



CHS NEWSLETTER

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CHILD HEALTH STATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The Center for Health Services Research and Development of the American University of Armenia (AUA CHSR) conducted nationwide evaluation of the Child Health State Certificate (CHSC) Program of the Ministry of Health (MOH) with financial support from the USAID Mobilizing Action Against Corruption project.



Hayk Darbinyan, Vahan Poghosyan, Karine Saribekyan, Karen Kostanyan, and others from Ministry of Health and USAID

The CHSC Program, which guarantees free in-patient healthcare services for children 7 years-of-age and under, has been in effect in Armenia since January 1, 2011. The nationwide evaluation of the CHSC Program took place in February-August 2011. The evaluation comprised of national quantitative baseline and mid-term surveys with parents of patients (1,603 mothers/caregivers of hospitalized children interviewed during two stages of the survey) and qualitative in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with health providers and policy makers (56 providers/administrators and policy makers/experts). The evaluation indicated that the CHSC Program has been successful in reducing informal payments for pediatric inpatient care in both Yerevan and marz facilities and in increasing accessibility of pediatric inpatient care for those who could not previously afford it; however, it also found consistent dissatisfaction among hospital pediatricians with certain aspects of the Program.

This evaluation included a sub-study of the Obstetric Care State Certificate (OCSC) Program. The survey of mothers who gave birth after the introduction of the OCSC Program, showed that significant reduction in informal payments remained sustainable over the years. The main portion of existing unofficial payments for obstetric care were for "thank you" payments. The MOH of the Republic of Armenia hosted a meeting for the MOH Senior Management and USAID Health and Social Reform Office to discuss the findings from the evaluation. This meeting concluded one of the MOH-USAID-AUA CHSR active and productive collaborations.



Ruzanna Yuzbashyan, Ministry of Health



IN THIS ISSUE:

- ✓ Child Health State Certificate Program [page 1]
- ✓ Graduating Cohort 2011 [page 2]
- ✓ Delicious Cookies Instead of Tobacco [page 3]
- ✓ Antismoking Exhibition in the RA National Assembly [page 3]
- ✓ National No Tobacco Day [page 3]
- ✓ Young Artists Join the Fight Against Passive Smoking [page 4]
- ✓ University of Pennsylvania Hosts College of Health Sciences [page 4]
- ✓ Public Health Seminar Series [page 4]
- ✓ MPH Alumni Successes [page 4]

GRADUATING COHORT 2011 (PART II)

MPH Integrating Experience Project Brief Abstracts

Tatevik Hovhannisyán; The Impact of Hospital Privatization on Physicians' Perceived Job Security, Job Satisfaction and Salary Satisfaction in Yerevan, Armenia

Privatization of Armenian hospitals began in 1994. The purpose of this study was to find similarities and differences in physicians' perceived working conditions, job security, and satisfaction between private and public hospitals in Yerevan that could lead to improvements in physician satisfaction and quality of health care. A total of 110 physicians participated in the study (45 from public and 65 from private general hospitals). The study did not find statistically significant difference in perceived job security or in physicians' perceived job satisfaction.



Dzvoinar Melkom Melkomian, MPH 2011

Domnica Balteanu; A Comparative Study of Patient Satisfaction With Mental Health Services in Armenia and Moldova

Mental health is important for the overall well-being of individuals, societies, and countries. This qualitative research study examined and compared patient satisfaction with mental health care services in Armenia and Moldova. An exploratory qualitative study on patient satisfaction with mental health care services was conducted in Yerevan and Chisinau. Participants and patients in Armenia and Moldova were overall satisfied with the services, despite the shortage of drugs at times, additional expenses, some informal payments, and uncomfortable conditions within hospitals. Participants from both countries reported that health professionals were highly qualified. The study recommended increasing patients'/caregivers' awareness of their rights and standards of care.

Hayk Davtyan; Risk Factors of Developing Lumbar Disc Herniation in Armenia: a Case-Control Study

Disc herniation is the protrusion of the disc beyond its natural borders. The most common symptom of the lumbar disc herniation is low back pain which could radiate into the leg. Low back pain is the second most common cause of disabilities and the leading cause of job related disability. The main objective of the study was investigation of the risk factor of lumbar disc herniation. A retrospective unmatched case-control study suggested the following risk factors for disc herniation: family history, lumbar load, height, work tempo and satisfaction with the working time. Moderate exercise and sleeping on the hard bed had protective effect.

Vahe Khachadourian; Risk Factors and Outcomes of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Comorbid Mental Disorders among 1988 Spitak Earthquake Survivors

Mental disorders are widespread among individuals in different age group. Anxiety disorders, more specifically post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), are among of the most common psychiatric conditions in individuals exposed to a traumatic experience such as natural disaster. Low socioeconomic status, female gender, low formal education and young age at the time of trauma are among the well known risk factors.



Vahe Khachadourian, MPH 2011

The 1988 Spitak earthquake was a major disaster which hit the northern part of Armenia. Several studies examining the psychological status of earthquake survivors showed high rates of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Twenty years later a small pilot study among the same study population found symptoms of PTSD among about 23% of participants. This paper developed a proposal for a follow-up study among individuals who participated in the 1990s study.

Hayk Kanchinyan; Salt Fluoridation to Prevent Dental Caries in Armenia

Dental caries is considered a public health problem for many countries. Dental care expenditure is a significant financial burden for many developed countries where 5-10% of public health expenditures relate to oral health. The mean DMFT index in 2000 for children aged 12 years was 4-5 on average and for adults aged 35 years the DMFT index was approximately 14 in Armenia. There is a need to develop and implement community based preventive programs to promote and improve oral health of the population in Armenia. Fluoridated salt has the same caries protective effect as fluoridated water. Salt fluoridation costs 10 - 100 times less than water fluoridation. Armenia has a local salt plant and it would be easy to implement the salt fluoridation program. This paper developed a proposal for salt fluoridation in Armenia

Neeraj Kishore Pandey; A Cross Country Comparison of Tobacco Use Among Youth in Yerevan, Armenia and New Delhi, India

Tobacco use is one of the major preventable causes of death. Smoking rates among men in Armenia have been consistently high, being one of the highest rates among men. In India tobacco smoke is responsible for half of all the cancers in men and quarter of all the cancers in women. With the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) having been conducted in both countries, a comparative secondary analysis of data from cross-sectional GYTS surveys (in 2004 for Yerevan and 2001 for New Delhi) identified differences and similarities in risk factors for smoking among youth. The study suggested that smoking fathers should be targeted in anti-tobacco campaigns as they are role models for their sons, and family members should be included in these campaigns to prepare them to conduct family discussions about the dangers of smoking with their children.

Dzvoinar Melkom Melkomian; Rabies: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors in Armenia

Rabies is a global public health issue accounting for approximately 55,000 human deaths annually. Many rabid animal bites and several cases of human rabies have been recorded in Armenia in recent years. No research on rabies in the Republic of Armenia appears in the literature. The study suggested that population of Armenia had limited knowledge concerning rabies. Better surveillance, increased transparency, public education, and minor policy changes (e.g., veterinarians providing information on the disease to their clientele) could help improving the situation in Armenia.

Full project reports are available at www.auachsr.com

Delicious Cookies Instead of Tobacco



On December 9, 2011 AUA College of Health Sciences (CHS), in collaboration with “Yerevantrans” CJSC of Yerevan Municipality and Yerevan Vocational College N1, organized an antismoking event to support and promote making public transport 100% smoke-free. As a result of brainstorming, the students who study to become chefs came up with an innovative intervention to combine their professional skills in cooking with tobacco control advocacy. Drivers of full-sized busses and mini-busses arriving in the bus stop were surprised and pleased to be offered freshly-baked cookies with a “No-Smoking” message. The student chefs thanked the drivers for keeping public transportation smoke-free and posted the Smoke-Free Hotline number inside buses.



Antismoking Exhibition in the RA National Assembly



Narine Movsisyan, Hovik Abrahamyan, Ara Babloyan

On October 24, 2011 the National Assembly (NA) of the Republic of Armenia hosted the anti-smoking exhibition dedicated to the National No Tobacco Day. The exhibition was a result of a fruitful collaboration between the Center for Health Services Research and Development (CHSR) and two youth art education centers - College-Studio of the National Center of Aesthetics and Art School after Avet Terteryan. Using the language of art, young artists expressed their understandings of and attitudes toward the problem of smoking, exposure to secondhand smoke and non-smokers' right to smoke-free air. The Chairman of the NA, Hovik Abrahamyan, expressed his appreciation to the CHSR for organizing the exhibition and urged fellow citizens to quit smoking and adopt healthy lifestyle.

National No Tobacco Day 2011

On October 12, 2011, to celebrate the National No Tobacco day, CHS, a founding member of the Coalition for Tobacco Free Armenia, in cooperation with the Boghossian Gardens organized an interactive educational session for the primary school children. During the event, the students of the AUA Master of Public Health (MPH) Program talked to children to promote the idea of healthy lifestyle and teach about hazards of tobacco smoke through the “Paint It!” game. The children accompanied by teachers and parents were very enthusiastic about painting the anti-smoking signs and flags and did not hesitate to express their opinions in front of TV media. While the MPH students talked to children, CHS staff distributed informational leaflets on the health hazards of smoking and secondhand smoke among the visitors of the Park.



Young Artists Join the Fight Against Passive Smoking



Exhibition at Yerevan State University

On June 13-14, 2011 CHS organized two exhibitions to advocate for non-smokers' rights in Armenia. These events were planned and implemented within a broader tobacco control advocacy project supported by the Open Society Foundations – Armenia and as a result of collaboration between the CHS tobacco control team and two youth educational centers the College-Studio of the National Center of Aesthetics, directed by Mr. Samvel



Exhibition at Art School after Avet Terteryan

Baghdasaryan, and the Art school after Avet Terteryan, led by Mr. Artur Martirosyan. The CHS team engaged in face-to face dialog with the visitors of the exhibition, mostly students and faculty of the Yerevan State University, persuading smokers not to expose their friends and family to secondhand smoke and encouraging non-smokers to protect their right for smoke-free air at worksites and public places.

LATEST NEWS



CHS Faculty

October 27, 2011 On 27 October, University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing and Penn Center for Public Health Initiatives and University of Pennsylvania MPH Program hosted a seminar, open to the university and Philadelphia communities, on "Update on Public Health in Armenia: Myths, Evidence, and Implications for the Region and the World." This seminar featured the research and policy advocacy work of the American University of Armenia College of Health Sciences (CHS) faculty and research staff and celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the American University of Armenia.

The event emerged from a growing partnership between AUA and Penn Nursing, spearheaded by AUA CHS Associate Dean Varduhi Petrosyan and Penn Nursing Professor Sarah Kagan who is also an AUA Adjunct Professor. The seminar capped a day-long AUA CHS Annual Faculty Workshop, held in Penn Nursing's Fagin Hall to develop new directions for growth in CHS' programs. CHS faculty from around the world gathered to direct new and expand initiatives in nutrition, nursing, medical and public health education.



July 1, 2011: CHS seminar "Legislative regulation of breast feeding promotion and marketing of infant food" in collaboration with Confidence health NGO and World Vision Armenia.



Nov. 3, 2011: CHS seminar on "Nutrition Issues in Armenia: How Can We Improve?" in collaboration with World Vision Armenia and Fund for Armenian Relief.



Dec. 9, 2011: Sergey Khachatryan, RA Deputy Minister of Health, seminar on "Current State of the Armenian Healthcare System."



Dec. 20, 2011: Tatul Hakobyan, Public Health Adviser in the WHO Regional Office for Europe, seminar on "Challenges and Opportunities for Better Health in Europe."



MPH ALUMNI SUCCESSES

Dr. Tsovinar Harutyunyan was appointed as Assistant Professor in the College of Health Sciences and as Research Consultant in the Center for Health Services Research and Development. Dr. Harutyunyan earned her Ph.D. in Health Services Research from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 2011. Her doctoral dissertation explored complex relationships between multiple socioeconomic factors and nutritional status of children under five in Armenia.

Giving to AUA

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