

Supercourse Newsletter
9 May 2013
www.pitt.edu/~super1/

World Health Organization, Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office and the BA SuperHelp Desk

Last week I had the honor to be able to meet for two days with regional director of WHO EMRO, Ala Al'wan, M.D and his wonderful team in Cairo.

Ala and I have known each other over 30 years. We discussed the establishment of a WHO Library of Alexandria SuperHelp desk, focusing initially on the EMRO region. He agreed that the Helpdesk can be established under WHO EMRO to build capacity in research. It will need to be however, reviewed at WHO Geneva. He does not expect difficulties. The WHO EMRO, BA SuperHelp desk would be the first and only WHO research help desk. The Supercourse is also the first Library of Alexander project outside the library in 2000 years. What an honor it is for the Supercourse to be collaborating with Ismail Serageldin, the director of the library of Alexandria and Ala Al'wan, the regional director of WHO. No organization to our knowledge has had a joint project with these two most venerable institutions in the world. It is you and our Supercourse team, of which we are most proud. We are on a trajectory to be one of the most important global health projects. "Team Supercourse" is on its way to the World Cup of Health.

"There is no comparison between that which is lost by not succeeding and that which is lost by not trying" (Francis Bacon)

I did not want to start the help desk if there was the possibility of being endorsed by the Library of Alexandria, and the World Health Organization, but now we can begin. Our official launch will be in the next few weeks. It is a definite go. We will develop the help desk first in the WHO EMRO region. If you would like to help answer questions or mentor researchers, please contact me at ronaldlaporte@gmail.com

"Who questions much, shall learn much, and retain much" (Francis Bacon)

The technical team at the Library of Alexandria has done magnificent work in creating a Question and Answer site at:
<http://ssc.bibalex.org/staging/helpdesk/introduction.jsf> (BETA Version, Access through Internet Explorer)

We have built this using email for question and answers. We will need to hire a technical person to decide the shape of the next generation WHO EMRO-BA SuperHelp desk. There are numerous options available with Q and A such as Ask.com, Wiki such as Wiki Answer, and Stackexchange. We are leaning towards a Wiki system as with the Wiki, one posts a question after it is reviewed by a moderator, and then gray/no haired experts can post answers. Experts would be identified, however, others could also contribute. This gives the person who asked the question various different view points.

A brilliant scientist/scholar Professor Mahmud Fathallah at our meeting discussed the SuperHelp desk concept as a means to achieve Research for All. Isn't that a wonderful concept?

"A prudent question is one-half wisdom" (Francis Bacon")

Moldy Oldies, and best of the rest

We want to have a rapid impact to markedly increase the number of public health papers from WHO EMRO countries. The BA Superhelp desk will aid, but it may be a little too slow to see a rapid effect. We decided to take a “Moldy Oldie” approach. I have published over 500 papers, however by my right knee is my Action/Moldy Oldie drawer. The front part of the drawer has bright white papers that I have worked on in the past year. However, looking back in my “action” file, I see an increase in slightly yellow paper in the middle of the drawer, than at the end are the 1980 musty, dusty articles, that I have not been looked at in decade. My action drawer, is really a drawer of transition from “action”, to inaction, to Moldy Oldie. Basically, I still like the ideas in the articles, but indeed they are my rejects, some of which I submitted 10-15 times. I think they are all great, but the Lancet and BMJ for some reason have not.

Perhaps the help desk can help resurrect the best rejects and get them published.

What we were thinking is that many scientists in EMRO countries also have a collection of unpublished articles many of which ask fascinating questions, however they suffer from Stataphobia. Our gray/no hair group will help to raise these articles from the dead, by cleaning up the methods and scaring away Stataphobia. Thus for scientists in EMRO countries, we will ask them to open up their “action” drawer, blow the dust away, whisk away the cob webs, and find the best of their rejected articles. With a little methodologic sprucing up many of your rejects can find their way into a good journal.

“Knowledge is Power” Francis Bacon

World According to GARP

I received wonderful response concerning the Global Association of Retired Professors (GARP). It was really funny as on my trip I watched the movis of the “World According to Garp”. It really was pretty strange. In the next few newsletters I will describe the remarkable successful professors who retire. Sadly I did not get a contrast group, e.g. “I retired and took all my money from TIAA-CREF and invested it into a wonderful hedge fund run by Bernie Madoff”, or at age 62 I decided to become a competitive pole dancer but broke my foot. If you have had some bad experiences, I would like to hear about this also, no names will be used for the bad experience. (if you have a sad retirement story, please tell me ronaldlaporte@gmail.com, I promise never to reveal my sources)

“I will never be an old man. To me, old age is always 15 years older than I am” (Francis Bacon)

Faina’s Lecture Pick of the week:

Overview of NIOSH-Approved Respiratory Protection Devices We are very fortunate to receive a new lecture from the National Insitute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). This lecture presents an overview of respirators, their components, their protections, and guidelines for their use in industry. Participants viewing this lecture will gain knowledge and understand: The

types of respirators that are used in industry; The basic components of those respirators; The protections these respirators offer to the user; General guidance in the use of respirators.

Please visit our new lecture at

<http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec50291/index.htm>

The Central Asian Journal of Global Health (CAJGH), Official Journal of the Global Health Network Supercourse project Nazarbayev University CALL FOR PAPERS Special Third Issue with the focus on chronic disease and its impact on global health

In addition to welcoming submissions from variety of area listed below, this special issue will examine issues related to chronic disease challenges in Central Asia and around the world and how these relate to Global Health. The Central Asian Journal of Global Health is a peer-reviewed scientific journal developed at Nazarbayev University in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh, WHO Collaborating Centre.

We encourage submissions in the following areas, Agriculture, Biomedical, Disasters, Engineering, Epidemiology, Global Health, Public Health, Statistics

The Central Asian Journal of Global Health is the first official journal of the Global Health Supercourse network of over 50,000 individuals in 174 countries and a library of over 5200 lectures in public health and medicine. Our aim is to develop one of the leading journals in Central Asia and the world. CAJGH opened in 2012 with two issues of the journal coming out in the past year.

The deadline for article submissions for the third issue is June 15, 2013.

If you cannot submit the article through the online system, please send it via email to Faina Linkov (faina.linkov@gmail.com) and with the subject "article for submission"

Please send this call for papers to your friends and colleagues. We are looking forward to your submissions!

"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, Nicholas, Ohanyido, Gil, Mita, Ismail, Eric, Kawkab, Vint, Ali, Olga