



IEIP Thailand

Global Salm-Surv Returns to Bangkok

WHO Global Salm-Surv (WHO GSS), the program created to build capacity to detect, control, and prevent foodborne and other enteric infections, conducted an advanced laboratory and epidemiology training course in Bangkok, with support from IEIP and GDD.



To be able to conduct Salmonella serotyping in their home countries, training participants practice with antisera kits.

The five-day diagnostics training in March and April attracted 70 microbiologists and epidemiologists from 14 Asian countries. Participants learned about use of molecular data for outbreak detection and response, discussed International Health Regulations, and were trained in Salmonella subtyping. Microbiologists received antisera kits, produced by the WHO National Salmonella and Shigella Centre in Thailand and funded by GDD. The kits will expand serotyping capacity in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. Course trainers came from 11 agencies in eight countries, representing human health, veterinary, and food-related disciplines. WHO GSS hopes to conduct its 7th Bangkok-based workshop in late 2010.

- Stephanie DeLong

IEIP Invited to Conduct Prison TB Surveillance in Nakhon Phanom

Thailand is a high burden TB country, currently ranked 18th by WHO. A recent MOPH policy focuses on TB elimination in controlled areas, such as prisons. In February 2009, the Provincial Health Office invited IEIP to join in finding cases of active TB disease in the Nakhon Phanom prison. The methodology used was adapted from other IEIP and MOPH innovative surveillance collaborations. The survey launched with health education for the entire prison population. Later, symptoms screening and chest radiographs were performed for all 1,458 prisoners and 99 officers. Sputum AFB staining was performed for all symptomatic persons, and positive smears were confirmed by culture. Eighteen active TB cases, including one case of multidrug-resistant TB, were found, indicating a prevalence rate of 12 per 1000 persons. As part of the new policy directive, beds and wardrobes were cleaned, and blankets boiled. TB screening for prisoners in Nakhon Phanom is expected to take place twice a year.

- Prabda Prapasiri

Deadly Pub Fire Investigated by MOPH and IEIP

Thailand MOPH and IEIP staff interviewed survivors of a pub fire that killed 67 people and hospitalized 229 on New Year's Eve in downtown Bangkok. More than 1,000 party-goers—over the club's capacity—squeezed into the three-floored Santika Pub, which had one main exit, a few small smoking area exits, and a rear door used primarily by pub workers. Staff from the Bureau of Epidemiology and IEIP, along with trainees and staff from the Thailand Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) reviewed 153 medical records and interviewed 78 people. The study identified where and how survivors first learned of the danger and described the most common causes of death and injuries and survivors' post-fire mental health. Lessons learned included the need for improved self-protection from smoke inhalation, awareness of exits, and life support training for rescuers. The study was conducted at the invitation of Dr Alden Henderson, FETP technical advisor.

- Sununta Henchaichon

GDD Represented at Pandemic Preparedness Regional Workshops

GDD-Thailand helped train participants at a regional pandemic preparedness workshop in February 2009. The three-day Bangkok training augmented similar GDD-led presentations and participation at the Pandemic Logistics Learning Exercise (P2LX), held in Kuala Lumpur last November. Both workshops, sponsored by the World Food Programme, targeted senior logistics staff at major organizations expected to be involved in responding to pandemics. Over 200 experienced logisticians joined the full-scale exercises in Kuala Lumpur, and identified areas needing improvement. IEIP-GDD Deputy Director Michael Basso helped facilitate sessions on use of personal protective equipment at P2LX. Recent changes at Thailand MOPH also reflect the increasing readiness to take an all-hazards approach to public health preparedness. IEIP has assisted with the establishment of an Emergency Operations Center in the Bureau of Epidemiology. GDD-Thailand will network with the center through its Emergency Operations Response Officer, due to be hired soon.

- Michael Basso



Pandemic Response officers from CDC, WHO, USAID, among several other organizations, gathered in November at the Kuala Lumpur Pandemic Logistics Learning Exercise.