MIRT-Capacity Building --- Local and Foreign

“When we do the best that we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another.” Helen Keller

MIRT Program faculty and staff greeted this year by working on submitting two new exciting training grant applications to the Fogarty International Center of the National Institute of Health (NIH). Each training grant will provide resources sufficient for supporting short-term and long-term training for faculty members/scientists in Chile, Ethiopia, Nepal and Republic of Georgia.

Led by MIRT Program Director Dr. Michelle Williams and Advisory Committee member Dr. Annette Fitzpatrick, those two training grants: Global Research Training in Population Health Training Grant and International Clinical, Operational and Health Services Research Training grant are expected to further strengthen research programs of MIRT Program partners in a profound way.

On another note, Dr. Fitzpatrick is taking a lead on a conference grant to pull the MIRT/MHIRT Alumni together. If successful, it is expected that MIRT/MHIRT Alumni from five longstanding Public Health Schools will get together to share their success and celebrate their unprecedented accomplishments. We’ll keep you posted-- let’s all keep our fingers crossed!

“Last year has been an exciting and a productive one for our foreign faculty members in Peru ...” (Please see page 2)

“The experience that I had in Ecuador was a once in a lifetime opportunity which has remained close to my heart ...” Alumni Update (Please see page 5)

Drs. Sancehz, Moodley, Williams, Saona and a guest (Left to right) at International Preeclampsia/Maternal Mortality Conference in Lima, PERU
Dr. Sanchez & PERU --Success Story

Last year has been an exciting and a productive one for our foreign faculty members in Peru. In this issue, we feature Dr. Sixto Sanchez from Lima, Peru.

Dr. Sixto Sanchez (MIRT Foreign Faculty and Advisory Committee) has been a core faculty member of MIRT Program since 1996. Dr. Sanchez is the Director of Epidemiology, Health Direction V Lima City, and Professor of Postgraduate Studies at Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos and Universidad Nacional Federico Villarreal, Lima, Peru.

Dr. Sanchez and colleagues in Lima have mentored 10 MIRT fellows in the last decade and co-authored more than 12 papers and presentations.

Dr. Sanchez describes his current research activities as "With my research team we are conducting a research (funded by the NIH and administrated by Impacta, a Peruvian NGO): Community Based Voluntary Counseling and testing. We are testing for VIH to sexual workers and their clients, using an HIV rapid test. The objective of this study is to find out the feasibility of this intervention. The justification is that just 40% of sexual workers have an HIV test in the previous year."

Dr. Sanchez added "I'm working on a project with a student of the University of Washington. The objective is to create a multi-sectorial plan in order to improve the management of garbage in one of the most critical districts in Lima Peru: La Victoria. This district has high rates of diarrhea, and respiratory infections. One of the worst characteristics of this district is that it is dirty. You can find garbage accumulated in many places of the district. In the creation of this plan, we are making many sectors (Health, Education, Major City, and police) work together."

Together with Drs. Garcia, Perales Diaz and Williams, Dr. Sanchez developed a study entitled "Prevalence, Correlates and Outcomes of Gender-Based Violence Among Women in Lima Peru". Currently the study is more than half way through enrolling 3000 subjects. The objective of the study is to identify the risk factors of gender based violence and its associations with the perinatal and maternal outcomes. This study which helped to train MIRT fellows in the past is expected to provide additional opportunities for training future MIRT students. Our special thanks goes to the Project Coordinator, Ms. Elena Sancehz and the Violence study team. Gracias por todos sus esfuerzos y trabajo duro!

At the end of last year Dr. Sanchez and colleagues organized an international symposium which brought more than 150 obstetricians and scientists across the globe. Dr Sanchez describes the purpose of the meeting as follows, "In Peru, Maternal mortality rate is very high, and post partum hemorrhage is the main cause of death. And in Lima and the big hospitals of the country, preeclampsia is the leading cause of maternal death. Therefore the symposium examined many aspects of preeclampsia with the aim of increasing knowledge and awareness about the epidemiology, pathophysiology and its clinical management in order to prevent morbidity and mortality associated to this disease."
Finally, Dr. Sanchez said “We are submitting for approval our study about non transmittable diseases (mostly diabetes, hypertension). The objective is to identify risk factors of this diseases in the population in Lima City. About 3000 persons older than 18, using cluster sampling, will be interviewed and a sample of blood will be drawn. This is the first study of this type in Lima, a population with 6 millions of inhabitants. The study will be funded by the Peruvian ministry of health.”

It has been a privilege and honor to work with Dr. Sanchez in executing the missions of the MIRT Program. We are looking forward to many more productive of research and research training in PERU. Muchas Gracis Dr. Sanchez and colleagues for being the important part of the MIRT program.

At the seminar, talks were given by well known international and national researchers. Experts led panels designed to discuss important issues about Pre-eclampsia and Maternal Morbidity and Mortality. MIRT Program Director, Dr. Michelle Williams and Dr. Jack Moodley were the main speakers of this symposium.

Professor Jack Moodley is Head, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Director of Pregnancy Hypertension Unit, Medical Research Council, Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine. Professor Moodley is respected as an international authority on hypertension disorders in pregnancy. A worldly renowned scientist, Professor Moodley has more than 350 publications in international journals.

Drs. Williams and Sanchez have been working together since 1996. They are co-principal investigators of several projects including a FIRCA grant entitled “Genetic Risk Factors of Pre-eclampsia Among Peruvian Women”. As a part of their collaborative activity, we are happy to report that their research work “Epidemiology of Abruptio Placentae in Peru” has been funded by the Fogarty International Center. This project has attracted much interest from US Department of State, US Agency for International Development, and Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington State.
In an effort to involve Peruvian investigators from many disciplines in collaborative research, Drs. Sanchez and Williams invited Neurologist, Dr. Julio Perez to participate in developing a neuro-epidemiology research project sponsored by the MIRT Program. In the summer of 2004, MIRT Fellows Kathryn Adeney and Jose Flores joined the research team in conducting a survey study on migraines. A synopsis of the study and its findings are highlighted below.

**Study Background**

Migraine is a common chronic-episodic disorder of idiopathic origin, ranked among the world’s twenty most disabling medical conditions by the World Health Organization. Many population-based epidemiologic studies, conducted in developed countries, indicate that the lifetime prevalence of migraine in women to be between 11-32%, and the one-year prevalence in women to be between 9 -22%. These studies have demonstrated that women are approximately three times as likely as men to suffer from migraine, and that the prevalence in women peaks during the reproductive years.

A recent multinational survey of migraines in Latin America showed comparable 1-year prevalence estimates. Investigators confirmed that reproductive-aged women bear the largest burden of migraine, and they also noted that the rates of medical consultation and under-diagnosis of migraine were much greater in Latin America than in developed countries.

Several studies have shown that migraines are a significant risk factor for ischemic stroke in young women; other studies suggest that a history of migraine headaches may be associated with hypertension in pregnancy and subsequent vascular disorders. As the burden of disease in Peru shifts from infectious communicable outcomes to chronic illnesses, it is essential to characterize the risk factors and outcomes for vascular disorders in this population, with an emphasis on women of...
MIRT Alumni’2004 Kelly Bui and Lisa Nguyen were invited to present their Poster works “Risk Factor Associated with Term & Pre-term LBW in Thai Nguyen, VIETNAM” and “Comparison of Farming and Non-farming Mothers in Thai Nguyen, VIETNAM” in a student research and public service poster session at President Emmert annual Visiting Committee and Advisory Board Day. The event took place on February 10, 2006 at the University of Washington HUB Ballroom. Approximately 450 community and business leaders and faculty attended the meeting. Kelly and Lisa had the opportunity to answer questions to the UW Advisory Committee. As always, Kelly and Lisa were stars of the event!

On a related news, Kelly and Lisa participated in the 2006 Western Student Medical Research Forum in Carmel, California.

Kelly and Lisa were undergraduates when they participated in the MIRT Program. They are now attending the Medical School at the University of Washington.

On our next issue we’ll report on the many more presentations and publications of MIRT 2005 Alumni. Stay Tuned!
George Siemen, MD  
MIRT ’97

This picture was featured in the Rochester Medicine Annual Magazine

It is always uplifting to hear the success of our Alumni across the nation. George Siemen was an undergraduate student when he was awarded his MIRT fellowship in 1997 to work on a project “Malnutrition and its Relation to Psychomotor Development in the San Pablo del Lago Region, ECUADOR”. After completing medical school, Dr. Siemen stayed on at Rochester Medical School, Rochester University and is now completing his final year of residency. What does Dr. Siemen say about his MIRT ‘97 experience?

"The experience that I had in Ecuador was a once in a lifetime opportunity which has remained close to my heart. It gave me a perspective on need, medicine, and research. I definitely want to return to Ecuador some-day." Best Wishes from the Program!

Nicole Anderson, former MIRT Program Coordinator (1995-2000) and mother two wonderfully talented and brilliant girls (Camryn and Halie, pictured) recently wrote in to wish us a happy and prosperous New Year.

During her tenure as MIRT Program Coordinator, Nicole contributed to the MIRT Program in many significant and sustaining ways. For instance, Nicole developed the MIRT Newsletter, and created templates we still use today to help teach MIRT fellows generate research posters.

Nicole also was instrumental in helping MIRT faculty develop and sustain productive collaborative research and research training partnerships with faculty in Peru, Ecuador and Zimbabwe. After traveling and working in Scotland and other parts of Europe and elsewhere, Nicole and family are back in Utah where she is enjoying a new career as a real estate broker. Nicole’s lasting contributions to the MIRT Program as deeply appreciated, and she is fondly remembered by all in UW Health Sciences who enjoyed working with her. Nicole, Camryn and Halie, on behalf of all your friends from F-wing (and and beyond!), we also wish you all the very best! We hope you-all will come visit sometime soon!
THESE PHOTOS WERE TAKEN BY MIRT STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF

MIRT PHOTOS

BUTAJIRA, ETHIOPIA: BIZU GELAYE

REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA: JASON SOH

REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA: JASON SOH

CHANG MAI, THAILAND: MICHELLE WILLIAMS

REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA: JASON SOH

THAILAND: VITOOL LOHSOONTHORN
THESE PHOTOS WERE TAKEN BY MIRT STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF

MIRT PHOTOS

VIETNAM: LISA NGUYEN

CALIFORNIA: KELLY BUI

HONG KONG: DENNY LE & ALVIN GARCIA

CUERNAVACA, MEXICO: BENJAMIN VASQUEZ

MACHU PICchu, PERU: JOSE FLORES
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:______________________________________________________

NB: We have made it easier for our Alumni to send updates directly online. Please go to the MIRT Web Page: www.depts.washington.edu/mirt/ and click on the Alumni Update.

Cancer Screening and Management
African-American women are more than twice as likely to die of cervical cancer than are white women and are more likely to die of breast cancer than are women of any other racial or ethnic group.

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)
Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death for all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. In 2000, rates of death from diseases of the heart were 29 percent higher among African-American adults than among white adults, and death rates from stroke were 40 percent higher.

Diabetes
In 2000, American Indians and Alaska Natives were 2.6 times more likely to have diagnosed diabetes compared with non-Hispanic Whites, African Americans were 2.0 times more likely, and Hispanics were 1.9 times more likely.

HIV Infection /AIDS
Although African Americans and Hispanics represented only 26 percent of the U.S. population in 2001, they accounted for 66 percent of adult AIDS cases and 82 percent of pediatric AIDS cases reported in the first half of that year.

Immunizations
In 2001, Hispanics and African Americans aged 65 and older were less likely than Non-Hispanic whites to report having received influenza and pneumococcal vaccines.
MIRT is a national program designed to encourage students from health disparity 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. MIRT is funded by the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD) and 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 public health research in developing countries and builds on established linkages with academic institutions in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Thailand, Republic of Georgia, Australia, Peru, Mexico, Ecuador, Chile, Brazil, and Argentina.

Thank you for your participation in the photo quiz, unfortunately nobody got the correct response (We’ll have to keep the prize!)

The picture was taken in Zimbabwe in 1995.

He was born at the very bottom, into the group of “out-castes” once called “untouchable” and now known as dalits - often going hungry as a child and borrowing slippers to walk the long distances to school and college. He often listened to school lessons while standing outside the classroom, having been barred from attending because tuition fees went unpaid. Yet he rose to the top, serving as the country’s president from 1997 to 2002. He is considered to have been a remarkably independent and assertive President. Speaking of himself he said, “My life encapsulates the ability of the democratic system to accommodate and empower marginalized sections of society.” [The Economist]