



# CHS NEWSLETTER

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COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

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Summer 2008

## PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TRAININGS IN NAGORNO KARABAGH

The Center for Health services Research and Development organized the health-oriented training program as part of the United States Agency of International Development funded Humanitarian Assistance Program for Nagorno Karabagh that was led implemented by the Fund for Armenian Relief. It helped to ensure that the people of Nagorno Karabagh (NK) receive timely and effective primary care, emphasizing the most common conditions that threaten their well-being.

The comprehensive health training program addressed integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI); management of adult diseases (ADM); and health promotion/patient counseling skills (PCS). The IMCI training addressed the most common conditions affecting children: respiratory infections, diarrhea, nutritional problems, anemia, prophylaxis of intestinal worms, burns and traumas, skin diseases, and ear and throat infections. ADM training addressed diagnosis and treatment of the most common conditions affecting adults: respiratory infections, cardiac diseases, urinary tract infections, skin diseases, burns and traumas, and gastro-intestinal diseases.

The patient counseling skills training enabled health professionals to effectively communicate with, educate, and motivate patients and community members in healthy habits and management of their illnesses.

In 2006, 265 nurses and 35 doctors throughout NK completed basic first aid and emergency skills training by the Armenian Red Cross Society.



By 2007, 86 nurses/feldshers and 10 doctors had completed the clinical IMCI training. From May-November 2007, AUA/CHSR team trained nearly 150 providers on ADM, and over 250 providers in patient counseling and health communication skills.



In 2008, nearly 600 villagers from 32 villages were trained in community-IMCI to promote healthy lifestyles and to encourage caregivers to seek appropriate medical care when necessary.



### A LETTER FROM CHS DEAN



Dear Friends, Supporters and Alumni,

This is our first newsletter and we are excited about providing an update on our successes and ongoing activities at the College of Health Sciences (CHS). The College has been able to help meet the needs of Armenia by providing an innovative and challenging educational experience for students in Public Health. Our graduates continue to secure strong positions within the Government, NGO's and private industry. Several graduates have continued on with their studies abroad to pursue advanced degrees. We expect in the future that many of these graduates will return to Armenia to compete for positions within the health care system.

We are quite pleased about the new Paramaz Avedisian building which opens this fall and will allow for modern updated offices and classrooms to expand our enrollment and offer new programs and courses. As part of this expansion, we are happy to report that Dr. Byron Crape will join the CHS in August full time in residence in Armenia as Assistant Professor and direct the MPH program. Byron has extensive experience teaching and conducting research in Armenia and worldwide.

We continue to work toward improving our position in Armenia as a strong high quality academic institution dedicated to improving the public health of Armenia and the region. The Center for Health Services Research and Development (CHSR) continues to compete and receive important research projects dealing with important issues such as Tobacco Control, Primary Health Care Improvements, Tuberculosis control, HIV prevention, among others.

As always we are seeking outstanding students and funding to continue our efforts.

We trust that you will partner with us to make a difference in the health of the Nation and Region.

Robert A. Bagramian, DDS, MPH, PhD  
Dean, College of Health Sciences

# GRADUATING COHORT OF 2007 (PART I)

## **Stella Arakelyan**, Investigation of Reproductive Risk Factors for Endometrial Cancer Development Among Women Aged 45-75 years in Yerevan, Armenia

"Endometrial cancer is one of the most common gynecologic cancers worldwide. The study identified the reproductive risk factors of endometrial cancer among 45-75 years old women in Yerevan, Armenia and developed recommendations for early prevention of the disease."



## **Liana Atabekyan**, Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices of Pregnant Women Regarding Environmental Tobacco Smoke in Yerevan and Nor-Hachn, Armenia

"According to the World Health Organization, Armenia is the sixth in the world for and number one smoking country in Europe: 63.7% of men (the heaviest puffers in Europe) and 3.1% of women in Armenia are smokers. The problem of pregnant women's exposure to ETS is particularly alarming, because this population is one of the most vulnerable groups, as both mother and fetus health is jeopardized."

## **Nune Dolyan**, Availability and Affordability of Modern Methods of Contraception in Pharmacies and Primary Health Care Facilities of Five Health Networks in Armenia

"Use of modern contraceptives in Armenia is low and the primary method of birth control is withdrawal which has a high failure rate. The present study aims to examine the availability and affordability of modern methods of contraception in pharmacies, polyclinics, ambulatories and health posts of five health networks of Armenia."

## **Varuzhan Ghazaryan**, Implementation and Evaluation of School-based Dental Caries Preventive Program: Proposal

"Oral health in Armenia is far from being satisfactory. The proposed program seeks to educate the children aged 6-8 years about appropriate dental care and oral disorders. Increase of knowledge about dental care will help children to avoid future oral diseases."

## **Ruzanna Grigoryan**, Investigating Reasons for High Patient Satisfaction Given Low Utilization of Health Care Services, Armenia: Qualitative Research

"Studies have revealed positive correlations between patient satisfaction and health care utilization: a more satisfied patient seeks health care more frequently. The aim of the study was to investigate reasons for high satisfaction with maternal and child health services given low utilization."



Full project reports are available at  
[www.auachsr.com](http://www.auachsr.com)

## CHS ALUMNI SUCCESSES



Kamilla Petrosyan, MD, MPH, was recently appointed as the Technical Support Team (TST) Manager at World Vision Armenia (WVA). The TST is a newly established department and has experts in health, economic development, child protection, advocacy, community engagement, disaster preparedness and mitigation. The aim of the TST is to 1) ensure that all programs and projects implemented by WVA are technically sound and have a high quality, and 2) be responsible for coordination of WVA national level activities and networking with partner organizations. TST will also conduct research and document best practices and lessons learned. Kamilla Petrosyan has been the Team Leader of the Principal Recipient Implementation Unit of the Global Fund HIV grant "Support to the National Program on HIV in Armenia."

# GARO MEGHRIGIAN INSTITUTE FOR PREVENTIVE OPHTHALMOLOGY

In 1999, Mr. Garo Meghrigian of Los Angeles funded a Blindness Prevention Program in Armenia in memory of his daughter, Christine Hripsime. The Meghrigian Institute was established within the Center for Health Services Research and Development to implement this vision.



## Strengthening Regional Ophthalmic Services in Gegharkunik Marz of Armenia

Meghrigian Institute finished a joint project with the Ararat-1 Lions Club (ALC) Charitable Organization and the Ministry of Health of Armenia. The project was supported by the Lions Club International Foundation and the Meghrigian Institute to strengthen the primary and secondary level ophthalmic services in the remote Gegharkunik marz establishing the Lions Regional Ophthalmic Unit (ROU) in Sevan and supporting screening and financing systems. The ROU in Sevan is providing eye care on the marz level to strengthen the local infrastructure and eye care at the primary and secondary levels in the rural areas. The project helped to develop a model of organization, financing, and delivery of regional ophthalmic services for Armenia that could be replicated as a national model for quality and affordable medical services. By 30 June 2008, about 225 patients received cataract surgery and 11 000 patients received eye care services and screening.



This unique project provided a wonderful opportunity to the Meghrigian Institute to accomplish all the major components of its mission:

- Conduct scientific investigations of ophthalmic epidemiology to increase understanding of eye disease in the community
- Link ophthalmologic services with expertise in organizing, financing and delivery of services to increase the utilization of ophthalmologic care in Armenia
- Educate eye care providers and the general public on scientific advances in detecting, preventing, and treating eye disease and in translating these advances into nationwide clinical practice
- Establish an ophthalmic care and prevention network to expand service delivery to under-served populations in need of affordable, accessible, and high quality eye care services for prevention and treatment of blindness at all levels
- Develop partnerships with organizations that are interested in blindness prevention and are capable of furthering blindness prevention.



## Primary Eye Care Trainings of School Nurses

Meghrigian Institute organized a 2-day ophthalmic training of 51 primary care nurses working in schools of Ghegharkunik marz. The aim of these trainings is to strengthen eye care capacity of school health offices and to raise public awareness of childhood blindness as an important health issue. The ROU of Sevan was the training venue of the project. Pediatric ophthalmic consultants delivered the theory classes, while ROU ophthalmologists and nurses provided practical trainings. Meghrigian team provided all trainees with basic ophthalmic equipment, medication, and supplies to be able to provide primary eye care and screening to school children (visual acuity charts, flashlights, eye drops for primary eye care, and other). All nurses received a brochure on basics of ophthalmology developed by the Meghrigian Institute.

# LATEST NEWS

## March 20, 2008: You Can Stop TB! Health System Approaches and Perspectives

CHS organized a panel discussion "I am stopping TB! Health System Approaches and Perspectives" to celebrate the World TB day. The highest rates of TB are reported in the eastern part of the European Region, mostly in the countries of the former Soviet Union. According to the National TB Program, the number of newly detected cases in Armenia in 2007 was 1534 (47.6/100000); 144 of them were children 0-17 years old. The prevalence rate in 2007 was 109/100000 (3867 people suffering from TB) and mortality rate was 5.4/100 000 (about 175 people).



The distinguished panel of the public seminar included Dr. Vahan Poghosyan, Coordinator of the National TB program, Ministry of Health; Gayane Ghukasyan, Country Program Coordinator for STI/HIV/AIDS and other Communicable Diseases, World Health Organization Country Office; Sylvia Wust, Head of the Health in Prisons Program, International Committee of the Red Cross; Naira Sergeeva, Project Coordinator, Armenian Red Cross Society; and Alexander Pasechnikov, Regional TB Advisor, MSF France.

Dr. Poghosyan emphasized that TB diagnosis and treatment are covered by the state, and financing of TB programs is continuously increasing.

Seminar attendees included health NGOs, AUA alumni, students, and faculty, and the general public.



April 3, 2008: Dr. George Jakab, Professor, Johns Hopkins University at the public seminar "Protecting Global Environmental Health"



April 30, 2008: Dr. Kimberly Waller, Health Team Leader, USAID at the public seminar "Understanding Policymakers' Perspectives"



May 21, 2008: Dr. Leeka Kheifets, Professor of Epidemiology, UCLA, School of Public Health at the public seminar "Epidemiologic Studies of Mobile Phones"

## To learn more

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