

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

(a) Trainings/Workshops/Seminars organized by the centre

(i) Reappraisal of Situational analysis of current scenario of Drug Abuse and HIV/AIDS in the North-eastern region of India

This 3-days Workshop was organized at Regional Medical Research Centre, NE Region, Dibrugarh from 28th to 30th April, 2005. The primary objective of the Workshop was to collect, collate and analyze the current scenario of Drug Abuse and HIV/AIDS in north-eastern states. The Workshop was attended by a total of 35 participants, comprising of state health functionaries, especially from State AIDS Control Societies, Non Governmental Organizations actively working in the field of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS, Voluntary agencies, subject experts and reputed scientists from Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) as well as non-ICMR institutes and International funding agencies like Family Health International. Prof R.C. Mahajan, Advisor to ICMR and Chairperson, Scientific Advisory Committee of RMRC, Dibrugarh, chaired the inaugural session. Dr. K. Pathak, Vice Chancellor, Dibrugarh University graced the occasion as the Chief Guest while Dr. Dipali Mukherjee, Sr. DDG and Chief, Division of ECD, ICMR was the Guest of Honour. Delivering the inaugural address, Dr. Pathak felt that drug abuse is a social problem having direct relationship with the economy of the communities. The gradually depleting economic resources of people and lesser developmental opportunities in the north-east region are possibly contributing towards the increasing trend of drug abuse in the region, he observed. Prof Mahajan in his presidential address spoke about the HIV/AIDS scenario in the country and expressed concern that during the last 4-5 years not only the number of HIV infected cases had gone up several folds but also the people dying of full-blown AIDS had also gone up substantially, especially in Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram.



Participants of the Workshop



Resource persons of the Workshop

The Workshop was divided in to various scientific sessions wherein status reports from State AIDS Control societies, NGOs and voluntary agencies were presented. Each presentation was followed by a lively discussion and interaction among the participants and valuable inputs from learned experts and resource persons. After completion of all presentations, participants were divided in to four groups of their interest to deliberate on defined terms of reference on the aspects of Epidemiology, Primary Prevention, Intervention including Harm Reduction, Rehabilitation and training. The Groups deliberated amongst themselves and the Group work was presented before the open house by one participant from each group in order to develop consensus with inputs from resource persons

The valedictory session was presided by Dr. N. G. Desai. He summed up the entire proceedings of the Workshop in his speech and congratulated the participants for their active interest, enthusiastic participation and lively interaction. Recalling the similar Workshop held in 1998 at the same venue he opined that the interval of 7 years is too long to take stock of the fast changing scenario of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS in NE region and wondered on the possibility of having such exercise regularly at a shorter interval. Dr. Bela Shah, in her remarks, thanked all delegates for attending the Workshop and making it a success. She spoke about the dynamic leadership of Prof. N. K. Ganguli, the Director General, ICMR whose interest and support culminated in this Workshop and expressed her indebtedness to Dr. N. G. Desai who was the prime mover behind this Workshop and was involved from the very beginning in the formulation of the Workshop.

(ii) Policy Makers Meet on Strengthening Field Epidemiology Services in North - east india

Various constraints of Northeastern states of India along with prevalence of various disease burden peculiar to this region has prompted the government to implement integrated disease surveillance project (IDSP) in this region and in the first stage IDSP is being implemented in Mizoram Accordingly, a workshop for Policy Makers' of Northeastern states of India on strengthening field epidemiology services was organized by Regional Medical Research Centre, NE region, (ICMR), Dibrugarh , Assam in collaboration with National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai on 23rd August 2005 at Dibrugarh. This workshop was attended by 10 representatives from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur and RMRC, Dibrugarh. Participant states were represented by either Director, Health services or his representatives in this workshop. Dr. J. Mahanta, Director, RMRC, Dibrugarh and Dr. MD Gupte, Director NIE, Chennai acted as facilitator. Dr. Gupte discussed about International Health Regulations-challenges for implementation, Framework for implementation of IHR in India. He informed the house in his detailed presentation about the Networking of existing and prospective WHO Collaborating Institutes for Epidemiology Training in India and described at length about the different courses offered by NIE, Chennai for strengthening the field epidemiology. During interaction all the participants presented their activities at state level and highlighted their needs and problems. During their deliberations they raised the issue of frequent transfer of health personnel and stressed that the personnel receiving such trainings should preferably not be shifted to other places so as to reap the maximum

benefit of the training. All the participants, including facilitators discussed as a group about the future training programmes in their respective states. It was decided that next state level training programme will be organized at Naharlagan, Arunachal Pradesh in November, 2005.

(iii) 17th National Congress of Parasitology

The 17th National Congress of Parasitology, organized jointly by Indian Society for Parasitology and Regional Medical Research Centre, Dibrugarh (Indian Council of Medical Research), was held w.e.f. 24-10-2005 to 26-10-2005 at Dibrugarh. Over 200 delegates, researchers, noted parasitologists, eminent scientists and academicians of national and International repute attended the Congress and deliberated on recent advances in various fields of classical and modern parasitology and control of various parasitic diseases of medical, veterinary and agricultural importance. The Congress was inaugurated by His Excellency the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh Shri S. K. Singh In his inaugural address Shri Singh expressed concern on the high prevalence of various parasitic diseases in the north-eastern states of India. He voiced his concern about the occurrence of paragonimiasis in Arunachal Pradesh and gave a first hand account of the high incidence of malaria and deaths due to malaria in various hospitals and hoped that the experts gathered in this Congress would address this problem.

A total of 98 abstracts were received for oral presentations of which 39 were presented in 8 scientific sessions. For presentations in poster form, 36 abstracts were received and 23 presented. Posters of Ms. Prachi Bhargava, Ms. Ansu Malhotra and Ms. Anuradha Kalani were given awards in different categories. On the basis of quality of research and presentation, Mr. Vinod Choubey from CDRI, Lucknow was given the Young Scientist award. A total of 3 symposia were organized during the Congress. The symposium on Vector Borne Diseases, sponsored by The National Academy of Sciences, India (as a part of their Platinum Jubilee celebrations) and the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme, Delhi, was held on 24th October, 2005. A total of 7 talks were delivered by eminent scientists of International repute, during the Symposium. The symposium on Food Borne Parasitic Diseases was organized on 25/10/2005. In this Symposium 3 speakers delivered their talks. This symposium on Parasites of Agricultural Importance was held on 26/10/2005 in which one speaker deliberated.

Two special orations were organized during the Congress. Prof N. K. Ganguly, Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research delivered an oration on '*An overview of research in India on Leishmaniasis*'. Dr. R. C. Mahajan, SN Bose INSA Research Professor and Advisor, ECD, Indian Council of Medical Research delivered the Shambhu Nath Dey memorial oration of Indian National Science Academy on '*Perspectives of Amoebiasis: Diagnosis and Drug Resistance*'.

Indian Society for Parasitology honoured Prof N. K. Ganguly, Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research Dr. V. P. Sharma, Meghnad Saha Distinguished Fellow of The National Academy of Sciences, by giving them Life-Time Achievement Award.



His Excellency S. K. Singh, Governor of Arunachal Pradesh being felicitated in the traditional way



A scientific presentation in progress

Glimpses of 17th National Congress of Parasitology



Poster presentation in progress



Performance by Mizo dancers

(iv) Orientation Workshop for Stake-holders of “Integrated Biological and Behavioural Survey among Injecting Drug Users and Female Sex Workers in Manipur”

Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Dibrugarh organized a workshop/orientation meeting among various stakeholders of Integrated Biological and Behavioural Survey (IBBS) among high risk population for HIV/AIDS in Manipur and Nagaland from 17-19 October, 2005 at the centre. In this Workshop a total of 22 participants, including core research staff of two implementing agencies of IBBS from Manipur and Nagaland, participated. Virginia Loo from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMG Foundation) was also present in the Workshop. Dr J Mahanta, Director, RMRC, deliberated in details about the objectives of the workshop and briefed the participants about the proposed IBBS survey in the two states. Dr Binod Kumar Sharma, Director of Manipur AIDS Control Society, presented the epidemiological scenario of HIV/ AIDS in Manipur. Representative from AVAHAN intervention project made a presentation on various ongoing interventions by project ORCHID on Female Sex Workers (FSWs) and Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) in these two states. In depth discussions during the Workshop were held on methodological issues of the survey among the participants. Dr Tobi Saidel, Director, Monitoring & Evaluation, Family Health International (FHI) and Dr Lisa Johnston, FHI Consultant, appraised the participants on various methodologies applicable to capture hidden population like IDUs and FSWs. A Brainstorming session was also held about suitability of methods in Manipur and Nagaland to conduct behavioural and biological survey among IDUs and FSWs. The Workshop resulted in establishing better coordination and cooperation among the stakeholders and was a one step forward in finding a suitable method to study these two hidden population groups in Manipur and Nagaland. This workshop also helped in local capacity building on methodological issues related to such surveys. The Workshop ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. H. K. Das.

(v) Training Workshop for Stake-holders of “Integrated Biological and Behavioral Survey among Injecting Drug Users and Female Sex Workers (FSWs) in Nagaland” on IBBS Methodology

Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Dibrugarh organized a Training/workshop for core research staff of the proposed Integrated Biological and Behavioural Survey (IBBS) among high risk population for HIV/AIDS in Nagaland from 14-16th November, 2005 at the centre. A total of 20 participants were present in the Workshop including 6 core research staff of KRIPA foundation, the implanting partner of RMRC, Dibrugarh for Nagaland. Dr. J Mahanta, Director, RMRC, welcomed the participants, appraised them the objectives of the workshop and outlined the key issues to be addressed in the workshop. He also spoke about the background and objectives of the proposed IBBS project. Dr Tobi Saidel, Director, Monitoring & Evaluation, Family Health International (FHI) gave an overview of Avahan India AIDS initiative programme. Dr Joyce Angami, Director, KRIPA Foundation presented epidemiological aspects of the HIV/AIDS scenario of Nagaland. Dr Lisa Johnston, FHI consultant, delivered a lecture on background, theory concept & country examples of proposed

Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) method to be adopted in the study for capturing the high risk populations (e.g. FSWs and IDUs). Participants indulged in brainstorming and raised various questions. Dr Roberts, FHI consultant, delivered a lecture on biological components of the survey. Various sensitive issues including confidentiality related to the study were discussed and many of the issues were resolved by the end of the Workshop. In the workshop, some other issues like providing incentives to the respondents, structure of field staff, communication and coordination mechanism between different partners were also discussed. The workshop ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. G. K. Medhi.