communication Training Workshop in June, sponsored by Thailand National Institute of Health and IEIP, in collaboration with WHO.

The training aimed to improve risk communication knowledge and skills for 80 laboratory scientists, communication officers, and physicians from all regions of Thailand. Thai experts shared experiences such as managing a large botulism outbreak in Nan province and training village health volunteers to communicate AI risks. Dr. Taweesilp Visanuyothin from MOPH also discussed how to maximize public health messages when communicating risk through interviews and press releases. Two experts from Atlanta, Mr. David Daigle, Associate Director for Communications Science (Acting), NCZVED, and Mr. Sean Kaufman, Director of Programs, Center for Public Health Preparedness Research, Emory University, also participated in the workshop.

- Kornrattha Sukamon



Following the lectures, panel discussions, and case studies at the Risk Communication Training Workshop, the karaoke began. Singing here are Dr. Pongpan Wongmanee, Deputy Director-General of DMSG; Ms. Krongkaew Supawat, Deputy Director of Thai NIH; Dr. Susan Maloney, Director of IEIP; and Ms. Sirivan Phoosnwan, Medical Science Officer, NIH.

Influenza Team Plans Study of Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions

The IEIP Influenza Team, together with the CDC Influenza division, U.S. AFRIMS, and the Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health, plans a study to assess household influenza transmission. The study would identify children with influenza, then follow family members to assess patterns of household transmission.

It would also evaluate the effectiveness of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), such as handwashing and wearing surgical masks, to prevent transmission. Many experts believe that NPIs, including measures of social distancing, may be the most useful and practical public health tools in slowing an influenza pandemic. More research about the effectiveness of such measures is needed. The proposed study aims to advance scientific knowledge of influenza in the region, and better prepare Thailand to respond to a pandemic.

- Mark Simmerman

Bangkok Hosts Pneumococcal Disease Conference

The 2007 PneumoADIP Surveillance Network Investigators Meeting brought pneumococcal disease experts from 30 countries to Bangkok, to share data on disease burden and discuss strategies to speed up introduction of vaccines.

PneumoADIP supports surveillance networks worldwide to document local incidences of pneumococcal disease and inform vaccine introduction decisions. In Thailand, PneumoADIP supports IEIP in Sa Kaeo and Nakhon Phanom provinces.

IEIP epidemiologist, Dr. Kip Baggett, summarized findings from Sa Kaeo and Nakhon Phanom provinces. After the meeting, IEIP and Sa Kaeo Provincial Health Office staff hosted conference participants and toured them through Crown Prince Hospital and laboratories to review local surveillance activities.

- Kip Baggett



Dr. Supamit Chunsuttivat, Senior Medical Officer at MOPH, remarked on Thailand's commitment to combating common, serious, preventable diseases.