

Supercourse Newsletter 23-01-2014

<http://ssc.bibalex.org/helpdesk/introduction.jsf> (BA Superhelp desk)

<https://www.facebook.com/TheBaSuperhelpDesk> (BA Superhelp Facebook)

www.pitt.edu/~super1// Supercourse

Dear Friends:

In the first newsletter of the year we like to provide an overview of the previous year.

2013, it was a SuperYear

The supercourse continues to grow and grow. It is taking on a life of its own. We calculated the numbers of unique visits to the Supercourse, the BA Supercourse of Science and Help Desk.

Also, we included estimates of the number of students who were taught the WHO Definition of health. The total came to be over 3.5 million. This is a remarkable total. We are teaching more people than any other program of global health combined. In the past 5 years we taught over 60 million students. Much of this was due to our H1N1 lecture which was seen by over 50 million people. We wanted to thank all of you in the supercourse, for doing such a Supereffort to education the world and global health and research. It is amazing. Also, the use of the BA Supercourse of science has become remarkable with over 300000 visits a year.

Eugene indicated that in 2013 we collected 283 lectures for the Supercourse. This large total is a surprise to us as we thought that we had covered almost all topics, but we have not.

“A great accomplishment shouldn’t be the end of the road, just the starting point for the next leap forward” (Mackay)

2014 promises to be another banner year. We are shifting interest as most people who want to teach global health know of the Supercourse and use our lectures. It is amazing how this has been disseminated around the world.

“It is through accomplishment that man makes his contribution and contribution is life’s greatest reward” (Portman)

We feel that the critical need now is to build global capacity in the area of research design and statistics. These two topics are a nemesis for virtually all budding scientists, and cause stataphobia, leading to articles being turned down, not getting tenure, and an early death in academia. We are very pleased that we created a library of Alexandria super helpdesk. We were disappointed in 2013 to see that not too many people asked questions. We think we have the answer for this, as although in 7 months only 14 questions were raised in these 7 months more than

7,000 visited the help desk, and over 50,000 visited at least one of our statistical/research help desk. I have found in my world teaching that many students across the world are inhibited from asking questions of professors, this may be a reason for so few questions, and we will need to build the culture. However, we will begin to highlight excellent statistics lectures as part of our lecture of the week. We also plan to include links to excellent youtube research design lectures as there are many beautiful lectures, including how to use SPSS, SAS and/or R. The year 2014 is designed to double world knowledge of research design and statistics.

Biodiversity, State Department and NIAID. Last week Faina and I went to Washington on the mega bus. The Mega bus is really cheap (\$52.00 round trip) but also horrible. If we drove the DC, the time would be about 4.5 hours, on the Mega Bus disaster, it took about 8. Coming back even was worse as we stood out in 0 degree temperature, and they came and told us that the bus had been cancelled. It was really ugly. Luckily we could get on a Greyhound bus. But we started our journey at 3:00 and got back home at about 1:30.

Despite the horrible transportation, the trip was wonderful. Most epidemiologists like us know nothing about biodiversity, but we learned cool stuff from people at NCI and the Smithsonian. NCI developed work in their institute with the hope of finding anti-cancer drugs. We are discussing the establishment of a biodiversity supercourse. One person from the Smithsonian showed the picture of a plant fossil, and a bug that looked identical to the plant. Also, it was so interesting to see how bugs, plants and people evolved together. We discussed collaboration with NIAID, as they do not have a large presence in Central Asia in comparison to what we have. There was similar interest from the State department. It appears that Central Asia is a very important area for scientific diplomacy.

2014, the future: In discussions with Dr. Serageldin this week, we plan to markedly increase our harvest of scientific lectures on Health, Education, Environment and Computer Engineering because of the broad interest in this area. Currently we have 170,000 lectures; we plan to markedly increase this. Also we plan to harvest the scientific lectures on youtube, and be able push these through apps on mobile technology as part of our effort of Mobile Global Science. Also, we have seen that many people are coming to the HelpDesks to learn about research design and statistics. We plan to also include outstanding youtube presentation on research methods on youtube.

Thank you all again for all your support.

Ron's statistical Pick: In this new component to the Newsletter, we will begin a short overview of research design topics that are needed to publish article. These are included in the Supercourse help desk.

"Fortunately for serious minds, a bias recognized is a bias sterilized"
(Hayden)

Dona Scheider, Ph.D. Bias, confounding and the Role of chance: This is an outstanding lecture beautifully describes the roles of bias and confounding in interpreting our research efforts. Bias and confound are difficult concepts for people new to research. It is important for all experts and new researchers to understand these concepts. Dona provides a very well thought out lectures. Also, the lecture has been translated by Nicholas Padilla, M.D. into Spanish. During the next few months we will be providing to you outstanding lectures so that you can have a beginning understanding for research design, or a refresher overview.

Here is a nice short youtube presentation on confounding:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7QdNYLp_E0

Here is a somewhat longer presentation:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7QdNYLp_E0

There are also series of 4-5 lectures teaching about bias. However, examination of the lecture and the youtube will give an excellent overview.

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". (WHO)

Best Regards,

Ron, Faina, Eugene, Francois, Nicolas, Ismail, Vint, Kawkab, Ali, Olga, Maria, Eman, Kyle, Aiyem, Rob, Ohanyido, Nabil, Mita, Olga, Gil, Eric Sholpan, Maria, Shalkar, Ghassan