

IEIP Brief

2nd Quarter, 2006

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

CDC recently announced a new global infectious disease strategy called Global Disease Detection (GDD). GDD formally brings together activities in IEIP, influenza, and builds on the already close relationship with the Field Epidemiology Training Program. Under this new structure, each GDD Response Center will have dedicated staff and funding. This year, the Thailand GDD Response Center is receiving additional funds dedicated to avian and pandemic influenza activities. In this issue we are proud to highlight some of the exciting international training activities for pandemic influenza that are being spearheaded by the Thailand GDD Response Center. Sadly, both Dr. Khanchit and I depart this month. Dr. Khanchit will move on to SEARO in New Delhi and I am returning to Atlanta. However, I am happy to report that the Thailand GDD Response Center and IEIP will be in good hands with the new Chief, Dr. Susan Maloney. We eagerly await her arrival! – *Sonja Olsen*



Drs. Khanchit, Scott and Sonja pose in front of their images during a celebration in Nakhon Phanom.

Research

Bocavirus? Coronavirus? What do these viruses have to do with Thailand? Dr. Alicia Fry from CDC's Division of Viral and Rickettsial Diseases was recently in Thailand to answer these questions. Using data from the Respiratory Pathogen Study in Sa Kaeo, Dr. Fry analyzed laboratory, clinical and epidemiologic data to describe the pneumonia patients with these unusual infections. Although the work is ongoing, these viruses appear to play an important role in viral pneumonia in rural Thailand and deserve further study.

Outbreak Response

We are excited about the new formal link between the FETP's technical advisor, Dr. Michael O'Reilly, and the GDD Response Center. GDD will now be providing financial support for critical FETP activities, including outbreak investigations and new staff. Dr. O'Reilly recently worked with provincial officials, the FETP and a CDC epidemiologist, Dr. Manoj Manot, on the second outbreak of botulism in Thailand this year. This time the outbreak was in Phayao province and the suspected vehicle was raw deer meat. The rapid response included 30 vial of anti-toxin from CDC. As in the last outbreak, the response was rapid and there were no deaths.

Surveillance

The second annual meeting to review our collaborative surveillance and research activities was held in Nakhon Phanom May 25-26. Although the scientific presentations and discussions were engaging, the farewell party for Drs. Khanchit and Sonja was spectacular (picture, left). It was also a great introduction to our new Surveillance and Research Coordinator in Sa Kaeo, Khun Sathapana Naorat. He replaces Dr. Wiwan Sanasuttipun who is now our Influenza Coordinator.

Training

The week of July 17-21 is a busy influenza training week in Thailand. The IEIP laboratory together with the Thai NIH is conducting the 2nd of a series of laboratory workshops on influenza diagnosis (picture, below). The course aims to train laboratory scientists in Southeast Asia to identify potential pandemic influenza by rapid, cutting-edge tests. Additional partners in these laboratory trainings include AFRIMS, NAMRU-2, the Association of Public Health Laboratories and CDC. During the same week we are conducting a Train the Trainers Workshop for Rapid Responders to teach public health responders what to do in the first 72 hours while investigating a respiratory disease cluster than might be the beginning of a possible pandemic. There will be over 100 participants from 14 countries and each team will be responsible for additional in-country trainings. This training is a collaborative effort between IEIP, CDC, WHO, Thai MOPH, the ACMECS Public Health Sector and regional ministries of health. All of these large trainings are made much easier with the help of our new training coordinator, Khun Kornrattha Sukamon.



Erik Reisdorf trains laboratory scientists from Southeast Asia to identify avian influenza H5N1 by PCR.