SPHCM UNSW has signed a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Medvarsity Online Limited, an e-learning venture of the Apollo Hospitals Group (India’s leading private health care provider) to offer training in the area of public health by online mode.

Medvarsity is the leading online training company for health professionals in India and UNSW is a leading research intensive university in Australia and is a member of the prestigious Group of Eight universities. SPHCM will offer its expertise by providing course content through their world class teachers.

The online courses developed by our SPHCM team will offer high quality material for Indian health professionals relevant to the sub-continent. Students will also have a chance to get insights into the online teaching modules used at SPHCM. A highlight of this program includes the short training intensives by a team of UNSW and Apollo academics, as well as a practicum in the Apollo Hospitals.

A formal MoU was signed between the two institutes on March 12, 2013. Mr Sanjiv Zutshi, CEO Medvarsity and Prof Peter Smith, Dean, UNSW Medicine signed the document. Mr Michael Carter, Trade Commissioner and Consul Commercial, Australian Trade Commission, South India, Prof Raina MacIntyre, Head of School of Public Health and Community Medicine and Ms Sangita Reddy, Executive Director, Operations, Apollo Hospitals group were all present to grace the occasion. The event attracted media attention in India.

Photo on right: Mr Sanjiv Zutshi, Prof Peter Smith, Prof Raina MacIntyre
Two major research grants

Staff at SPHCM have recently been awarded two substantial research grants through the 2012 Funding Round of the AusAID Development Research Awards Scheme (ADRAS).

Professor Richard Taylor is the principal investigator in a $1.1 million ADRAS Research Grant titled “Trends in non-communicable disease risk factors and premature mortality in Pacific Island countries and predictive modelling of effects of inaction and control interventions.”

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a major cause of illness and premature adult mortality in many Pacific Island Countries (PICs). This research relates to trends over time in NCD risk factors in PICs from available data, and trends in NCD premature mortality and effects on life expectancy. Implications for future NCD morbidity/mortality from various NCD control interventions or lack of action will be estimated using predictive statistical modelling of time trends in NCD risk factors and mortality. This will enable countries and donors to better allocate funds for NCD control and provide estimates of the consequences of intervention or inaction.

The research team includes: Stephen Morrell, Augustine Asante, and Christine Linhart from SPHCM, UNSW; Paul Zimmet, Dianna Magliano, and Jonathan Shaw from Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, Alfred Hospital, Melbourne; Sione Hufanga from Ministry of Health Tonga; Isimeli Tukana from Ministry of Health Fiji; and Karen Carter from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Noumea.

Assoc Professor Virginia Wiseman is the lead chief investigator in a $1.2 million ADRAS research grant titled “An assessment of equity in health care financing in Timor Leste and Fiji”.

Many developing countries are exploring how to move towards universal coverage through an equitable health financing system. Designing and evaluating strategies to achieve this requires evidence on the current distribution of the burden of health care financing and benefits from the delivery of health care. This study will provide such evidence by working with local researchers and institutions in Timor Leste and Fiji. These findings will help the countries move towards universal coverage and to address AusAID’s strategic goal of improving access to health care through the recognition that evidence-informed, pro-poor health policy is crucial for meeting such objectives.

Dr Andrew Hayen (UNSW) and Assoc Professor Stephen Jan (George Institute for International Health) are also chief investigators and Augustine Asante from UNSW is an assistant investigator.

International collaborators are: Dr Wayne Irava, Fiji National University, Professor Joao Martins (Faculty of Health Sciences, National University of Timor Leste), Prof Anne Mills & Dr Lorna Guinness (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), Dr John Ataguba (University of Capetown), Prof Viroj Tangcharoensathien and Dr Supon Limwattananon (Ministry of Public Health, Thailand & Khon Kaen University).
The trip was at the invitation of Dr Luis Bernal who completed the MPH program with the School in 2012. Dr Bernal works in the capacity of academic director for Javesalud, a not-for-profit primary health care provider organisation. Established in 1992 Javesalud is closely affiliated with one of the largest Universities in Colombia – Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

These organisations hold an annual forum that aims to both raise the profile of primary health care in Colombia and to discuss innovative models of organisation and delivery of health services. Colombia, like many other countries, is grappling with the implications of epidemiological transition from communicable to non communicable diseases.

Professor Zwar says: “Non-communicable chronic illness such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory conditions are now the major contributors to burden of disease in the country. Developing a health system built on a strong primary health care foundation can address these challenges in a way that is equitable, effective and affordable.”

Javesalud provides primary health care services to over 160,000 people in a network of clinics in Bogota and a clinic on the island of San Andrés. The financial model is a capitation system, while the clinical model has doctors who have completed specialty family medicine training providing advice and supervision to more junior doctors who have completed their medical studies, but have not yet trained in a specialty. Javesalud implemented this model in 2007 and since then have been able to demonstrate a decrease in the use of emergency and hospital services and good levels of control of chronic illness.

Professor Zwar visited four Javesalud clinics in Bogota and met doctors, nurses and allied health professionals as well as the leadership of the organisation. He says: “It was very impressive to see the extent and quality of services they were providing with limited resources.” The annual forum discussed this and other innovative models from across Latin America, including indigenous health service provision in the mountainous area of Santa Martha area in the north of Colombia.

Professor Zwar says: “As well as the forum at Universidad Javeriana, I was fortunate to visit and present at Universidad el Bosque. This university, where the medical program has a strong focus on the biopsychosocial model of health and illness, was another supporter of the primary health care forum. At Universidad el Bosque I met another adventurous graduate of the School’s MPH program Marlene Brettenhofer. Austrian by background, Marlene completed her MPH with SPHCM in 2012 while she and her husband were based in Australia. They continued their travels to South America and Marlene was appointed as voluntary lecturer at Universidad el Bosque with a focus on teaching health promotion. Impressively, after only two months of language classes, Marlene gave her presentation in Spanish!”

Both Universidad Javeriana and Universidad el Bosque are keen to develop on-going relationships with UNSW Medicine and to look at opportunities for postgraduate and research students exchanges, staff exchanges and research collaboration.
Volunteering on the day was a local Master of Public Health (MPH) alumnus, Anastasia Susanto. Anita asked her to describe her experience at the School and how the MPH shaped her career. This is Anastasia’s recollections of her time at SPHCM.

My undergraduate degree was in biology, majoring in biotechnology, in Indonesia. After that, I worked in the food company as their research and development executive. The company I worked for was concerned with developing healthy foods for those with chronic diseases like diabetes or cardiac problems, or for those who wanted to watch their food intake. I developed products such as low fat milk, food with less sugar and low cholesterol products. This then led me to pay more attention to the growing health problems in my country and to enrolling in a postgraduate program in Public Health.

I chose to study at UNSW as it offered a great curriculum with lots of topics that I could explore (from Communication in Public Health, Environmental Health to Program Design and Health Promotion). The one year full time study was appealing to me, as was the Sydney location! Sydney is a top travel destination in Australia, it has great weather and the UNSW campus is in a terrific location. It’s near the beach and there are lots of restaurants around it, including Indonesian.

When I graduated from the MPH I moved back to Indonesia and for the last year and a half I have been working at World Vision. In my first year, I was the maternal and child health coordinator in West Kalimantan area. In this role I focused on the implementation of health programs, engaging with stakeholders and the community. Our health programs are aimed at initiating change in the community, promoting active participation and also encouraging the community to be responsible for their own health. I worked in collaboration with education, environment and economic development projects, addressing the social determinants of health.

I have held the role of program officer for the past 6 months and I am now responsible for program development (design), which can consist of various projects, such as health, economic development, education projects, and program monitoring and reporting. This role also includes proposal development for funding opportunities and also ensuring good sponsor / donor relations. I really love this job because it allows me to contribute and hopefully will benefit the community and improve their wellbeing. I also love interacting with children and the community, getting to see their daily lives and explore other cultures.

World Vision in Indonesia is mainly addressing infant and child health, especially malnutrition issues in children under five, the growing number of HIV & AIDS cases, poor sanitation practices and hygiene behaviour contributing to the high burden of diarrhoeal disease. We are currently promoting exclusive breastfeeding and proper infant and young child feeding practices (including supplementary feeding), better antenatal care for pregnant women, better health service to support service delivery for the community, reproductive health for youth, and also water and sanitation interventions. These are some of the interventions that we are currently undertaking.

When I think back to my experience at UNSW, the courses I took definitely provided the greatest contribution to my work and help me in my current role, especially the program design and evaluation and health promotion courses. I also volunteered with Football United during my study there, which gave me great exposure to the community development approach.

I really enjoyed my time in Australia. I got to experience four seasons (from summer to winter). The foods were the best! Of course, I still keep in contact with some of my fellow students from UNSW. We sometimes chat through emails and share our current work experiences. I now have friends from all over the world, which is great.
Health management seminar

In January this year, a two day seminar titled ‘International Management Development Program (IMDP) was conducted in Chennai. Faculty members from SPHCM including Professor Raina MacIntyre, Professor Richard Taylor, Dr Joanne Travaglia, Dr Holly Seale and Dr Padmanesan Narasimhan contributed to the lectures, case studies and discussions. The seminar also featured several leading health management experts from India including Prof KR John, Prof Thangaraju, Prof Jayashree Suresh and Dr Prithvi Mohandass. The seminar attracted over 300 participants from all over the country and provided participants with a review of essential knowledge, skills and attributes required for managerial roles in health care delivery.

The course builds on the strong foundations of the health management program of the SPHCM which proudly claims to have its alumni in various leadership positions in health departments and services around the globe. Topics including principles and practice of health services management, organisational and workforce capacity building, disaster management and challenges for health management in India were discussed.

Collaborating centre for training and research

Prof Peter Smith inaugurated the collaborating centre for training and research at the Department of Community Medicine on March 11, 2013. The centre will serve as a nodal point for student exchange activities, short term training courses and research programs between the two institutions. Prof Thangaraju (Pro VC Medical-SRM), Prof Raina MacIntyre and Prof KR John (SRM) were present during the function. SRM will host SPHCM masters students for internships at their rural and urban health centres. For further details on this collaboration please contact Dr Holly Seale, International Internships convenor.
UNSW Medicine and South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) General Practice Unit at Fairfield Hospital is conducting a pilot study on Interprofessional Learning (IPL). The study commenced in mid-January 2013 and its evaluation will be completed by the end of May. It is supported by the Sydney Interdisciplinary Clinical Training Network (ICTN) and NSW Health Education and Training Institute (HETI).

This IPL study has provided opportunities for medical and nursing students to learn together in some of the clinical units based in Fairfield Hospital. The educational rationale is that when students from different healthcare professions learn with each other it enhances their future working together. This study is also enabling staff to examine the logistics and issues involved with and resources required for creating and sustaining these learning opportunities.

The study has included eight medical students from UNSW, and four nursing students from The University of Western Sydney, Charles Sturt University and the Australian Catholic University. Medical students were doing the Society and Health term in Phase 2, and nursing students were in the final year of their nursing program. Each interprofessional student team consisted of one or two medical students and one nursing student, or one medical student and one healthcare practitioner from the same clinical placement.

Interprofessional student activities were conducted between March 4 and March 27. These activities were designed to integrate with and enrich existing activities and resources in these students’ own educational programs. The overall aim was to complement the existing tasks completed by students in their clinical placements with interprofessional activities without adding to the workload of students or their clinical teachers.

Medical and nursing students attended their regular learning activities as planned by their respective clinical teachers. They then came together for approximately two hours per week to participate in IPL activities either in their interprofessional teams or in a larger group of all the teams supported by an IPL facilitator. Each IPL student team was required to prepare and present a patient management plan for a case study they had selected. Individual students were also requested to keep a reflective journal to capture interprofessional interactions they observed during their clinical placement for discussion during large group sessions. To support these activities, students and their clinical teachers were provided with an IPL information booklet containing relevant readings. These activities and resources aimed to introduce students to interprofessional learning while reinforcing the importance of collaborative practice, patient-centred care, multidisciplinary teams and teamwork in general.

Professor Siaw-Teng Liaw, Professor of General Practice, and Director UNSW/SWSLHD General Practice Unit says: “The evaluation of this study by participating students, their clinical teachers and other involved and interested healthcare staff will help to improve the interprofessional learning and teaching activities used in this pilot. We hope to create new opportunities for productive IPL student experiences in future. This evaluation will also help to provide recommendations on the potential expansion of this pilot to other clinical placements in Phase 2 of Society and Health.”

Our thanks go to the clinical placements supervisors – Dr Tai-Tak Wan, Dr Oddom Demontiero, Dr Fiona Stafford-Bell, Dr Nicholas Cheng, Dr Peter McCaul and Ms Danielle Brown – for embracing this IPL opportunity. Thanks also go to the IPL Team members from SWSLHD and UNSW – Kung Lim, Barbara Chapman, Christine O’Neal, Katrina Stott, Sanjyot Vaghulkar, Winston Lo, Glenda Austin and Eilean Watson – for taking this study this far.”
The Football United team has been awarded a UNSW International grant to work in partnership with the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) to develop a pilot Football United program in that country. Myanmar is currently undergoing significant reform, establishing peace over conflict and Myanmar’s reintegration into the global economy promises a better future for its people. Sport and physical activity have been rapidly gaining recognition over the past decade as simple, low-cost, and effective means of achieving development goals. The partnership will enable the MRCS and UNSW’s Football United to work together with vulnerable youth and communities in the arena of sport for development.

As Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) is the leading and oldest humanitarian organisation in Myanmar, the organisation had incomparable experience in providing services to improving the health and well-being of vulnerable people in Myanmar. In addition this grant will enable the SPHCM to build further links and possibilities with the well-established University, Institute and College Red Cross Societies, and School Red Cross Committees in Myanmar.

The grant is particularly important as it will enable SPHCM graduate and Football United Project Officer Tun Aung Shwe to return to his home country and lead the program development.

Anne Bunde-Birouste says: “I am so happy to get a chance to introduce the Football United approach and sport for development ideology in Myanmar, particularly in these days as the country is now on a reform process and leaders of the country invited international community to work together to promote the nation’s education and health of the people. The project will bring SPHCM and UNSW’s image and identity into Myanmar and this is just the beginning.” “This new initiative is a fabulous example of how the SPHCM enables its graduates to expand their horizons and build upon their experiences here at the school, as well as continue engagement with us”. We are really excited about this and other future opportunities for our students, such as internships both here in Australia and internationally.

Football United, one of the SPHCM’s flagship action research programs, has come a long way since 2006 when it was founded during Anne Bunde-Birouste’s PhD research (Anne is SPHCM’s Convener of Health Promotion). With a mission to build opportunities for culturally and linguistically disadvantaged youth and their communities for belonging, racial harmony, community cohesion and youth development using magic power of Football (aka soccer). Under an umbrella of sport for development ideology, the program uses a community development, determinants-based Health promotion and positive social change approach. The choice of football as the vehicle in this approach was purposeful, as it is relatively inexpensive, is played in many countries as a national sport, and by both genders.

The Football United program has seen significant growth and depth in Australia over the past seven years, currently operating in New South Wales, South Australia and Australian Capital Territory. It has received several awards in the journey, including:
Football United

- UNSW University Award for Community Engagement and Research in 2009
- The Australian Human Rights Commission's National Human Rights award in 2010
- Inaugural New South Wales Building Inclusive Communities Award in 2011
- Australian Parliamentary Award for Contribution to Community through Sports in 2012.

In October 2012, UNSW Chancellor, David Gonski AC, launched a world’s first-of-its-kind research report outlining the benefits of the Football United program. The report presents findings from an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant and other Football United monitoring and evaluation results, to investigate the implementation of Football United and its impacts.

To learn more about the program go to: www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/research/social-research/football-united

Photo on previous page - Football United Coordinator, Assmaah Helal, Director Anne Bunde-Birouste, and Project Officer Tun Aung Shwe receiving the inaugural Building Health Communities award from New South Wales State Premier, the Honorable Barry O’Farrell, 2011

Human Resources for Health Knowledge Hub

By Graham Roberts Acting Director

The contract between UNSW and AusAID for the Human Resources for Health Knowledge Hub concludes at the end of June 2013. The period since 2008 has been called Phase 1 – there were 4 Knowledge Hubs (HRH, Health Information Systems, Finance and Policy, Maternal and Child Health).

Over recent years the HRH Hub at SPHCM has developed strong links with the World Health Organization in the Western Pacific Region in both the regional office in Manila and the sub-regional office in Suva Fiji.

In our 2012-13 Work Plan we added an additional domain of ‘strategic intelligence’, the working papers from which are soon to be published on our website and academic papers derived from them will be published in the next edition of the Pacific Health Dialogue. These papers deal with the policy implications of the significant changes occurring in health workforce education across the Pacific region, mostly consequent of the large number of international scholarships being offered and accepted without much planning on the issues that will arise – such as integrating new graduates into health systems, the recurrent costs of large scale up of staff, scope of practice relative to other CADRE, registration and licensing. The most critical issue currently being addressed by a Hub formed working group in conjunction with a WHO consultant is the issue of internship and preparation for practice.

AusAID is currently preparing tender documents for Phase 2 of the Hub’s initiative. There will be a new model proposed and the tenders will be targeted to Australian academic institutions.

If you would like to keep track of the Hub publications, they are available on our web site www.hrhhub.unsw.edu.au and they demonstrate wide areas of involvement on the four themes we were contracted to create knowledge on – leadership and management, maternal, child and adolescent health, health worker migration and public health emergencies.

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

Published by the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales.

Opinions expressed in the articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of New South Wales. Information was correct at the time of publication but is liable to change. Please visit the School website for the latest information: www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au

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CRICOS Provider No: 00098G

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