

MEETINGS, TRAININGS, & WORKSHOPS

FY 2012

3rd Annual African Network for Influenza Surveillance and Epidemiology (ANISE) Meeting

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

Dates: February 1–3, 2012

Goals: The goal of the meeting was to share and promote the use of standardized surveillance methods in the regions among laboratorians, epidemiologists, veterinarians and other public health practitioners involved in influenza related public health activities or influenza research in Africa.

Agenda: The three day meeting included plenary sessions, breakout sessions, and poster presentations. The meeting included the following scientific themes: Burden of Disease, Virologic Surveillance, Co-Infections and Other Respiratory Diseases, and Vaccines and Other Interventions. Representatives from 12 African countries provided updates on their national influenza surveillance systems. Additional highlights from the meeting included the poster presentations and roundtable discussions.

Outcome: The meeting brought together 170 participants representing 30 countries, including 24 African countries. Additionally, members from organizations such as the WHO, Institut Pasteur, and the U.S. Army Medical Research Unit (USAMRU-Kenya) in Kenya attended and provided updates. Out of the 82 abstracts that were submitted, 17 were selected for oral presentations and 58 were selected for poster presentations. The meeting was a success and provided attendees an opportunity to present their data and share best practices.



Group photo from the 3rd Annual ANISE Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya.

Improving Influenza Laboratory Management Practices Training Course

Location: Bangkok, Thailand

Dates: February 27–March 2, 2012

Goals: The training course was designed to help laboratories achieve, maintain, and improve global influenza surveillance systems by presenting various laboratory management topics to influenza laboratory managers and staff.

Agenda: The format for the course was a combination of lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on exercises. This format allowed participants to gain knowledge and information for implementation within their laboratories. Course topics included: Human Resources Basics, Biosafety for Lab Managers, Quality Assurance and Quality Control, Inventory Management, Specimen Collection and Processing, Laboratory Testing and Test Result Reporting, and NIC Designation. During the course, participants toured the laboratories of the National Institute of Health (NIH) of Thailand. They also listened to presentations on Thailand's Influenza Surveillance Network and their BSL-3 Laboratory.

Outcome: The participants learned how to describe key aspects of laboratory biosafety including risk assessment, incident management and BSL-3 (biosafety level three) security practices. Additionally, participants learned how to develop strategies to implement Quality Assurance and Quality Control best practices, describe and develop an inventory management system, describe specimen collections and processing best practices for influenza detection, and they learned the roles and responsibilities of becoming and/or maintaining a National Influenza Center (NIC) designation.



Improving Influenza Laboratory Management Practices Training Course – Group Photo.

FY 2013

Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) Influenza Surveillance Training Workshop

Location: Pointe aux Piments, Mauritius

Dates: January 21–25, 2013

Goals: Several countries from the IOC (Comoros, Reunion, Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar) demonstrated an interest in establishing and maintaining influenza surveillance with the goal to build capacity to detect, diagnose, and respond to influenza and other respiratory diseases. CDC, the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), Mauritius MOH, Institut Pasteur (IP)-Madagascar, and the IOC developed a training course to help the ministries of the IOC achieve, maintain, and improve global influenza surveillance systems by teaching epidemiologists and laboratorians the methods and practices of establishing and maintaining influenza sentinel surveillance.

Agenda: The workshop was taught in a “hands-on” manner using a combination of lectures, group discussion, and on-site instruction. Day one and day four of the course focused on overall topics applicable to both epidemiologists and laboratorians. For day two and day three the participants were divided into two groups, epidemiologists and laboratorians, which allowed for more in-depth instruction and discussion. Each group also participated in hands on instruction: the epidemiologists toured a hospital to learn about their sentinel surveillance system and the laboratorians performed the CDC influenza assay at the university laboratory.

Outcome: All participants strongly agreed that the workshop was very valuable. The most valuable component was developing network connections. A majority of participants indicated that after completing the workshop they would be able to analyze data and use it for empowered decision making as well as utilize new contacts within the IOC network to respond to unexpected or crisis events. Participants also indicated that they would be able to identify strategies to help overcome public health laboratory management challenges and to create a plan to increase team effectiveness in their laboratories.



Group photo from the workshop.

International Influenza Networks Meeting

Location: Scottsdale, Arizona

Dates: January 14–16, 2013

Goals: To increase awareness of global work, share data, best practices, and lessons learned surrounding influenza networks.

Agenda: While essential topics such as partnership, building capacity, and information sharing were covered, integration and sustainability were focal points of a majority of discussions. Participants were able to gain a better understanding of the influenza focused networks and their respective strengths through a series of five panel presentations. The panels were divided up according to the network's areas of focus such as human surveillance, education/advocacy, animal surveillance and research, laboratory and clinical/research. The panelists shared network goals, information generated and the unique attributes including current strengths and gaps. Group exercises were also a significant part of the meeting. The participants were given a charge each day during the group exercise and reported back to the larger group with their findings.

Outcome: More than 60 government officials, leaders from various influenza focused networks and representatives from the private sector convened in Scottsdale for the first International Influenza Networks Meeting. Over 35 networks were represented. Successes from the meeting include exposure to existing networks and their activities and a better understanding of gaps and challenges.



Group photo from the International Influenza Networks Meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Regional Data Management Training Courses

Working with various organizations in the World Health Organization (WHO) Regions as well as WHO Region Offices, the Extramural Program Office of the Influenza Division provided technical support and trainers for courses on data management and analysis for cooperative agreement partners in various World Health Organization (WHO) Regions.

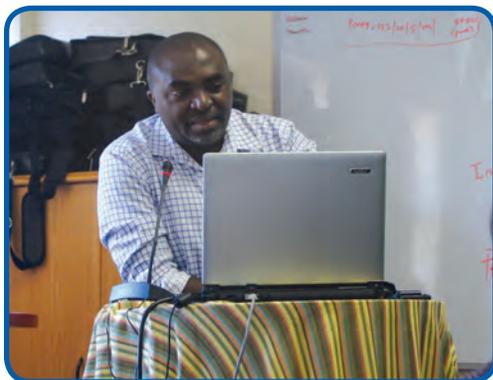
The primary goal of the course was to help data managers and epidemiologists establish, maintain, and improve influenza surveillance systems by teaching data management and analysis methods. The course format was a mixture of short lectures and hands-on exercises which allowed participants to gain knowledge and skills to use with their own data and teams. Course topics included: building a database from scratch; data entry controls and data cleaning; quality assurance and control; data analysis; collection and analysis of risk factor data; understanding of the utility of baselines, risk ratios, and odds ratios in data interpretation; and presenting and reporting data for public health action.

In partnership with the National Institute for Communicable Disease (NICD) the first Data Management Training Course for influenza surveillance data managers/epidemiologists was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. The training course was held at the NICD Training Facility on November 14–18, 2011.

Location: Johannesburg, South Africa

Date: November 14–18, 2011

Summary: There were 30 participants representing 20 African countries (Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zambia) and 12 instructors from various agencies such as CDC, NICD, WHO AFRO and WHO Headquarters. The course was offered in both English and French. During the course, the participants toured the NICD Data Management Centre. The tour provided the participants with a look at how NICD enters, stores and utilizes data. Many participants thought the Centre's processes were very effective and wanted to see if they could implement some of the methods used within their countries.



Dr. Richard Njouom presenting on data management techniques used in Cameroon.



South Africa Data Management Training Course— Group photo.

The Extramural Program Office of the Influenza Division in collaboration in the WHO South East Asia Region (SEAR) supported a training, February 11–15, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Location: Bangkok, Thailand

Date: February 11–15, 2013

Summary: A total of 23 participants from eight countries (Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste) as well as instructors from agencies including CDC, the World Health Organization Collaborating Center, the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO) and Prince of Songkla University participated in the course. On the last day of training, course participants shared information on their own surveillance systems and shared some of their current reports and analysis. Discussion of individual needs and plans for improvement of surveillance systems were discussed.

The third session with the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office hosting cooperative agreement partners in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) was held April 21–25, 2013 in Cairo, Egypt.

Location: Cairo, Egypt

Date: April 21–25, 2013

Summary: A total of 27 participants from 14 countries (Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen) as well as instructors from agencies including CDC, NAMRU–3, WHO Headquarters Office, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) participated in the course. Extramural team members, worked with WHO EMRO to design the course to meet the specific needs of region participants.

On the last day of training, course participants presented their data to their peers and making a case for the future funding needs of their program. The exercise was designed so participants could practice presenting data to decision makers responsible for funding. Presenters obtained feedback on both the presentations and their individual presentation skills. Discussions were lively and informative.



Attendees working on exercises during the SEARO course in Bangkok.



Attendees working on exercises during the EMRO course in Cairo.

Immediately following the EMRO course, the WHO Regional Office for Europe (EURO) requested a modified version of the data management course. The course was held on May 1–3, 2013 in Nijmegen, Netherlands. The course was revised to focus more on the concepts of epidemiologic analysis and understanding the utility of baselines, risk ratios and odds ratios in data interpretation. The intent was to build analytical skills using Microsoft Excel as a data collection tool. Additionally, WHO EURO presented and discussed study results from a University of Nijmegen study to which countries had contributed data.

Location: Nijmegen, Netherlands

Date: May 1–3, 2013

Summary: A total of 12 participants from seven countries (Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation and Ukraine) as well as instructors from agencies including CDC, WHO EURO and Nijmegen University participated in the course. The course was conducted in English and Russian (via simultaneous translation) for participants.

The course format was changed due to the limited instruction days. The format remained a mixture of short lectures and hands-on exercises allowing participants to gain knowledge and skills. Course topics included: building a database from scratch; data entry controls and data cleaning; quality assurance and control; data analysis; collection and analysis. The more advanced concepts of risk factor data; understanding of the utility of baselines, risk ratios, and odds ratios in data interpretation; and presenting and reporting data for public health action were introduced on a limited basis. Based on participant questions and requests, the focus of the class was instruction on building a basic Access database and instructions on how to analyze data in Excel and creating a descriptive graph.



Attendees listening to a presentation during the Data Management course at Nijmegen University.

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Côte d'Ivoire and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted a Data Management and Scientific Writing Workshop held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The purpose of the workshop was to provide guidance and structure to the journal writing process, empowering participants to complete and produce quality data for manuscript/abstract writing and publication.

Location: Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Date: May 2–24, 2013

Summary: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo each sent participants to the workshop. The 13 participants were chosen based on their involvement with influenza surveillance activities in their respective countries. Facilitators/mentors from agencies including CDC, CSTE, and NAMRU-3, as well as the CDC Côte d'Ivoire Country Office participated in the workshop. The format remained a mixture of short lectures and hands-on exercises. Participants were especially pleased to have a mentor assigned to them to assist them as they developed their abstracts and/or manuscripts.

At the conclusion of the workshop, each participant had developed an abstract ready for submission to an upcoming conference. Eleven of the 13 participants submitted an abstract to the Options for the Control of Influenza Conference held September 2013 in Cape Town, South Africa. All 11 abstracts were accepted by the Options Conference. Additionally, the participants were able to develop a relationship with a mentor to provide technical assistance on an ongoing basis for finalization of a manuscript.



Group photo from the Data Management and Scientific Writing Workshop in Abidjan.

A final data management course had the Extramural Program Office partnering with CSTE and the WHO Collaborating Center, Australia, to conduct a program in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on July 29–August 2, 2013.

Location: Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Date: July 29–August 2, 2013

Summary: There were 22 participants representing nine Western Pacific countries (Fiji, New Caledonia, Vietnam, Vanuatu, Mongolia, Laos, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, and Philippines) and six instructors from various agencies such as CDC, CSTE, WHO CC and the Maldives Ministry of Health. Throughout the course, participants engaged in discussions around issues within their countries and how to solve the problems. During the last day participants presented their data to their peers and received feedback on the presentations and their individual presentation skills.

An end of course evaluation was conducted for each session. Feedback indicated that all participants agreed the materials presented will help them perform their jobs better and they appreciated the interaction with the facilitators and other participants. They felt the content covered was appropriate for the class and overall the course was worth the time they spent. The information shared during the training course will help countries improve data collection, management, and analysis and contributes to the overall goal of building capacity to establish strong influenza surveillance systems throughout the various regions.



Group photo from the Data Management and Epidemiologic Analysis for Influenza Data Course in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.