



Summer 2005

MIRT NEWS

Multidisciplinary International Research Training (MIRT) Program

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MIRT Program Funded for Another 5 Years

We are happy to report that the MIRT Program received funding for another five years. The new award will begin July 8, 2005. Thanks to all for help and support in getting this training grant renewed.

MIRT '04 Alumni & Faculty Presented 8 Posters in Toronto, Canada

MIRT '04 alumni & faculty presented 8 posters reporting the results of their MIRT research at the Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology Research (SPER) and Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) annual meetings held in Toronto, Canada, June 26-30, 2005.

April Noble presented

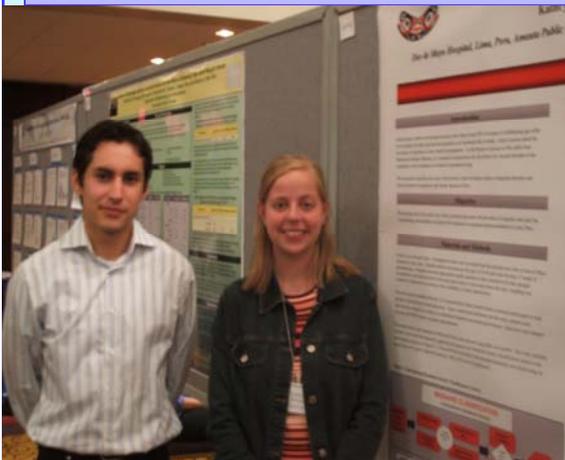
Preterm delivery risk in relation to maternal HIV infection, history of malaria and other infections among Zimbabwean women.

Linda Pham presented

Seroprevalence and risk factors of syphilis infection in pregnant women delivering at Harare maternity hospital.

Ribka Ayana presented

Risk factors for preterm delivery among Zimbabwean women.



Kathryn and Jose in Toronto



We are READY for the Summer!
MIRT fellows with Dr. Fitzpatrick (left) and Dr. Lohsoonthorn (right)



April, Linda & Ribka (left to right) getting together in Toronto

Kelly Bui presented

Risk factor associated with term and preterm LBW in Thai Nguyen, Vietnam.



Kathryn Sinclair and Jose Flores presented

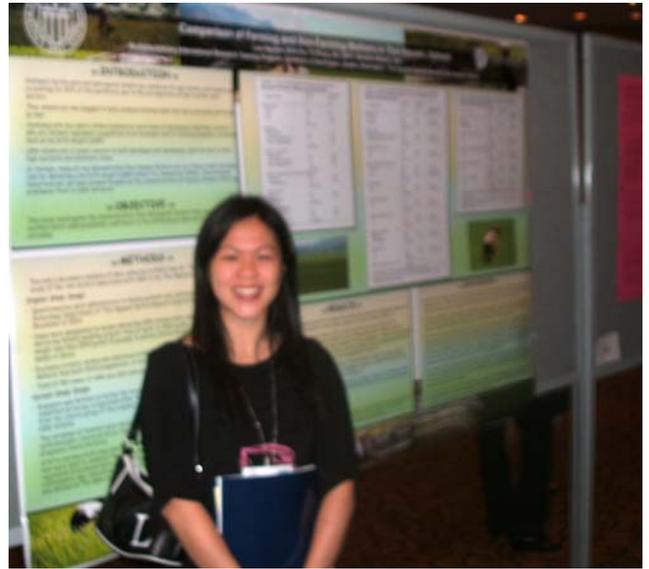
Descriptive study of migraines in a pregnant population in Lima, Peru.



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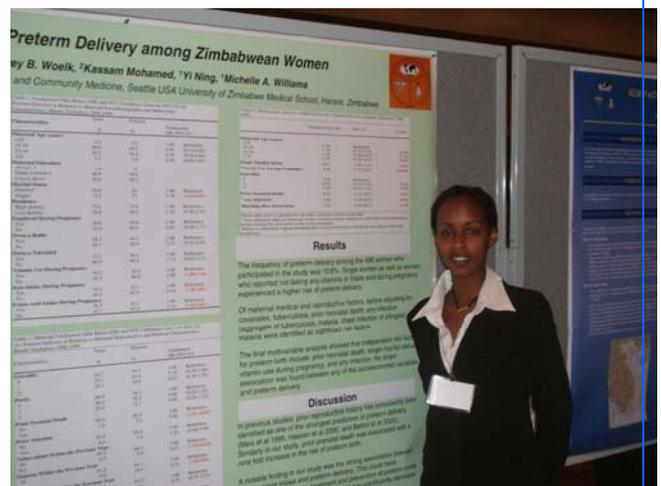
Lisa Nguyen presented

Comparison of farming and non-farming mothers in Thai Nguyen, Vietnam.



Dr. Yi Ning presented

Dr. Ning was assisting the MIRT fellows in Thailand in 2004 and he is the co-author of the poster "Maternal arm circumference and other anthropometric measures of obesity in relation to infant birth size"



MIRT 2005 PRE-Departure Orientation

The pre-departure orientation program to prepare the fellows for their MIRT 2005 experiences in Asia, Eastern Europe and South America was held in the South Campus Center on May 26 and 27.

The UW Human Subjects Division Director, Helen McGough lectured the fellows on important procedure to undertake when conducting research with human subjects.

Sandy Murray, R.N., BSN, from the UW Travel Medicine discussed on the travel health issues and the 10 commandments for the traveler. The MIRT program is very grateful for the UW Travel Medicine (Yes the best one).

Karlotta Rosebaugh, Director, Health Sciences Minority Student Programs and Ira SenGupta, Executive Director and Cultural Competency Training Manager led the cultural competence session.

This part of the orientation gave MIRT fellows the opportunity to assess how their own cultural experiences may affect their professional attitude. Fellows were taught how to be effective anywhere, even in places where cultural differences may hinder day-to-day peer interactions.

Fellows in Epi-Biostat session with Dr. Fitzpatrick

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness and many of our people need it sorely on those accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable view of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s life time.”

Mark Twain, 1867



This year’s fellows were very fortunate to meet Ms. SenGupta. MIRT program fellows, staff and faculty benefited from Ms. SenGupta’s presentation and exercises.

MIRT program faculty and advisory committee member Professor Annette Fitzpatrick introduced fellows to Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Fellows participated in practical exercises involving data analysis.

Our last but not least thanks goes to Dr. Vitool Lohsoonthorn, Dr. Surab Vadachkoria and Ms Kathryn Sinclair for leading this year’s small group discussions.

The sunny and bright days of Seattle were delight for all participants.

Thank you all for helping us to have a successful orientation Program!



MIRT group-after cultural competence session



Laketa, Alvin, Shirley and Jason (left to right) — Lake Washington



**Alvin Garcia, Undergraduate,
Macalister College**

“My measure of success will depend on how much I give back to the community in which I grew up”

Alvin's Personal Statement

My name is Alvin Garcia and I am a junior attending Macalister College. I hope to become a physician. My intention is to spend the next year at Macalister College to fulfill my required courses for medical school and major in biology and chemistry. Upon completion of my undergraduate studies, I hope to get into the best medical school that will challenge me as I work toward a specialization in pediatrics. I have always had a passion toward helping people, especially children. Being the second oldest of eight children, the interactions I have with my younger siblings motivates my career decisions. Eventually, I plan on returning to my hometown to practice my specialty among Native American communities. I would be the first person to hold an MD degree in the village. When I become a physician, my measure of success will depend on how much I give back to the community in which I grew up. My profession will indeed be an asset to my community as well as other Native communities.

The community in which I grew up in values its culture. Many traditional activities are still practiced on the reservation. Coming from a family that values tradition, I grew up participating in Pueblo cultural events.

I frequently participate in events such as dancing during the corn dances held on New Years Day, Easter, Christmas and August 4th (our annual Pueblo feast day). Some hobbies that I enjoy are jewelry making and horse back riding. I enjoy deer hunting and fishing as well.

I'm excited to participate in public health research in Thailand, where I will study lifestyle variables related to lipid levels among patients in Thailand. I believe that it is important to understand the cultural and lifestyle differences of patients in order to be an effective healthcare provider. The knowledge I gain from the program will help me understand my culture better and will help me be an effective healthcare provider in the future.

Jason's Personal Statement

I am a student at the University of Washington and am studying Microbiology. This is my third year. I am involved in a research lab with Laboratory Medicine.

The research revolves around the pathobiology and treatment of hepatitis C infections. After graduating I will apply to medical school and hope to pursue a career in medicine. Ideally, I would be able to assist and serve in underdeveloped countries.



Jason Soh, Undergraduate, UW

Besides the joys of studying, I enjoy playing sports and music, as well as serving at church and various community projects and events. With the latter, I enjoy working in community projects because it provides the opportunity to meet a diverse array of people.

I expect my experiences through the MIRT program to be rewarding in two significant ways. On one level, traveling to a foreign country will allow me to see the world in a different perspective as well as to learn a different language and local customs. On another level, I expect to learn how to conduct public health research and put the pieces together in a scientific paper.

Ultimately, the experiences in the short term will provide me with the knowledge to move forward and in the long term help define my character.

“I expect to learn how to conduct public health research and put the pieces together in a scientific paper”

The MIRT Program hosted the visit of Dr. Nicholas Kintraia, Professor of OB/GYN at the State of Medical Academy of Republic of Georgia. Dr. Kintraia is the Head of the Laparoscopic Surgery Department at the Chachava Scientific Research Institute of Perinatology and the OB/GYN Expert at the Ministry of Health of Georgia.

Dr. Kintraia's Presentation

During his visit Dr. Kintraia presented a research seminar entitled "Mother and Newborn Health Care in the Republic of Georgia: Reality, Problems and Perspectives."

Dr. Kintraia briefly touched on the overall public health status in relation to the national economic crises since 1990. He also highlighted that infant mortality has increased since 2000 with primary causes being conditions of the perinatal period, acute respiratory infections, parasite disease, congenital birth defects and others.

He also gave an overview on other major public health problems.

In his final remarks Dr. Kintraia said "Georgia has seen economic and health progress since the crisis of the early 1990's; however challenges remain. He outlined several priority areas for Georgia:

- Need to attract and retain Georgian professionals to stay and work to at home – out-migration has had debilitating effects.
- Need our friends in developed countries to help us build human capital and enhance infrastructure. 10 years of neglect has been devastating!
- Georgian students and faculty need better access to current/good quality information; Professors need continuing education opportunities
- Need to opportunities to have international faculty exchanges, collaborative research opportunities for mid-level clinical and public health professionals."

"Georgian-American partnerships in health will help prepare Georgians to participate fully in the global arena of health and human development."



He also added that "Georgian Must Increase Commitment to:

- ◆ Prevent Infant and Maternal Mortality.
- ◆ Improve Access to Quality Health Care and Nutrition
- ◆ Prevent Spread of HIV
- ◆ Improve Access to Health Education
- ◆ Address Poverty and Housing Issues
- ◆ Increase Awareness of Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Practices

To achieve these objectives, stressed Dr. Kintraia "we need help from our international friends.

Georgian-American partnerships in health will help Georgians recover from the crisis of the 1990's and prepare them to participate fully in the global arena of health and human development. "

During his visit, Dr Kintraia met with faculty & students in Health Services, IHP, Epidemiology and Upper Campus.



Participants in discussion

Dr. Virginia Gonzales, Co-Director, MIRT Program, Senior Advisor, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS for International Training and Education Center on HIV (I-TECH) and Senior Lecturer, UW.

The Caribbean has the highest HIV prevalence rate of any region of the world, outside of sub-Saharan Africa, and the highest HIV incidence rate among women in the Americas. Thus, efforts are being made to effectively address the impact of the growing epidemic through the development of the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Regional Training (CHART) Initiative – an initiative designed to establish a regional network of training centers in order to increase human capacity for care and treatment of persons with HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean.

The Caribbean HIV/AIDS Regional Training (CHART) Initiative, begun in 2003 and Dr. Virginia Gonzales, MIRT Co-Director and Senior Advisor for Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission for the International Training and Education Center on HIV (I-TECH) has been traveling to the Caribbean as part of that effort since the beginning. The **goal** of I-TECH activities in the Caribbean is to work with the University of the West Indies, CDC, HRSA, USAID and other stakeholders in the region to develop the infrastructure for CHART. CHART is designed to serve the region through a network of National Training Centers (NTCs) that function in a sub-regional capacity by supporting training needs of nearby countries. Centers are currently operating in the Bahamas, Barbados, two sites in Haiti, and Jamaica, with plans to establish centers in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and other Caribbean locations. The Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) of CHART is located at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus in Jamaica.



Dr. Godfrey Woelk , MIRT Foreign Faculty and Advisory Committee, Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Community Medicine, University of Zimbabwe.

“the challenge is making these disparities visible to generate action”

Dr. Godfrey Woelk, presented a talk entitled *“Making Disparities Count: From Government Statistics Systems to Action”* at the International Symposia at Harvard School of Public Health, May 5, 2005.

This symposia evaluated about different approaches of monitoring social disparity in health in relation to data.

During his presentation, Dr Woelk discussed the issues on addressing differences in health status that are unnecessary, avoidable and unfair and the challenges in making these disparities visible to generate action. He also discussed the identification of groups, indicators of health status, sources of data and advocacy a system to monitor equity.

As his final remarks Dr. Woelk pointed to the need for incremental changes in a routing health information system and examining indicators that are relatively simple to collect; mobilizing opinion to support the collection of this information.



Dr. Gonzales with a group of graduates from all over the Caribbean during a training of trainers workshop entitled, Train-up with Teachback! conducted May 2005, Montego Bay, Jamaica.



Carolina Mejia — MIRT Alumna '01

I have received an overseas fellowship from the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Fogarty International Center [FIC], with support from The Ellison Medical Foundation, for a one year research training experience in Peru. This funding will provide me with the opportunity to conduct my doctoral dissertation in Health Services Research. I will be returning to Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia where I was initially placed for my MIRT fellowship. I will be, once again, working with Drs. Patricia Garcia and Cesar Carcamo. I plan to start data collection for my dissertation in early 2006. I will be collecting qualitative data on STD/HIV risk factors associated with increased risk of STDs and HIV among female sex workers. I am especially interested in exploring the types of risk behaviors that are associated with migration and mobility of sex workers in Peru. I anticipate that the findings from this study will help inform program planners and researchers on designing targeted interventions for mobile sex workers.

I am very excited to have this opportunity to return to Peru to conduct my doctoral research! I feel that I am developing an area of expertise for my future career as a social science researcher. When I was being interviewed for the FIC fellowship, I was told that NIH would like to see a MIRT alumni receive a FIC fellowship and then a new investigator/ career development award (K-award). I am aiming to be this person!

Congratulations Carolina!



Miriam Castro — MIRT Alumna '01

"I was told that NIH would like to see a MIRT alumni receive an FIC fellowship and then a new investigator/ career development award "

Miriam Castro, MIRT Alumna 2001 and now a UW medical student, was accepted to the CDC-Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools (HSHPS) fellowship program. HSHPS is a non-profit organization comprised of 22 medical schools and 5 schools of public health that was established in 1996 in response to the President's Executive Order 12900, "Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans." The goal of HSHPS is to increase the Hispanic workforce in all fields of health care, increase Hispanic health care research, and improve the curriculum of health professions schools in order to help those better serve Hispanic communities.

At the CDC Miriam will be working in the division of Viral Hepatitis. Her specific task will be to evaluate the usability, understandability, and cultural competency of a series of educational materials on viral hepatitis for the Hispanic community and generate recommendations about these materials. This will take place in a large Hispanic population outside of Atlanta, Georgia.

Congratulations Miriam!

To find out about the HSHPS fellowship go to: <http://www.hshps.com/fellowship.html>

For more information about the FIC/ Ellison Foundation Fellowship go to: <http://www.aamc.org/students/medstudents/overseasfellowship/start.htm>

ALUMNI UPDATE

Let US Know How You're Doing

Do you have an update or new photo to share with us?

We would love to hear from you!

NAME: _____

UPDATE: _____

E-mail Address: _____

MISCELLANEOUS

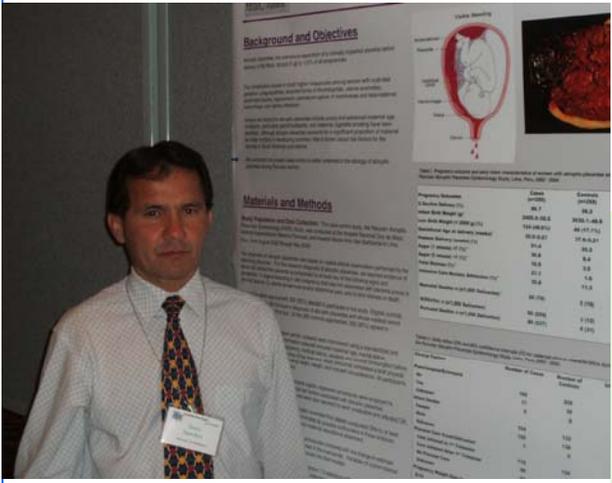
♦ *Dr Sixto Sanchez visited and met with program faculty and staff on his way to present a research work on the Annual Society for Epidemiologic Research in Toronto, Canada. His paper “Risk Factors of Abruptio Placentae” will soon be published in the Am J of Ob/Gyn.*

Response to Previous Photo Quiz

*Thank you for your participation in the photo quiz, unfortunately no one got the right response. Melany Grogan and Geraldine Cherry had the closest response but missed the year. **Oops!!***



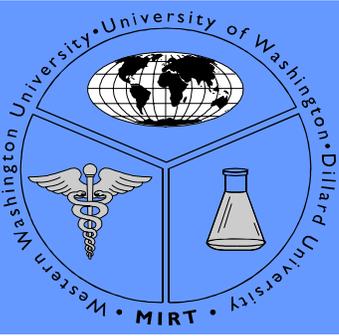
The photo was taken in Ecuador, Summer 2001.



Dr. Sanchez gave a talk on “Maternal Mortality in Peru” during his stay in Seattle at Swedish Medical Center.



Dr. Sanchez in Toronto



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MIRT is a national program designed to encourage students from underrepresented groups to pursue careers in biomedical and behavioral research. This program provides support for undergraduates and graduate students to receive research training in an international setting. Conceived and funded by the Fogarty International Center of the National Institutes for Health, the UW MIRT Program has been developed in collaboration with Dillard University, Xavier University and Western Washington University. The program focuses on population-based health research in developing countries and builds on established linkages with academic institutions in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Thailand, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, Republic of Georgia, Argentina and Brazil.

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PHOTO QUIZ



In one of the iconic images of the 20th century, this person smiling broadly in his blue lab coat was described by his employers as a cleaner or gardener. It was only recently that many of us learned that he was a key person involved in the first human heart transplant. As a young man this person was not formally trained. As he put it, "I stole with my eyes". He became expert in transplant surgeries, particularly liver transplants which are far trickier than heart transplants. [*The Economist*- June 2005]

What is the name of this unsung hero?

In what year did he contribute to making the first human heart transplant?

A special prize will be awarded to the first person providing the correct responses.

Send your response to mirt@u.washington.edu ** Cheers!**