India Issue

Greetings, Fogarty Scholars!

I am delighted to launch this newsletter, highlighting the impressive accomplishments of our Fogarty Scholars.

As you know, this important work is made possible by funding from the Fogarty International Center through its AIDS International Training and Research Program (AITRP), directed on the Berkeley campus by Dr. Arthur L. Reingold, M.D., head of the Division of Epidemiology, U.C. Berkeley School of Public Health. Part of the Berkeley AITRP funding goes to the UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS), so there is a CAPS page, too.

Through this newsletter, we hope to help you keep in touch with each other’s progress.

Please write to robertamyers@berkeley.edu and let us know what you are doing. We will be happy to hear from you and to pass on news about your work and your life.

My best to all of you,
Roberta Myers, Editor

Spring 2006 Graduating Scholars (See last page for details)

MPH: Alexandre Ekra (Cote d’Ivoire), Tendesayi Kufa (Zimbabwe), Knox Makumbe (Zimbabwe), Robert Opika Opoka (Uganda)

PhD: Samuel Malamba (Uganda), Nitika Pai (India)
PROFILE:
Purnima Madhivanan

Purnima Madhivanan earned her medical degree in 1993 from the Mysore University, Government Medical College. While she was working as a Medical Officer in a tertiary HIV care center in Chennai, she decided to pursue an education in public health in order to improve the lives and health of HIV infected women in India. During her studies in UC Berkeley’s MPH Program in Epidemiology, she worked at the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS) in San Francisco for her summer internship on a trial of pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV transmission in India. She became interested in intervention trial design in particular and in research methodology in general. She determined to get her Ph.D. in Epidemiology. She hopes to achieve this goal by the end of December 2007.

Project Prerana

Dr. Madhivanan returned back to India in 2005 to conduct her dissertation research, which examined the role of lower genital tract infections and HSV-2 infection among reproductive age women in India. She founded Project Prerana to provide reproductive health care for the women of Mysore, India. In 2006, its clinic provided free health care to over 2500 of Mysore’s poorest women, 60% of whom had never seen a doctor before; 90% had never had a pelvic exam.

Services provided include pelvic exams, diagnostic screening tests and treatment for reproductive tract infections, distribution of iron supplements and multivitamins, and counseling for domestic violence. Free transportation to the clinic is also provided. Dr. Madhivanan has been raising private funds to continue the work of Project Prerana now that her dissertation research in Mysore has been completed.
Indian Scholars return to Berkeley

Sumeeta Krishnan (MPH 95, PhD 2000) has returned to the San Francisco Bay Area to work with Art Reingold and Nancy Padian for the next two years. Asked to describe her current project, she sent the following:

Dilemmas in the cross-cultural application of research ethics guidelines largely developed in Europe and North America combined with the rapid expansion of health research, particularly research on HIV/AIDS in India, provided the impetus for creating this training program on ethics in health research in India. The training program brought together a number of Indian researchers to form an Ethics Training Resource Group. The group has developed a training curriculum and tested this curriculum in numerous settings (medical colleges, social science institutes) in the country. We have also helped organize the first National Bioethics Conference in India, which was attended by over 400 individuals. The second national conference will be held in Bangalore in December 2007 and is being organized by the Bangalore Bioethics Forum, a group that has emerged from this training project. Please visit the conference website (www.nbc.ijme.in) for more details. The India training program has developed a training manual on ethics in health research. Look for the manual on our Fogarty webpage soon; go to http://epi.berkeley.edu and click on "Fogarty AITRP Program."

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Niteka Pai (MPH 03) and her husband, Madhukar Pai (MPH 00, PhD 04) came back to Berkeley for the commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 12, where Nikki received her Ph.D. degree. The Pais are living in Montreal, where Madhu is Assistant Professor in the Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health, and Nikki is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Canadian HIV Trials Network.

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Rajnish Joshi (MPH 06) was admitted to the Ph.D. Program in Epidemiology last fall and has spent his first year working at home in India. He will return to Berkeley for Fall Semester 2007.
CAPS Corner—News from UCSF

The Center for AIDS Prevention Studies is pleased to announce the following research from the International Collaborative Research Program:

**Carolina Berini**, Argentina, “Epidemiologic status and associated risk factors for HIV, HTLV-I/II, HBV, HCV, Trypanosoma cruzi and syphilis among blood donors from Buenos Aires”


**Xiaobing Fu, MD**, China, “The epidemic characteristic and trend of HIV/AIDS in Guangdong province”

**Pedro Goicochea**, Peru, “Inconsistent condom use in MSM at high risk of acquiring HIV: implications for HIV prevention clinical trials”


**Nguyen Luu**, Vietnam, “Stigma and discrimination experienced in the health care setting by pregnant women with HIV in Ho Chi Minh City”

**Xiaoyan Ma**, China, “The possible rise in HIV prevalence among men who have sex with men in Beijing?”

**Vahid Mojtahed**, Iran, “Integration of substance abuse prevention, treatment and harm reduction programs in primary health care system in 3 districts of Iran”

**Sally Mtenga**, Tanzania, “Assessment of knowledge, practices and stigma towards HIV before introducing VCT services”

**Adriana Pinho**, Brazil, “Rapid point of care STI testing and screening at home”

**Le Thi Thanh True**, MD, Vietnam, “Etiologies and trends of sexually transmitted diseases among HIV infected patients in HCMC”
Research Topics of our Graduating Scholars

Masters Paper
Alexandre Ekra, Cote d'Ivoire, “Prevalence of and risk factors for HIV infection among adults in Cote d'Ivoire: Analysis of the 2005 Cote d'Ivoire AIDS indicator survey”
Tendesayi Kufa, Zimbabwe, “Risk factors for mortality in HIV infected children started on HAART in resource-limited settings: A systematic review of the literature”
Knox Makumbe, Zimbabwe, “The relationship between AIDS-related stigma and the utilization of voluntary HIV counseling and testing (VCT) in Zimbabwe”
Robert Opika Opoka, Uganda, “Risk factors for severe malarial anemia in African children”

Doctoral Dissertation
Samuel Malamba, Uganda, “Examining the interactions between HIV and malaria infections using data from prospective cohort studies in Uganda”
Nitika Pai, India, “Treatment and diagnostic issues in HIV/AIDS”

News from All Over
A study done by Fogarty graduate Dr. Anne Gasasira (MPH 03) of Makerere University in Uganda showed that taking one inexpensive antibiotic pill per day (cotrimoxazole) and sleeping under an insecticide-treated mosquito net reduced the incidence of malaria in children by 97 percent. This work was featured in a recent New York Times article. Dr. Gasasira will be returning to Berkeley this fall to begin the Ph.D. Program in Epidemiology.

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Got a tale to tell about your recent activities or plans in the immediate future? Write us! The more you share with us, the better this newsletter will be!

Hello from the Epidemiology staff, left to right: Roberta Myers, Diane Hinkley, Ron Jeremicz, Susan Meyer, Juanita Cook. (Photo credit: Madhukar Pai)