



# CHS NEWSLETTER

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## CHS SEMINAR SERIES



Professor Aram Chobanian

**September 26, 2012:** The AUA College of Health Sciences, in collaboration with the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia, organized a Public Health Seminar with Dr. Aram V. Chobanian, a world famous cardiologist and President Emeritus of Boston University as well as a Dean Emeritus and

Provost of Boston University School of Medicine. Dr. Chobanian talked about the major public health challenge of cardiovascular diseases, particularly hypertension, in Armenia. He emphasized the importance of appropriate control of hypertension through healthy lifestyle and medical therapy to prevent cardiovascular complications. Dr. Chobanian shared with the audience the international evidence behind the recommendations of the Seventh Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation and Treatment of High Blood Pressure of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute in the US, which he chaired.

**October 30, 2012:** The CHS, in collaboration with the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia, organized a Public Health Seminar with Professor the Lord Ara Darzi of Denham. Professor Darzi shared his wealth of experience in health care reform with the audience. He emphasized that priorities should be given to improving the quality of health care (including streamlining patient access) and preventive public health measures such as promoting healthy lifestyles (including reducing smoking rates) to improve health outcomes and quality of life. He showed evidence that reforms directed towards a more equitable integrated patient-centered health care system significantly improved outcomes. Professor Darzi holds the Paul Hamlyn Chair of Surgery at Imperial College London. He is an Honorary Consultant Surgeon at Imperial College Hospital National Health Service (NHS) Trust Hospital and Royal Marsden Hospital and holds the Chair of Surgery at the Institute of Cancer Research.



Professor Ara Darzi

Large audience of public health and medical professionals, including students, faculty, researchers and physicians, members of the AUA community and Ministry of Health asked questions and received advice from distinguished guests during the seminars.



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## Meghrigian Institute for Preventive Ophthalmology

### Global Cost of Correcting Refractive Errors



Dr. Kevin D. Frick

The Meghrigian Institute for Preventive Ophthalmology of the College of Health Sciences organized a Public Health Seminar on July 26, 2012. During the seminar Dr. Kevin D. Frick, a Professor in the Departments of Health Policy and Management and International Health at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, presented his work about the global burden of visual impairment from uncorrected refractive errors and cost-effectiveness of interventions correcting refractive errors. AUA students, graduates, researchers and faculty, and ophthalmologists from different organizations attended the public seminar.

### Meghrigian Institute in Kashatagh Province of Artsakh



Dr. Mikaelyan examines a resident of Kovsakan town

In August 2012, the Meghrigian Institute launched a project aimed at reducing the incidence of avoidable blindness and visual impairment among socio-economically disadvantaged population in Kashatagh province of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh). Kashatagh is one of the eight provinces of Artsakh and the largest by area. The living conditions and the situation in the health sector in Kashatagh are among the harshest. The Meghrigian Institute conducted free eye screenings for the residents of Berdzor and Kovsakan towns, as well as Msheni, Moshatagh, Aygehovit, Urekan, Mirik, Hochants, Qaregah, Getap, Martunashen, Yericvanq, Mijnavan, Alashkert, and Ishkhanadzor villages. Overall, 161 patients received eye screening in Kashatagh.

Diabetes patients received educational brochures developed by the Meghrigian Institute to increase their awareness about diabetes management and prevention of diabetic retinopathy. All patients diagnosed with eye pathologies received free ophthalmic consultation about their diagnosis and further treatment. Those who had refractive errors or presbyopia (106 people) received prescriptions for eye glasses and free eye frames from the Meghrigian Institute.



Kashatagh Resident receiving an eye frame

### Meghrigian Institute Celebrates World Sight Day (WSD) 2012



Meghrigian Institute in Number 1 retirement home

The Meghrigian Institute extended its program to elderly population living in retirement homes in Yerevan to celebrate WSD2012. In October 2012, the staff of the Meghrigian Institute launched the ophthalmic screening program among elderly residents of Number 1 and Nork retirement homes and the Center of Social Services for Single Elderly. Detailed eye screenings were conducted among 340 elderly people who agreed to undergo the eye screening

procedures. All participants received free ophthalmic consultation from ophthalmologists. Patients diagnosed with eye diseases or refractive errors received appropriate medical assistance and eyeglasses from the Meghrigian Institute.



Meghrigian Institute in Nork retirement home

### Risk Factors for Developing Myopia among 6-18 Years Old Schoolchildren in Yerevan and Gegharkunik Marz

Childhood blindness is a significant problem globally with an estimated 1.4 million blind children below 15 years of age. One of the main causes of childhood blindness is uncorrected refractive errors (RE). The Meghrigian Institute conducted a study to determine the prevalence of RE and identify the main risk factors for development of myopia among 6-18 years old school children living in Yerevan and Gegharkunik marz. The study results showed that the prevalence of myopia was nearly two times higher among children living in Yerevan compared to those in Gegharkunik. Both genetic and environmental factors were associated with myopia. The length of time of focused continuous close work plays a significant role in development of myopia.

## Protecting Children from Tobacco Smoke

AUA CHS responded to the request from the Boghossian Gardens (Lovers' Park) for cooperation in creating an outdoor smoke-free playground in the park. Together with the Coalition for Tobacco Free Armenia and DJ Vakcina, they launched the first smoke free playground in Yerevan on the occasion of the



Smoke free playground in the Lovers' Park

World No Tobacco Day on May 31. Children from the neighboring kindergarten and students from the AUA Experimental English Classes Program joined the visitors of the Lovers' Park to celebrate World No Tobacco Day. The CHS staff, faculty, and the MPH students organized different games and activities for children and distributed information leaflets on the health hazards of smoking and secondhand smoke among the visitors of the Lovers' Park.



Dr. Arusyak Harutyunyan

## National No Tobacco Day

On October 12, National No Tobacco Day in Armenia, Dr. Arusyak Harutyunyan was invited to speak about Tobacco Control Efforts in Armenia at the General Membership dinner meeting of the Armenian American Health Professional Organization (AAHPO) in New York City, USA. The participants of the dinner were eager to learn more about public health problems and their solutions in Armenia. Dr. Harutyunyan's presentation was broadcasted by a TV channel in the New York area and in Armenia.



Drs. Kim Hekimian and Arusyak Harutyunyan

## LATEST NEWS



Round Table participants

**August 23, 2012:** The CHS hosted a Round Table on Infant and Child Nutrition. Dr. Kim Hekimian, faculty at CHS and Columbia University, led the

discussion with the main stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, United Nations World Food Program, UNICEF, World Vision Armenia, OXFAM, Fund for Armenian Relief, Institute for Child and Adolescent Health, Confidence Health NGO, and CHS faculty.



Dr. Aleksandr Lazaryan

**November 27, 2012:** CHS hosted a public seminar devoted to scientific breakthroughs in blood malignancies. Dr. Aleksandr Lazaryan, Assistant Professor of

Medicine, Division of Hematology, Oncology and Transplantation, University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, was the guest speaker. Interesting question/answer session with medical and public health professionals followed the presentation.

## MPH ALUMNI & STUDENTS' SUCCESSES

**Armine Podosyan, MPH (2011)** has been competitively elected as a member of the Executive Committee of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) at the 40th WFUNA Plenary Assembly held on November 10, 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



Armine Podosyan

**Armine Vardanyan, (MPH second year student),** received the "Best Student" Award from the Mayor of Ejmiadzin on November 17, 2012. This award recognizes academic excellence and service to the community.



Armine Vardanyan

**Arusyak Harutyunyan, MPH (2009)** received a competitive Scholarship from the Institute for Global Tobacco Control to complete the Global Tobacco Control Certificate Program at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

### Learn more

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