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ICDDR,B 'going green'

Page 4

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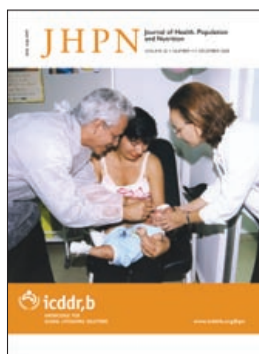
Contents



ICDDR,B 'going green'

ICDDR,B has recently launched a campaign to raise awareness of environmentally-responsible behaviour at the Centre...

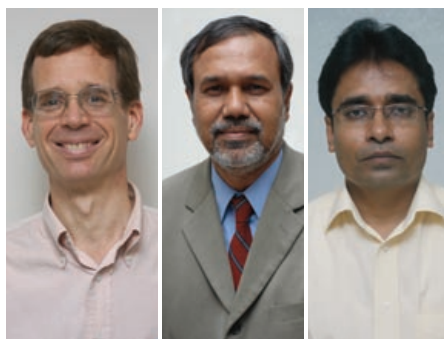
Page 4



JHPN changes its frequency of publication

The peer-reviewed quarterly Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition (JHPN), published by ICDDR,B, has changed...

Page 6



International award and honours to ICDDR,B scientists

Three ICDDR,B scientists have received international recognition...

Page 6



Tribute to Prof Jane Kusin

Professor Jane Anita Kusin passed away on 9 November 2008 following a critical surgery for cancer...

Page 8

November 2008 Meeting of the Board of Trustees



ICDDR,B Board of Trustees in its full session

ICDDR,B's Board of Trustees (BoT) met on 28-29 November 2008. The Board approved a number of resolutions and endorsed the Centre's new Strategic Plan to the year 2020, with a decision to see a revised plan in the June 2009 Meeting. A salary increase for employees of the General Services and National Officer categories was also announced.

The meeting held separate sessions of the Programme, Human Resources, Finance, Audit and Fund Development committees, followed by one with the Staff Welfare Association and another with the Development Partners Group of the Centre. The trustees expressed their satisfaction over quick responses to the recommendations from an earlier review of the Laboratory Sciences Division.



Tanzanian national Dr Charles Stephen Mgone, Executive Director of European &

Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership based in The Netherlands and US national Dr Mary Elizabeth Wilson, Associate Professor of Global Health and Population, Harvard School of Public Health and Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, USA, were selected BoT member for a three-year term to start November 2009. Dr Mgone is an expert in clinical and laboratory aspects of paediatrics and genetics, with a PhD degree in Medical Genetics from the University of Glasgow, UK.



Dr Mary Wilson has wide-ranging expertise in teaching of and research on infectious diseases, with an MD degree from the University of Wisconsin Medical School, Madison, USA. She is also a Fellow of the American College of Physicians (ACP) and a Fellow of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (FIDSA).

Both are internationally known for their publications in various globally-circulated, peer-reviewed journals. ICDDR,B welcomes both Dr Mgone and Dr Mary Wilson as new BoT members and wishes them a successful tenure on the Board.

The Board appointed two new Adjunct Scientists for the Centre. They are: Dr Marge Koblinsky, former Director of the Public Health Sciences Division of ICDDR,B and Professor Anwar Islam, Director of the James P Grant School of Public Health under BRAC University, Bangladesh. Proposals to recruit personnel for some high-ranking positions were also approved during the meeting.

The meeting concluded with a report by BoT Chair Dr Timothy Evans to the Centre staff in the Sasakawa International Auditorium, followed by a question-and-answer session. The concluding session also paid tribute to former BoT member Professor Jane Anita Kusin who recently died after a critical surgery for cancer. Dr Evans conveyed messages of condolence from several former BoT chairpersons, directors, and other staff members who worked closely with her.

While approving the 2009 budget, the BoT Chair praised Centre management for successfully handling budgetary problems and ensuring financial health for the Centre despite the worldwide economic recession. The Board particularly applauded the efforts of Centre management to secure retirement benefits of employees from possible ill-effects of the ongoing global recession. Dr Evans also acknowledged the work done to develop materials which will be used in the fundraising campaign planned for 2009. ■

Special Feature

ICDDR,B ‘going green’

Historically, the core of the worldwide environmental movement has been the commitment to conservation of nature and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment in response to rapid environmental degradation caused by human activity. Today, the concept of environmentalism has evolved to mean sustainable management of resources and stewardship of the environment through changes in policy and eco-friendly behaviour of individuals to promote health and human rights.

clinical services to our community, the Centre feels that the message should be disseminated beyond its staff members to raise public awareness of these issues as well.

For many years, our world has been subjected to continuous urbanization and industrialization, leading to a depletion in natural resources in many cases. Other notable consequences of human activity are: environmental degradation, generation of toxic wastes, pollution, and contamination. Climate change is another critical issue requiring

2 billion by 1922, over 6 billion by 2000, and is estimated to increase to over 9 billion by 2050. One calculation by scientists indicates that, from 1950 to 2050, per-capita access to natural resources will be reduced by 75%.

This estimation has far-reaching implications for public health in all nations irrespective of their socioeconomic position in the wealth quintile. Air pollution and groundwater contamination by chemical wastes are likely to emerge as an important cause of morbidity and mortality in the near future.

Economical use of consumables, including recycling of consumer products and industrial wastes, can substantially slow the rate at which we consume resources and, at the same time, may allow us to improve our environment and our health.

In a brief survey among a randomly-selected sample of employees and almost all units of ICDDR,B, it was found that most of them are aware of the deterioration of resources in the world and of the means to cope with the situation. ICDDR,B encourages all its employees to “reduce, reuse, recycle” and recommends the following:

- Use email in place of hard-copy communications whenever reasonable and possible. Use double-sided computer printing and photocopying to reduce wastage of paper
- Reduce a publication's volume and number when possible and ensure that the hard copies printed are, in fact, needed
- Use re-usable mailing envelopes for internal correspondence
- Whenever possible, all resources should be recycled
- Minimize consumption of electrical energy by turning



ICDDR,B has recently launched a campaign to raise awareness of environmentally-responsible behaviour at the Centre and specified how employees could ‘go green’ themselves. As a health research institution and provider of

immediate action to forestall its potential devastating effects on animal and plant species on Earth.

While world resources are on the decline, global population growth is accelerating quickly. The world's population was 1 billion in 1800,



Photo: fotolia

off lights, air-conditioners, computers, and audiovisual and lab equipment when absent from your workplace for more than a short period

- Set all electrical appliances to the most energy-saving setting reasonable, e.g. highest comfortable temperature for air-conditioners and highest permissible setting for coolers and freezers
- Minimize consumption of fuel by maintaining vehicles properly and driving responsibly
- Book the most direct route available for all air travels
- In procurement activities, develop a culture of purchasing low-cost yet energy-efficient machinery and equipment
- Explore renewable energy resources, such as solar and wind-power, as options
- Explore opportunities for innovative research on environmental issues affecting public health and incorporate into our research agenda.

Although awareness of decreasing world resources and environmental degradation was rooted in the mid-nineteenth century intellectual thought, issues of accelerating resource-poverty and of public health emerged as major concerns

after publication of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* in 1962. In 2006, Al Gore's blockbuster film—*An Inconvenient Truth*—raised public awareness of the dangers of global climate change. Although environmentalism can trace its roots to early advocates, like Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir, the environmentalism as a movement is a more recent phenomenon. Observance of International Earth Day each year on the March Equinox (the period when the sun crosses the equator) has now become a regular event.



'Going green' initiative at ICDDR,B is based on the policy of appropriate wastes disposal procedure, including incineration

ICDDR,B is concerned about the alarming speed of deterioration of the global environmental situation and recognizes the critical importance of developing strategies to save our planetary resources. ICDDR,B's environmental and conservation efforts will not be limited to an internal exercise only; planning is underway to incorporate the effects of environmental degradation on public health into its research agenda and to promote studies by relevant institutions on recycling and renewable energy resources.

Centre's priorities and areas of concern in its research on environmental issues are based on the following premises:

- Identification and pursuance of projects that have environmental significance
- Finding the relationship of environmental issues with public health
- Contribution to public policy dialogue, governmental programmes and interventions, and educational initiatives

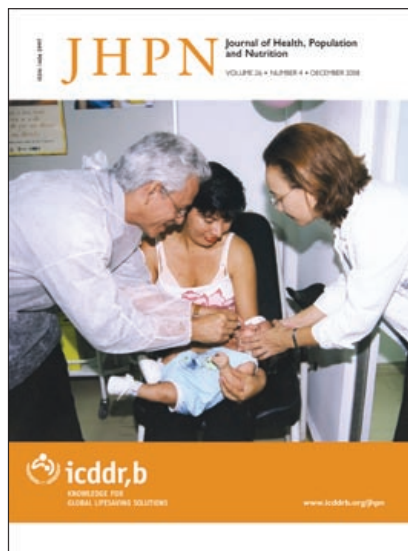
that enhance awareness of environmental degradation and public health in Bangladesh and other developing nations

- Avoidance of research activities that evidently exert a significantly negative impact on environment
- Undertaking research that involves the least amount of toxic wastes and are cost-effective and suitable for the purpose.

ICDDR,B has formulated an Environmental Policy that provides specific guidelines to researchers in the above fields. ■

JHPN changes its frequency of publication

The peer-reviewed quarterly Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition (JHPN), published by ICDDR,B, has changed its frequency of publication. From the coming February 2009 Issue, JHPN will be published as a bimonthly (six issues a year). The decision has been taken at the advent of increased flow of manuscripts from around the world, the rising impact factor, and expanded readership of the Journal. The change is also done to ensure speedy publications of the accepted manuscripts.



The Journal publishes papers on various disciplines of health, nutrition and population research, with emphasis on issues relevant to developing countries. Original research articles, review articles, short reports, commentaries, case studies, and letters-to-the-editor constitute the contents of the Journal. The names of eight sections in the Journal: Emerging Diseases, Health Systems, Reproductive and Neonatal Health, Nutrition, Immunization, Water and Sanitation, Population, and Gender

Health and Human Rights, well-describe its wide-ranging field of interest.

JHPN is covered by all major indexing/abstracting agencies. In a rating done in late 2007 by IndexCopernicus™, JHPN ranked 33rd among the top 100 journals that they cover. The impact factor of JHPN was reported to be 1.060 in 2007 by Journal Citation Reports (JCR)-Thomson Scientific. They evaluate the world's leading journals and their impact and influence in the global research community through quantifiable statistical data in a systematic and objective way.

Full-text versions of the Journal are available free of charge on the ICDDR,B website at: <http://www.icddr.org/jhpn>. The contents of the Journal may also be accessed through websites of several external agencies at: <http://www.who.int/hinari>, <http://www.bioline.org.br/hn>, <http://www.FreeMedicalJournals.com>, <http://www.doaj.org>, <http://www.openj-gate.com>, and <http://www.portico.org>. Arrangements for making the full texts available through PubMed Central, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and AGORA are also underway.

For hard copies, the current subscription rate is: US\$ 300 for institutions and US\$ 150 for individuals in developing countries (excluding Bangladesh); US\$ 500 for institutions and 250 for individuals in developed countries; and Tk 3,000 for institutions and 2,500 for individuals in Bangladesh. For Bangladesh-based international organizations, multinational companies, donor agencies, embassies, private health institutions, including private medical colleges and universities, the subscription rate is Tk 5,000. ■

International award and honours to ICDDR,B scientists

Dr Steve Luby wins OU International Water Prize

The first-ever OU International Water Prize given by the Water



Technologies for Emerging Regions (WaTER) Centre at the University of Oklahoma has been awarded to Dr Stephen P Luby,

Head of ICDDR,B's Programme on Infectious Diseases and Vaccine Sciences. The prize includes a cash amount of US\$ 25,000—half going directly to the recipient and half to a non-profit organization of his choice for water-related interventions. Additionally, the winner will receive the water-symbol of the organization cast in silver and a plaque made of bronze.

This biennial prize has been introduced "to recognize and honour an individual who has made significant international contributions, either through research or teaching or service activities, in the field of water supply and sanitation, with a focus on the world's poorest living in small villages/communities in rural or remote regions."

Dr Luby has been working at ICDDR,B since 2004 and additionally functions as Head of Agency in Bangladesh for the US-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The award will be officially handed over to him in October 2009 at the OU International Water Conference.

Dr Abbas Bhuiya earned two prestigious positions

The Centre's Senior Social Scientist Dr Abbas Bhuiya, Head of the Poverty and Health Programme and



Social and Behavioural Sciences Unit, recently was appointed to two prestigious positions at two different organizations.

Thematic Reference Group on Health Systems and Implementation Research under UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases has appointed Dr Bhuiya a member of its international experts group. He is invited to attend the programme office housed at the WHO Country Office in Abuja, Nigeria, initially from 1 December 2008 to 30 September 2010.

In an online voting system for the executive council of Asian Population Association (APA), Dr Abbas Bhuiya has also been elected a Council Member for a two-year term from 2009 to 2010. Of the 560 eligible members, 372 (66%) voted for Dr Bhuiya. Other elected council members are: Terence H Hull (Australia), Naohiro Ogawa (Japan), Moneer Alam (India), and Shireen Jejeebhoy (India). President and Vice President of the Council are, respectively, Leela Visaria of India and Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi of Iran. Terence H Hull was previously Chairperson of ICDDR,B's Board of Trustees and Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi is currently a member of the Board.

Dr Sharful Islam Khan elected Secretary General of APNET

Dr Sharful Islam Khan, Associate Scientist in the Public Health Sciences Division of ICDDR,B, has been selected Secretary General of the Asia-Pacific Network (APNET) of the International Forum for Social

Science in Health for a three-year term from November 2008.

The mission of APNET is to encourage collaborative efforts



to develop, promote, and apply social science perspectives in health research and interventions to improve the health of people in

Asia-Pacific region. APNET believes the health problems have to be understood and intervened by applying inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches and organizes a regional event—Asia-Pacific Social Science and Medicine Conference—on a regular basis.

We congratulate Dr Steve Luby, Dr Abbas Bhuiya, and Dr Sharful Islam Khan, who brought honour both for themselves and for the Centre. ■

ASCON XII Update

Preparation for holding the 12th Annual Scientific Conference (ASCON XII) at ICDDR,B on 9-12 February 2009 is in progress. The opening ceremony will be held on 9 February at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, followed by technical sessions on 10-12 February. The theme of the Conference is "Health Systems Research: People's Needs First." In response to the announcements through various channels, 224 abstracts have so far been received from around the world. The deadline for submission of abstracts was 15 November 2008.

In addition to those from ICDDR,B and other institutions in Bangladesh, researchers from Australia, Canada, USA, Germany, Thailand, Philippines, India, Iran, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Nepal, and Nigeria submitted abstracts for the Conference. The ASCON XII Organizing Committee is headed by Centre's Executive Director Professor Alejandro Cravioto. A team of experts in the Scientific Committee, led by Dr Tracey Pérez Koehlmoos, Head of the Health and Family Planning Systems Programme, is now assessing the merit of these abstracts for acceptance or rejection. The accepted abstracts will be categorized either for oral presentations or for poster presentations. As in other years, the accepted papers of all categories will be included in an Abstracts Book to be published in advance. In between the technical presentations, plenary sessions on key building blocks of health systems research and on future directions in health systems research in low- and middle-income countries will be held.

During the last years of the past millennium, health systems research placed an emphasis on exploring people's needs while undertaking interventions for health-service delivery. ICDDR,B played a leading role in this regard through launching of its Health and Family Planning Systems Programme in support of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in Bangladesh. In the new millennium, the systems research has shifted both globally and within ICDDR,B to emphasize all areas of health systems. ASCON XII is expected to provide an international platform for health systems researchers from around the world to share results of their recent studies.

The lessons learnt from the deliberations will be instrumental in designing innovative strategies to strengthen health systems in low- and middle-income countries based on the needs of the users, reducing inequalities in healthcare, and increasing the efficiency and sustainability of service-delivery agencies.

A Tribute to Professor Jane Kusin

It is with great regret that the Centre notes the passing of Professor Jane Anita Kusin, Professor in International Nutrition, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands and former member of



the ICDDR,B Board of Trustees (BoT). Professor Kusin passed away on 19 November following critical surgery

for cancer. She was a member of ICDDR,B's Board of Trustees from July 2000 to June 2006 and worked as Deputy Chair of the Programme Committee from November 2005 to June 2006. Professor Kusin was also Associate Editor of the Centre's Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition and later served as its Section Editor for Nutrition.

ICDDR,B was first informed of Professor Kusin's death just before the November Meeting of the Centre's Board of Trustees. BoT Chair Dr Timothy Evans, in his reminiscence, summarized the messages of condolence and comments from many former BoT members and directors of the Centre, and other individuals who worked closely with her.

Dr Marcel Tanner remarked: the Board rated her as an extraordinary person and "she lives on with us and in us... she stimulated many of us, made us think and gave us directions." Dr Marian Jacobs reminisced on the sweet company of Jane on several occasions. Prof Terry Hull commented: "We enjoyed her feisty contributions to the Board deliberations. She was totally committed to the Centre." "We all remember Jane...for her enthusiasm, her love for children,

her important contributions for nutrition and her dedication to her job" said Dr Claudio Lanata. Dr Mary Ann Lansang, in her reminiscence, said "Jane was the one who introduced me to the Board...[she was] an invaluable guide to contributing effectively in Board meetings and beyond. She was dynamic, cared a lot about ICDDR,B staff."

Two former directors of the Centre Dr Demissie Habte and Dr David Sack recalled with heartfelt emotions their memories of Prof Kusin. Dr Demissie Habte said, "I recall the laughter of Jane, her genuine interest in the welfare of the people of the developing worlds and her keen devotion to the Centre." Dr David Sack recollected her expertise and integrity thus: "When I needed someone to review a manuscript in any field of nutrition, she was always ready and willing to do it...When I asked her to accompany me to visit the Office of Foreign Affairs in The Hague, she was always ready to be right there, encouraging me and speaking up for the Centre...When I needed advice on almost any topic, she was one I could trust to give a straight answer. It was not always the answer I wanted, but it was the one I needed."

Born in Jakarta (Indonesia) on 12 June 1935, Jane Kusin was a Dutch national. Through her diverse academic pursuits and research works, Professor Kusin developed her career as a specialist in Nutrition, Public Health, Reproductive Health, Maternal and Child Health, and Family Planning. She had her first MD degree in 1961 from University of Jakarta and a second one in 1963 from Free University of Amsterdam; MPH degree in 1966 from Tropical Royal Institute, Amsterdam; and PhD degree in 1973 from

University of Amsterdam, followed by postgraduate studies in Applied Nutrition at National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, India, from 1973 to 1974.

Dr Kusin was very vocal about her ideas, firm in her beliefs, straightforward, and strongly supported people she believed in. Comments of Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, Head of the Nutrition Programme of ICDDR,B, are indicative of her expertise in the field of nutrition: "Any discussion about maternal and child nutrition is incomplete without the contribution of Prof Jane Kusin. From her work in Madura, East Java, she was the first to demonstrate that high-energy supplementation during the 3rd trimester boosted postnatal growth and reduced malnutrition in children aged less than five years. She worked in Hyderabad in the 1970s and showed that there was no significant impact of vitamin E in the retention of vitamin A in children. Her seminal work in Lesotho, Kenya, and Tanzania answered many questions on maternal and childhood under-nutrition. Prof Kusin demonstrated that supplementary feeding had a positive effect on clinic attendance rates, immunization, health and nutrition education, and growth monitoring. However, she also cautioned about the cost-benefits entailed in providing supplementary feeding and recommended a holistic, integrated approach to maternal and child health. The Centre's work in nutrition has been benefited much by her advice and suggestions."

Mr M Shamsul Islam Khan, Managing Editor of JHPN, said "She was a very organized, meticulous, dedicated, committed, and helpful guide and editor of JHPN articles relating to nutrition. I particularly enjoyed working with her."

The Centre has lost a dear and trusted friend with the sad demise of Prof Kusin. ■