

IEIP Brief

3rd Quarter, 2003

Editor: Sonja Olsen

An Update on Activities at the International Emerging Infections Program, Thailand

As the SARS outbreak came under control in Thailand and the region, attention turned to the other core activities at IEIP; surveillance, research, and training. With the launching of new projects this quarter, our surveillance activities have more than doubled in size, and major active research protocols have expanded from one to three. We have also enjoyed visits from several distinguished guests, including CDC Director Julie Gerberding; Steve Blount, director of CDC's Office of Global Health; NCID Associate Director for Global Health Ray Arthur; and Melinda Moore, Deputy Director of the Office of International & Refugee Health at HHS. The SARS crisis has raised the profile of IEIP, bringing welcome appreciation for the program's contributions, but also expanding requests for regional support. - *Scott Dowell*



The Permanent Secretary of the Thai MOPH, Dr. Vallop Thaineau (center), welcomed CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding, her review team, and TUC staff members in a visit in June.



Staff who attended the IEIP training workshop for surveillance, Nakhon Phanom

Surveillance

In July, IEIP launched active, population-based surveillance in a second province, Nakhon Phanom. Surveillance officers attended a 2-day training workshop to learn about case ascertainment, data collection, and digital image collection of radiographs (picture, left). Activities in Nakhon Phanom are being funded through a cooperative agreement between CDC and the Bureau of Epidemiology (BoE) at the Thai Ministry of Public Health. Sarika Pattanasin was recently hired by the BoE to help coordinate these activities.

Research

July was a busy month for research. Three abstracts from IEIP projects were presented at the National Epidemiology Seminar in Bangkok:

- Saithip Sutthirattana - Etiology of Febrile Illness in Khon Kaen and Chiang Rai Provinces
- Wanna Wongjindanon - Evaluation of a Rapid Test for Dengue Infection from a Febrile Illness Study
- Nakorn Premsri - The Active Population-Based Surveillance System in Sa Kaeo Province



An award for "Best Abstract – Methods" was given to IEIP laboratory staff member Wanna Wongjindanon.

This month we also began enrollment for two large research projects, encephalitis and respiratory pathogen. The respiratory pathogen study, which augments the active pneumonia surveillance, is designed to identify the causes of pneumonia and influenza-like illness in persons in Sa Kaeo.

Outbreak Response

IEIP welcomes Dr. Michael O'Reilly who will serve as the new technical advisor to the Thai FETP addressing both HIV and emerging infections issues. During his first month he participated in an influenza outbreak investigation in Mae Hong Son.

Training

This spring, IEIP helped pair 10 Thai FETP students with CDC mentors at NCID (3), EPO (3), NCHSTP (2), NIP (1), and NCCDPP (1). The trainees spend the month of April in Atlanta attending the EIS conference and working on a research project with their mentor. The new class of 6 FETP fellows started in June and TUC staff will be mentoring 2, Pham Hung and Thitiphong Yingyong, throughout their 2-year tenure. Harvard Medical student, Peter Lokken, is also training with IEIP for the summer.

On July 23, IEIP sponsored a workshop in Sa Kaeo to provide additional radiology training to hospital technicians. Two staff from the Chest Hospital in Bangkok, Chief Radiologist Dr. Ponglada Subhannachart and lead technician Surapa Hairunpijit, were the course instructors.