

Supercourse Newsletter
September 21, 2004

www.pitt.edu/~super1/
www.bibalex.org/SuperCourse/
www.bibalex.org/english/initiatives/SupercourseArchive.htm

Noble Project:

Carlos Milian Cachinero from Spain sent a wonderful note to us. He said:

I like very much to work with your team. I'm working in the next lecture and in the translations with Eugene. This is a noble work.

Several others have indicated that the Supercourse is Noble work. In the past few weeks I have received letters amazed that we could work with so many scientists, and that they would give to us their most prized possessions, their lectures. It is not us, it is the global network and the mission that is Noble. What an honor for us.

e-Scrapbook:

We did something that was fascinating, and shows the power of the Internet. Jan Dorman, Professor of Epidemiology, Associate Dean of Research, Co-Director of our WHO Collaborating center and my wife just became the Associate Dean of Research and International Affairs at our Nursing School. It is a wonderful opportunity for her. Mita organized the building of an e-scrapbook. A scrapbook is a collection of remembrances of a person such as pictures, objects, etc. In the electronic world we did it a bit differently, we contacted all the students, faculty and alumni and asked them to write about 2 sentences about a moment in time that they remember about her. The results were fantastic, with 62 emails sent to us. Some were PowerPoint slides, some were sentences, some were really funny, some were just wonderfully nice. We found that looking at the total remembrances, one could get a very good picture of who the person was. Jan loved it, Mita did a wonderful job. We provided the e-Scrapbook to all those who contributed. We would be pleased to send to you a copy of the e-scrapbook as you might like to develop this for someone else. It was a wonderful way to remember a person. It is a lot better than waiting for them to die to create an e-eulogy.

Recruitment: We are just about to start our e-recruitment to bring in students from across the world to receive a Masters Degree in Epidemiology and potentially be trained in global health. We would appreciate if you could discuss this with students and faculty in your department to see if there are any students from your group who might qualify. Sadly, we have no funding available. However, we would be pleased to write letters for you or your students to help obtain funding. Our program has rapidly grown and is now one of the leading programs. We would love to have students from our Supercourse group. Please go to our webpage at www.epidemiology.pitt.edu, and then contact me at ronlaporte@aol.com. I will give you the "scoop" about our school and others.

We will have an open house at our GSPH on Monday October 18, 2004. Please contact Mike Rick at mrick@pitt.edu if you would like to come. Again, we do not have travel support.

Way-To-Cool: Machine Translation for the Supercourse May Be There. In the past week we have been investigating machine translation of the Supercourse and the results look very exciting. We have been wanting to do Just In Time translation, thus you as a teacher from Russia want to present my lecture on Cancer. We have found that the back translation looks to be very understandable. Here is the result of forward and back translation. It will actually be much easier to understand as there is a figure with this, and you are experts on prevention. We are beginning to see that in the future you can click on a button and all the web pages are instantaneously translated into Mandarin, or Thai or Russian. Isn't this

fantastic? We have avoided manual translation as the problem arises that if we have one lecture translated into 9 different languages, if that lecture is changed, the logistics of change are staggering. However, if we can translate on demand, even though it is not perfect, a teacher can understand it and present it to their students. This is really exciting. Mita is working on a paper for the BMJ for this. PowerPoint is also ideal for MT, as the grammar of Bullet-Text is universal across languages, also with PowerPoint, prevention, and educators knowledge of prevention we constrain the results. Let Mita know if you would like to join us to make the Supercourse multilingual (MitaL@pitt.edu). We used a beautiful slide from John Sheffrin's lecture. John is the CEO of the American Cancer society. The slide can be found at: <http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec5241/007.htm>

This is the language from the original slide:

Original:

At the same time, deaths from non-communicable diseases are expected to climb from 28.1 million deaths in 1990 to 49.7 million in 2020, an increase of 77% in absolute numbers. In proportionate terms, deaths from non-communicable diseases are expected to increase their share of the total from 55 percent in 1990 to 73% in 2020.

Translated to Russian then:
Back Translation:

At the same time, deaths from noncontagious diseases, predictably, will rise on 28.1 million deaths in 1990 on 49.7 million in 2020, increase in 77% in absolute numbers (numbers). In proportionally terms (terms, conditions), deaths from noncontagious illnesses, predictably will increase their share (action(share)) of total from 55 percent (interests) from in 1990 up to 73% in 2020.

The translation is quite good. It would be near perfectly interpreted by examining the figure on the slide.

Best Regards from the Burgh. Autumn is the most beautiful time to be here, the leaves explode in color, and the temperature is cool, brisk and wonderful. We would love to have you visit!

Global Pittsburgh: There was considerable interest about how the Supercourse can build research design and statistical capacity across the world. One idea that was presented several times was to build with-country help desks that feed into a global help desk. The research design and statistical experts were very interested in participating say for 3 questions a week. This also builds collaboration. We will keep you posted.

Best regards,

Mita, Ron, Faina, Soni, Eugene, Samar, Monica, Jan, Tom, Fred, Julia, Akira, Carlos

If you would like to come off this list, please send a note to MitaL@pitt.edu