The International Foundation for Dermatology

The Community Program for common Skin Diseases in Mali

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In most resource poor countries skin disease remains a common problem but it often receives scant support amongst national health agendas and it is therefore heartening to see examples of individual initiatives that have made a difference in this context.

One of these is a nationwide program to improve the lot of patients with skin disease in Mali. It was developed and planned by Antoine Mahe from France and Ousmane Faye, a Malian dermatologist, who has been the project co-ordinator and now leader of the programme. As background information Mali is one of the poorest countries with a population of 14 million living in a region covering 1'240'190 km². There is only one referral centre for Skin diseases (Institut Marchoux) and 12 dermatologists most of whom work in the capital, Bamako. This original medical training centre in Bamako was an institute whose principle focus was the elimination of leprosy but with declining case numbers of this disease a group of Malian dermatologists decided to develop a national programme to address the problem of poor care for the many patients attending clinics through the country with skin disease. They chose to address the problem through a nationwide education and training system aimed at front line health care workers, who are mainly general medical practitioners and nurses.

The work started in 2001 with a comprehensive epidemiological study to identify the common problems. This was followed by the development and piloting of a simple algorithm, the first of its kind to help health care workers to identify and treat the commonest skin diseases, focusing on infections such as pyoderma, scabies, superficial mycoses and eczema; because the recognition of new cases now depends on front line health workers the algorithm also included the diagnosis of leprosy. This project attracted the strong support of the Ministry of Health and was financed by the International Foundation for Dermatology (IFD), which also provided methodological help, as well as the Fondation Pierre Fabre and the French, Swiss, and Canadian national dermatology associations.

In order to train health care workers in the use of the algorithm a national programme of one-day training sessions was provided as a result of which, after evaluation of the education provided, the proportion of patients who benefited from a clear diagnosis associated with appropriate treatment had increased from 42% (before training) to 81% (after training) (Bulletin of the World Health Organization 2005; 83: 935–943) with a 25% reduction in prescription costs. In addition, the program’s impact on the diagnosis of leprosy was very promising in terms of improvement of disease detection (Lepr Rev 2007; 78:11–6). Five dermatologists are currently involved in the project. Training sessions generally involve about 25 to 35 participants and , two to three weeks are needed to perform 9 to 10 sessions for about 400-500 health care workers. Four dermatologists assist the Coordinator by helping to facilitate the training sessions. The head of Department of Dermatology at the University is the internal project supervisor.

To date the programme has trained 2187 health care providers from 5 of 9 health regions in Mali. This represents nearly 375 doctors, 1’330 nurses and 252 midwives and 230 others belonging to more than 700 primary health care centres As a result in every primary health centre in Mali, there is now at least one health worker trained in the management of...
common skin diseases. A secondary effect of the work has been to increase awareness of skin disease and patients whose diagnosis is uncertain to the newly trained health care workers are regularly referred to the Dermatology Department in Bamako for management. In addition in 2008 the team established a dermatology residency program to remedy, in the longer term, the shortage of skin disease specialists. This is a four-year study program that will grant each graduating doctor the title of dermatologist. There are currently 18 residents in training.

In addition, in order to ensure that all new graduates, trained in the management of common skin diseases by the end of their study, the algorithmic approach for management of common skin disorders was incorporated into the national undergraduate curricula for both doctors and nurses as part of the learning objectives.

The dermatology initiative will continue and now Dr Faye and his colleagues are turning their attention to the best means of training health care workers in the recognition diseases that present with signs in the skin and which have potentially serious consequences such as toxic epidermal necrolysis and bullous auto-immune diseases, mycetoma, generalised inflammatory skin disorders and HIV related skin disease.

Planning for the scientific program has gotten underway under the capable leadership of Professors Jean Bolognia (USA), Wolfram Sterry (Germany), and Georg Stingl (Austria). The ILDS has invited all international societies to recommend speakers, moderators, and topics for the Vancouver Congress with a special emphasis on rising stars in dermatology. These nominations should be forwarded to the ILDS as soon as possible (admin@ilds.org) for consideration by the Scientific Committee. Many of you have already shared your suggestions with us, and we’ve forwarded these directly to Jean Bologna.

We had the pleasure of meeting many of the delegates attending the EADV in Lisbon at our WCD exhibit booth. Prof. Picoto and his team did a wonderful job and we are grateful to the EADV for a great social and scientific program. The next stop for our WCD roadshow will be the AAD meeting in March 2012. Please come and share your ideas with us at our exhibit in San Diego.

Jerry Shapiro, President
Harvey Lui, Secretary General
23rd World Congress of Dermatology
www.derm2015.org
The Scientific Committee would like to encourage all abstracts should be submitted by 1st April, 2011, and should be well organized as title, authors, affiliations, keywords, and text (including purpose, methods, results and conclusion, not exceed 250 words). No references, tables, charts or drawings are allowed. Abstracts can be submitted for:

- Oral presentation only
- Poster presentation only
- Oral or poster presentation

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**General information about Vietnam**

Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia, with a total area of approximately 331,210 km². It is bordered by China to the north, Laos to the northwest, Cambodia to the southwest, and the South China Sea to the east. The land is mostly hilly and densely forested, with field covering no more than 20%. Geographically, it is composed of 3 regions: North, Centre and South. While Hà Nội is the capital city and it is also the administrative center, Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Sài Gòn) in the South is an economic center. The population is approximately 85.8 million in 2010, of which the Viet or Kinh ethnic groups occupy over 85% of the whole population.

Historically, Vietnam has been an agricultural society with predominantly rice cultivation. However, thanks to the economic reform since 1986, private ownership has been encouraged by the government in industries and commercial sectors in addition to agricultural field. And several new industrial zones have been opened recently. The GDP in 1990s was achieved around 8% in annual average and it had been flourishing continuously at an annual rate of growth around 7% between 2000 and 2005, and 6.8% in 2010, which suggests that Vietnam is a nation with one of the world’s fastest growing economies.

**Medical training**

There are 11 medical faculties or universities in all over Vietnam and about 4'000 new doctors are coming out per year. To be a dermatologist, doctors have to study at least one year for training in dermatology after 6 years under graduate medical education.

**The Vietnamese Society of Dermatology**

The Vietnamese Society of Dermatology was founded on the 6th September 1961 under the umbrella of Vietnam General Medical Association. Since 2009, the society has become formally a member of the ILDS with more than 600 members from 63 provinces throughout Vietnam.

**Important Activities in Dermatology**

There are several annual dermatological related activities as follows.

- Organizing the dermatological meetings every three months
- Annual scientific conference in dermatology
- Skin forum every two months
- Training course in dermatology for practitioners
- The Vietnamese Journal of Dermatology is being published every 3 months and the active editor-in-chief is Professor Tran Hau Khang

**The National Hospital of Dermatology and Venerology**

From 1982 to 2009, The National Institute of Dermatology and Venerology has contributed much for the development of Dermatology in Vietnam and it was based on the Dermatological Department of Bach Mai Hospital. From 2009, the National Institute of Dermatology and Venerology renamed as the National Hospital of Dermatology and Venerology (NHDV)

**Major Missions of the NHDV**

The major missions of the NHDV are as follows.

- The NHDV is a dermatological referral center with 100 beds and approximately 1000 dermatology out-patients visiting per day from Hanoi or even more remote areas of Vietnam. Out of a total of 210 medical staff 65 are dermatologists. Half of the dermatologists were trained abroad in countries such as Thailand, Japan, France and the USA.
- Research activities involving dermatology and venerology
- Training staff specialized in dermatology and venerology
- Health education on dermatology and venerology
- Technical guidance concerning the elimination of leprosy and sexually transmitted infections as well as the care of skin diseases in Vietnam.

Although it was very short stay in Hanoi, I can sense that Vietnam is changing rapidly in a certain direction. It seems be true that many Asian nations enthusiastically follow a similar track such as South Korea has pursued for the past 50 years: from a traditional agricultural society through a rapid industrialization and finally to a high tech society. Whatever the end result it may be, it will be a very exciting and also frustrating challenge not only to Vietnamese dermatologists but also to all the Vietnamese.

Hee Chul Eun, Professor
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Board Member of the International league of Dermatological Societies

**Dr. Rosemarie Moser**
Professor Angelika Stary

Rosemarie Moser (2010) and Angelika Stary (2011) having been presented with their ILDS Certificates of Appreciation in Linz, Austria, November, 2011. The Certificates were presented by Klaus Wolff on behalf of the ILDS.

1. to r. Josef Auböck, President of the Austrian Society of Dermatology, Angelika Stary, Rosemarie Moser and Klaus Wolff.