



Professor Stephen Lewis

The First Global Health@UNSW Conference: 'Is Global Health in Crisis?'

The inaugural GlobalHealth@UNSW conference was held on 13th August, 2012. It attracted an audience of around 250 academics, students, development workers and government officials, including five diplomats from developing countries. The conference theme, 'Is Global Health in crisis?' examined the critical issues of global health leadership and finance in an era of global financial uncertainty, dwindling overseas development assistance and increasing inequalities in health.

The keynote speaker, Stephen Lewis, a celebrated humanitarian, former UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, and author of *Race Against Time* opened the conference with an address: 'Global Public Health: It's not just a crisis, it's a scandal of epic

proportions', in which he discussed the gutting of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as a scandal of global health funding, governance and accountability. He described what happened to the Global Fund as the latest episode in the unvarying history of betrayal. In 2005, the G8 Summit in Gleneagles made a commitment to provide an additional \$50 billion in aid to the developing world by 2010, \$25 billion of which was destined for Africa. By the Summit in 2010, the G8 was between \$10 billion and \$15 billion short of the target.

Other speakers included Professor Richard Taylor, A/Professor David Legge from La Trobe University, A/Professor Heather Worth, and Dr Gulin Gedik of the World Health Organization.

A/Professor David Legge spoke about the ways in which the funding crisis currently facing WHO has prevented effective action around Resolution WHA59.26 which deals with policy coherence across trade and health, arguing that WHO's funding crisis has been deliberately imposed by the rich countries, led by the US, in order to prevent the majority of member states

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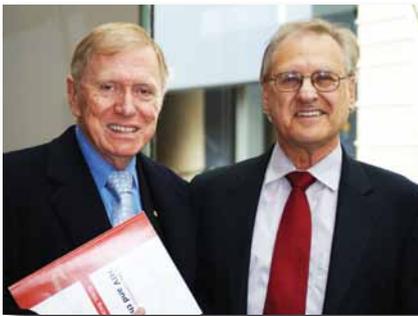
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Mr Enoch Nkuruho - Acting High Commissioner Uganda, Ms Chwane Mthethwa - Second Secretary South Africa, Mr Wijesundara - ATF Consulate General of Sri Lanka, Mr Charles W Lepani - High Commissioner of PNG, Mrs Cathy Lepani

from committing the Secretariat to engage in 'political' matters such as trade. He concluded that global health is indeed in crisis, measured by its inability to effectively engage in the trade domain where some of the most critical determinants of health arise. Stephen Lewis also spoke again at a public lecture on the topic of the failures surrounding the health-related millennium development goals. He discussed at length violence against women and the epidemic of rape.

To see more about the conference go to globalhealth.unsw.edu.au



Justice Michael Kirby and Prof Stephen Lewis



Mr Enoch Nkuruho, A/Prof Heather Worth, Prof Robyn Richmond



NHMRC CRE in Population Health Research (Immunisation) Launched

The new NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in population health research, focusing on immunisation in under studied and special risk populations: closing the gap in knowledge through a multidisciplinary approach was launched at a Breakfast session titled "*Hot Topics in Immunisation in under studied and special risk populations*" held on June 21 at the PHAA conference in Darwin.

The session was chaired by Professor Raina MacIntyre, Head of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, who provided an overview of the CRE and its research agenda and featured presentations covering research, engagement and opportunities for collaboration under the four main themes within the CRE.

The session featured an overview of the key areas of the CRE:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vaccination needs: presented by the CRE team member Ms Telphia Joseph (NCIRS)
- Maternal and neonatal vaccination: presented by the

CRE team member Dr Nick Wood (NCIRS)

- Vaccination in migrants, travellers and refugees : presented by the CRE team member Dr Anita Heywood (SPHCM, UNSW)
- Frail elderly vaccination: presented by the CRE team member Professor Raina MacIntyre (SPHCM, UNSW)

The launch was a great success, with over 60 guests attending and considerable interest in the proposed research and possibilities for engagement.

The next CRE event will be a two day workshop on the Health Economics and Modelling for Vaccine Preventable Diseases on 22nd – 23rd of November in John B Reid Theatre (G07) at UNSW Kensington Campus.

Details at: www.creimmunisation.com.au/event/health-economics-and-mathematical-modelling-vpds

Student Profile - PHOTP and Dr of Public Health

By Ben Polkinghorne

I completed my Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the ANU in 1999 and joined the Health Insurance Commission (HIC) in 2000, working as a business analyst managing mainframe, intranet and internet systems amendments for the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register. In 2002 I joined the new graduate intake at the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA). While in Population Health Division in February 2003, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic erupted and I was lucky enough to have a minor role in researching past epidemics and monitoring international correspondence during the public health response. It was this experience that shifted my interest to public health.

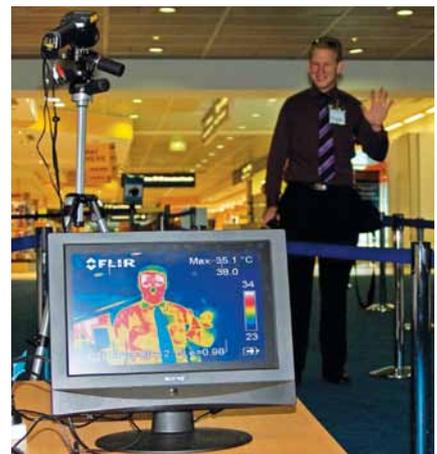
In 2004 I enrolled in the Health and Ageing Postgraduate Studies (HAPS) program to study a Masters of Public Health, which I completed by correspondence in 2007 after the HAPS program ended. In early 2007, my wife changed jobs and we pulled up stumps for Sydney. It was during a short term contract in the nutrition and physical activity team at NSW Health that I first learned of the Public Health Officer Training Program (PHOTP). I then moved to the Sydney office of DoHA as a program manager with the Division of General Practice

Program, but resolved to apply for the PHOTP as soon as I completed my Masters.

Ben says: "On Christmas Eve 2008, I received word that not only was I accepted into the PHOTP, but I would also be studying a Professional Doctorate of Public Health (DrPH) under a new partnership with UNSW. I was both excited and terrified as I had never even considered studying a doctorate."

"The PHOTP DrPH is nearly the reverse of a traditional PhD. The PHOTP aims to develop skilled professionals to work in NSW public health and to provide surge capacity for responding to public health emergencies. We complete a number of placements, including one in a rural public health unit and all projects must meet a current workplace need. My DrPH supervisor is Prof Raina MacIntyre and my co-supervisor is A/Prof Glenda Lawrence."

The 2009 pandemic hit while I was only two months into my first placement in the Bio-preparedness Unit – talk about being in the right place at the right time! I worked in the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (the Bunker) and then documented the public health response to the Sydney 2009 World Masters Games and evaluated the pandemic ICU surveillance systems. My next placement was with David Muscatello's ED surveillance team



Testing airport thermal scanners during the pandemic

(David is a SPHCM PhD student featured in the previous issue) where we conducted a time series analysis of the association between influenza and respiratory syncytial virus and febrile convulsions in Sydney children, which has been published in *BMC Infectious Diseases*. In my rural placement I evaluated the public health response to the Tamworth Country Music Festival and yarned with pig hunters about swine brucellosis risks. Lastly was a health promotion intervention, the Study of Hydration in Illawarra Miners of which testing miner's urine was a particular highlight!

Ben concludes: "I had joined the PHOTP with the intention of working on public health emergencies and major events, so I chose planning, surveillance and response for events of public health significance as the theme of my thesis and focused on influenza surveillance and mass gatherings. I submitted in March 2012 and am currently finalising my emendations. It has been a hell of a ride!"



Briefing for return of cruise ship *Pacific Dawn* during the pandemic, with fellow trainees Evan Freeman and Susan Thomas

Testing urine specific gravity to determine hydration status of coal miners

2012 Fred Hollows Australian Leadership Awards Fellows

Earlier this year, SPHCM collaborated with the Fred Hollows Foundation to conduct the *Leadership and Management Training Program for International Hospital Directors*. The program was funded through the AusAid Australian Leadership Awards. The program attracted 12 senior health managers from across Cambodia, most of whom had not met prior to their participation in this program.

SPHCM has an important history of successful collaborations with the Fred Hollows Foundation. This partnership has incorporated the design and facilitation of past training programs, including a project aimed at improving access to primary eye care in Laos and Cambodia through health promotion. SPHCM equally has a long and distinguished history in the education and training of health services managers, with a specialisation in the training of managers from developing countries around the world. This specialisation is supported by our AusAid funded Human Resources for Health (HRH) Hub. In 2011, the HRH Hub produced *A review of health leadership and management capacity in Cambodia*. This work provided an important background for the development of the program.

The *Leadership and Management* program exposed participants to a range of health management theories and approaches, through a combination of lectures, case based activities and site visits. Lecturers were drawn from SPHCM staff and conjoints, and staff from the Australian Institute of Health Innovation. Over the ten days of the course, participants explored and discussed core issues in healthcare including national and international factors affecting health services management, the changing roles of health



SPHCM - Fred Hollows 2012 Australian Leadership Awards Fellows

services managers, leadership, workforce planning and human resource management, financial management, clinical governance and risk management, quality improvement, and the contribution of health informatics.

Prior to their arrival in Australia, the Fellows were asked about their most pressing concerns. What became clear on their arrival was that despite differences in geographic location, health systems, resources and culture, a number of issues of common concern to both Cambodian and Australian healthcare managers were identified. Difficulties in attracting and retaining staff to rural areas and support for families of staff members working in isolated locations drew nods of recognition on both sides. Motivation of staff, and in particular lower paid staff, was another common concern. So too was continuing staff development, including the need to improve patient safety strategies such as infection control. The ability of managers to engage staff in effective teamwork provided another common challenge. There were also obvious differences. The Cambodian Fellows were eloquent in their discussion of the specific difficulties faced by themselves, their peers and their

The impact of the program on the fellows can be summed up in the following quote: 'I learnt a lot from the course. It's been a great experience. I will endeavour to use these new skills in my position as hospital Director in Cambodia. Thank you so much!'

colleagues in providing adequate and appropriate healthcare in a resource constrained country.

As participants came to know each other and the teaching staff, a greater level of appreciation grew for the depth of expertise across the group. The level of in-depth discussion and engagement throughout the program, both amongst the Fellows, and between the Faculty and Fellows proved fruitful for both groups. Site visits to St Vincent's and Blacktown Hospitals confirmed both the similarities and differences between our health systems, and the size of Sydney metropolitan area!

The experience has also directly enriched the Faculty's teaching and research, and all parties look forward to long and fruitful collaboration between the groups.



Training Workshops for Academics

In December 2011, deans and professors from medical and nursing schools from Bangladesh, China, India and Indonesia were trained in a three day workshop on smoking cessation by Professor Robyn Richmond from SPHCM, Professor Harry Lando (USA) and Dr Karen Bissell and Trish Fraser from the International Union against Tobacco and Lung Disease (IUATLD) which is a non government organisation.

With the largest populations in the world residing in China, India and Indonesia, focus on training medical and nursing students in these countries is vital to improve health outcomes. While tobacco use is below 5% among women in Bangladesh, China, India and Indonesia, among men in these countries, smoking rates are high at 40%, 49%, 25% and 53% respectively. The workshop was funded by IUATLD. The workshop objectives were:

- To find out what is currently being taught about tobacco control in their curriculum in their university;
- To introduce and discuss the latest updates in tobacco control;
- To present findings from research on teaching about tobacco in medical and nursing schools globally;
- For participants to discuss how to assess and adapt the

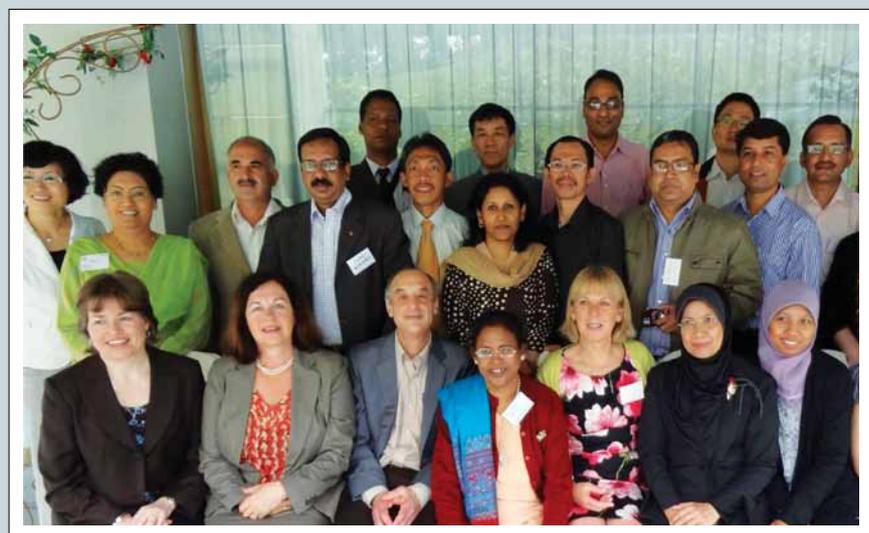
various tobacco control teaching programs, formats and resources that are available for medical and nursing school contexts, making these relevant;

- For participants to produce a draft plan to design, strengthen and implement tobacco control education in their institution's medical and nursing curricula;
- For participants to produce a draft strategy for their country to motivate other key decision makers and stakeholders to implement and expand tobacco control education in medical and nursing schools throughout their countries;
- For participants to carry out an evaluation on the implementation and adoption of a tobacco control program in their university.

Professor Robyn Richmond says: "Critical to the success of this project is ongoing support and mentorship, and evaluation of the effectiveness of implementation in medical and nursing schools within each of these four Asian countries. Guidelines from their experience implementing or strengthening a tobacco curriculum in their medical and nursing schools will be developed. They will build upon my previous work in China where a model of implementation was published in *Respirology*."

Top - The training team that organised and ran the three day workshop in Singapore: Professors Robyn Richmond and Harry Lando, second and third from the left, with consultants from the IUATLD, Trish Fraser (left) and Dr Karen Bissell (right)

Bottom - Workshop participants at the training workshop



US CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service Director visits the SPHCM

Breakfast Seminar and DrPH Supervisor Guidelines Launch

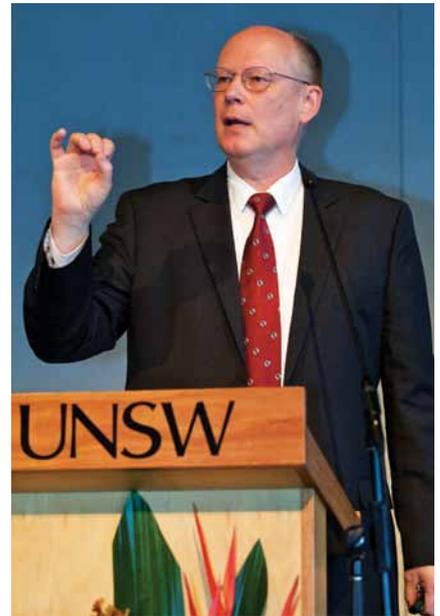
Dr Hamilton was the guest speaker at this special breakfast seminar, to which all DrPH supervisors and potential supervisors, as well as PHOTP workplace supervisors, were invited. The theme of the seminar was the workplace and academic supervision of these trainees.

Dr Hamilton provided some interesting insights into the processes of selecting and supporting supervisors in the EIS program. Dr Lynne Madden, Head of the PHOTP, gave an outline of the PHOTP. Dr Siranda Torvaldsen reflected on the lasting influence of her early experiences of good supervision and how we can best match trainees and supervisors and then support them. Siranda also spoke about the collaborative effort in developing the Guidelines for DrPH Supervisors and acknowledged the pivotal role of A/Prof Jan Ritchie in this process. The presentations were followed by a question and answer session with Doug Hamilton, Lynne Madden, Siranda Torvaldsen and Holly Seale.

Field Epidemiology in a Changing World

This seminar attracted people from all around Australia and was attended by over 140 guests. Dr Doug Hamilton began by presenting the origins, development and contribution of the US CDC EIS Program to public health response capacity in the US and globally. This was followed by Professor Tony Adams talking about Public Health and Emergency Response Capacity in Australia – past, present and future of workforce training. Professor Adam's presentation highlighted the shortfalls in Australia's capacity to respond to public health emergencies. A separate session was held in the afternoon to discuss possible strategies to overcome these shortfalls, particularly in the area of skilled applied public health workforce training.

In the second part of the seminar, eminent Australian public health leaders described memorable field experiences from early in their careers to illustrate the unique role of field-based training in shaping careers. Speakers included Dr Jeremy McAnulty, Director,



DR DOUG HAMILTON SPEAKING AT THE BREAKFAST SEMINAR

The Director of the renowned Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) at the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States, Dr Doug Hamilton, was a guest speaker at two events held by the SPHCM on the 18th May 2012.

Both these events were a huge success, and whilst he was here Dr Hamilton contributed to many other fruitful discussions, both within the SPHCM and with stakeholders in Australian Field Epidemiology Training Programs.





Professor Tony Adams



Professor George Rubin



A/Professor Glenda Lawrence

Centre for Health Protection at the NSW Ministry of Health; Dr Rosemary Lester, Chief Health Officer of Victoria; Professor George Rubin, the founder of the NSW PHOTP; Dr Tony Stewart of the Burnet Institute and the Global Outbreak Alert Response Network (GOARN); Dr Robert Hall from the Victorian Program and Monash; and from UNSW Professor Raina MacIntyre and A/Professor Glenda Lawrence.

The speakers each reflected on their own experiences in programs including the US EIS, the Victorian Public Health Officer Training Program and the ANU Master of Applied Epidemiology. The vignettes and case studies had the audience riveted, and highlighted the crucial role of field epidemiology training programs in producing public health leaders. The event attracted significant media interest nationally.

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN INFECTIOUS DISEASES EPIDEMIOLOGY AND CONTROL

For a short period in the 1960s and 1970s, there was a view that infectious diseases were conquered. Vaccines and antibiotics were available and the fight against smallpox was being won. The HIV/AIDS epidemic provided the first major blow to this viewpoint and since then it has become apparent that there are many challenges remaining in reducing the impact of infectious diseases. Some of these are technical – can we develop effective vaccines against malaria, tuberculosis and HIV? How do we deal with increasing antibiotic resistance? Some are practical – how do we improve surveillance and control in resource-poor settings? Others are social and political – can we sustain the political will to eradicate polio for instance?



The Master of Public Health (MPH) in Infectious Diseases Epidemiology and Control provides students with strong training in the principles of communicable diseases epidemiology and modelling. This course is aimed at people who seek a career in communicable disease control in the health sector or in international health, or who wish to progress to postgraduate research in infectious diseases epidemiology.

The core course for this stream is Current Challenges in Infectious Diseases (PHSM9782). This course aims to introduce students to the challenges of controlling or managing infectious diseases through an appreciation of the theory of transmission modes; the important role of surveillance in disease prevention and control; the steps in outbreak investigation, modelling of infectious diseases, risk perceptions and human behaviours, implementation and evaluation of immunisation programs and current disease control and management strategies. In 2012, staff from the NSW Ministry of Health contributed to the teaching of the course and delivered lectures on the issues associated with outbreak control and disease surveillance.

Through electives, students can focus on methods of analysis; specific classes of disease such as HIV or tropical diseases; or areas in which infectious diseases pose particular challenges including humanitarian emergencies and environmental health. Infectious diseases epidemiology and control is a key focus of research and practice within public health and a key area of research and expertise within the School of Public Health and Community Medicine.

This stream provides students with an opportunity to select courses in a combination, which enables specialisation in infectious diseases epidemiology and control. As part of the program, students can undertake a small-scale research project, which may be in the form of a research study, a case study, a program evaluation or a report on field experience.

Of the streams which are offered in the school, Infectious Diseases Epidemiology and Control has been the most popular to date. For further information go to www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/SPHCMWeb.nsf/page/PH

Recent research success at SPHCM

Post-implementation economic evaluation of childhood vaccination programs

This is an ARC Linkage Project grant for \$120,000 led by Dr Anthony Newall and Dr James Wood from SPHCM. This project will develop a novel framework for assessing the value for money achieved by childhood vaccination programs. This will provide decision makers with methodologically sound economic assessments that incorporate real world program outcomes.



Dr Anthony Newall at SPHCM Research Conference

Can death from chronic life-limiting illnesses be predicted in Australian General Practice?

Dr Joel Rhee from SPHCM, together with Professor Geoff Mitchell from the University of Queensland and Associate Professor Josephine Clayton from University of Sydney and Hammondcare, were recently awarded a research grant from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Primary Care Collaborative Cancer Clinical Trials Group (PC4). Their study will help find the best method of identifying

patients for case-finding approach to end-of-life care planning in general practice and enhance our understanding of the barriers and facilitators to its successful implementation.

Publication success for ILP student Amanda Cohn

One of Associate Professor Juliet Richters' ILP students, Amanda Cohn, has had a paper accepted for publication from her work: *'My vagina makes funny noises'*:

Analysing online forums to assess the real sexual health concerns of young people' in the International Journal of Sexual Health. Amanda did all the research and analysis herself, drafted the paper and prepared it for submission, submitted it herself and revised it in response to reviewers' (minimal) comments. Also Amanda gave a paper about her work to the NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on HIV and STIs Health Promotion Subcommittee, so the findings are already feeding into changes in practice.

Let's hear from you

We would like to keep in touch with former staff and students of the School. Please send your contributions to the editor Kevin Forde: k.forde@unsw.edu.au or Assistant Editor Ravit Danieli-Vlandis r.danieli-vlandis@unsw.edu.au

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