



# World Health Organization Collaborating Centres and Centres of Expertise Network in THAILAND

## Newsletter

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### Greetings from the Editor

**W**elcome to the first published newsletter of the WHO Collaborating Centre (CC) and Centre of Expertise (CE) network in Thailand. This newsletter aims at opening door for co-operation between WHO CCs and CEs intra and intercountry. The network has been established last July 2004. Currently its office is located in the Faculty of Public Health, Mahidol University while its function is to co-ordinate among all institutions designated as WHO CCs and the national CEs. The network's founding members comprises of 22 WHO CCs and 38 national CEs. These institutions have performed distinguished research, training and services for quite some years. However their expertise had not been collected for easy access to the public via an electronic information technology system. The Secretary General and her team are taking this role and function. The two-way communication between the institutions and their stakeholders through this media is a way to learn about each other. The needs and expectations on institutional strengthening are anticipated to be candidly expressed.

The recognition and designation of WHO to the institutions as WHO CCs determine the technical standard of the member institutions. So that the editorial board introducing the recognized technical performances of the member institutions in this and upcoming newsletters. Any suggestions, comments and queries are quite welcome.

Associate Professor Dr. Orapin Singhadej  
 Secretary General WHO CCs and CEs network  
 Editor

## What are WHO Collaborating Centres (CCs) and Centres of Expertise (CEs)?

“**WHO Collaborating Centre**” means a national institution designated by the Director-General of the World Health Organization to form a part of an international collaborative network carrying out activities in support of WHO’s mandate for international health work and its programme priorities. An entire institution, or a department or laboratory within an institution, or a group of facilities for reference, research or training belonging to different institutions, may be designated as a “WHO Collaborating Centre”. When a Collaborating Centre comprises several departments or institutions, only one of these acts for that centre in relation to WHO.

“**Centre of Expertise**” means an institution that poses at least one expertise area out of all WHO’s areas of work. The Centre of Expertise must be well recognized in its scientific and technical standing at the national or regional or international level, and its ability to strengthen national and regional capacity for health development. The Centre of Expertise should have the capacity and the institutional stability to develop relationships with other institutions through collaborative activities and networking. They should be willing and prepared to use their own resources to implement such activities.

Any WHO CC whose term has expired (after 4 years of designation) and/or in the process of applying for redesignation may be regarded as “a Centre of Expertise”.

## Why establish the WHO CCs and CEs network?

The goal of its establishment is to promote the international use of Thai expertise through establishing close linkages with international agencies and networks, to which information concerning Thai institutes and their expertise will be disseminated.

The objectives of the network are:

1. To promote scientific and technical collaboration among professionals of member institutions.
2. To promote capacity building among member institutions through sharing, cooperating and coordinating expertise and technical resources, and to become a WHO CC, if they desire.
3. To develop strategies and methods for the development and management of WHO Country programme.
4. To provide advice to, and facilitate WHO’s capacity to promote or strengthen appropriate Technical Cooperation among Countries (TCC).

## What are the scopes of such technical collaborations?

The WHO CCs and CEs or the applicant institutions are classified into 6 groups according to 6 areas of work of WHO as shown in the WHO Country Cooperation Strategy, Thailand, 2004-2007. Those areas are described as follows:-

1. *CDS* (Communicable Diseases Study and Control)
2. *NMH* (Non-communicable Diseases and Mental Health)
3. *FCH* (Family and Community Health)
4. *SE* (Sustainable Development and Environment)
5. *HIP* (Health Technology and Pharmacy)
6. *EP* (Evidence and Information for Policy)

## How does the network function?

There are three principal organs of the Network:-

1. An Interim Executive Board (EB) consists of 12 members appointed since February 2004, name list as attached.
2. A secretariat consist of a Secretary General, and a task force group, and
3. A General Assembly (GA) consists of representatives of all member institutions.

## An Interim Executive Board (EB)

There is 12 designed members as follow;

### Chairperson

1. Prof. Visith Sitprija  
Queen Saovabha Memorial Institute

### Co-chair

2. Assoc. Prof. Somchai Durongdej  
Faculty of Public Health Mahidol University

### Members

3. Dr. Boosaba Sa-nguanprasit  
Faculty of Public Health Mahidol University
4. Assoc. Prof. Bencha Yoddumnern-Attig  
Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR),  
Mahidol University
5. Assoc. Prof. Kobkul Phancharoenworakul  
Faculty of Nursing Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University
6. Prof. Emeritus Suchitra Prasansuk  
Faculty of Medicine at Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University
7. Assoc. Prof. Earnporn Thongkrajai  
Faculty of Nursing Khon Kaen University
8. Dr. Titasak Boonthai  
Information and Communication Technology Center,  
Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health
9. Dr. Sopida Chaovanichkul  
International Health Group, Bureau of Policy and Strategy  
Ministry of Public Health
10. Prof. Yongyudh Vajaradul  
Faculty of Medicine at Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University
11. Dr. Valaikanya Plasai  
The College of Public Health, Chulalongkorn University
12. Assoc. Prof. Wilawan Senaratna  
Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University

## What are the roles and functions of the network secretariat through the Secretary General?

As stated in the charter proposed by the EB and approved by the General Assembly (GA) the secretariat shall have the following powers and duties:-

1. To promote close communication among member institutions;
2. To support regular professional and technical development and capacity building exercises and exchanges;
3. To foster closer linkages with international agencies;
4. To ensure the availability of adequate funds for the network to function properly;
5. To help create sufficient incentives for member institutions to collaborate and coordinate effectively;
6. To promote the international use of Thai expertise, through the collection and dissemination of information concerning Thai institutions and their experts/specialists.

## What is next?

The founding members of the WHO CCs and CEs network in Thailand had met and discussed in three meetings during 2003-2004. So far there are 22 WHO CCs and 38 CEs. The secretariat realizes that there are many more capable institutions who may need to participate in our network. The interested parties are most welcome. The contact address and e-mail are below. The secretariat will keep you informed on your incentives of being members and other stakeholders are quite welcome to contact us at the website:  
<http://w3.who-thai.org/qn/qn/>.



### About the Secretary General “Associate Professor Dr. Orapin Singhadej”

Dr. Orapin Singhadej is a former Regional Advisor on Safe Motherhood and Community Health Services of WHO office for South-east Asia Region. Her last assignment with WHO is WHO Representative to Bhutan. Before that, she had served the Royal Thai Government at the Faculty of Public Health and the ASEAN institute for Health Development (AIHD), Mahidol University altogether 27 years.



Pre-workshop  
Representatives of WHO CCs, CEs  
and Executive Board members  
on 16-17 September 2004  
at The Emerald Hotel Bangkok.

## Introduction to WHO CCs & CEs Network's Members

### Trauma and Critical Care Centre, Khon Kaen Regional Hospital

Khon Kaen is fifth ranked in land area of Thailand. It is a center city of north-east region. As a result of city developing and transportation increasing, the statistic of accident from traffics is very high. The Khon Kaen Regional Hospital tried to find out a solution for this problem since the year 1989-1991 by created an Integrated Provincial Trauma (IPT) Service programme. The major activities were developing trauma registry and referral system, establishing committee for accident prevention, and running Traffic Injury Prevention (TIP) campaign. In the year 1992-1996, a mapping for hazardous location had been done. The Emergency Medical Service (EMS), trauma and Life Saving Unit were developed together with continue promoted an anti-knocked helmet campaign. The training programmes for responsible personnel in pre-hospital care and injury surveillance were launched at this time. Two years later (1997-1998), the Ministry of Public Health had jointed the centre to transferring trauma care service system to other general hospitals in Thailand. The trauma and critical care centre was established in the year 1998. Since then, the advance technology is applied for development of Geographical Information System (GIS) base traffic accident through Trauma management system. The research, training, and seminar projects were conducted and implemented simultaneously. This hard working program leads to the establishment of many units for control and prevent trauma injury. The mortality statistic from traffic accident in Khon Kaen province shown that a rate per 100,000 people was decreased from 59.32 in 1996 to 17.52 in 2002.



Because of the works and innovation on traffic accident prevention of the trauma and critical care centre at both provincial and country level, it was designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion (WHO CC No. 199) by the WHO regional director since 2003. The centre has many activities such as:-

- ▼ Services for various institutions in developing accident prevention and control system.
- ▼ Research within the hospital and/or cooperate with other institutions i.e. a development of management system and network of accident centres in Thailand.
- ▼ Training on pre-hospital care and injury surveillance. There were 596 and 603 trained personnel in basic and advance level respectively during 2003-2004. The exchange programs on training, and field observation were performed for medical personnel from Lao, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Moreover, in the next year, there will be a training programme on pre-hospital care for SEAR member countries and traffic injury prevention for Indochina countries.
- ▼ Cooperating, system developing, and running special activities such as traffic injury prevention.

## Queen Saovabha Memorial Institute (QSMI)



Queen Saovabha Memorial Institute has an interesting and unique history. The death of Momchaoying Banlusrisarn Diskul, caused by rabies in 1911, made one realize the danger of this incurable disease and the necessity of having vaccine against it in Thailand. Rabies Vaccine was not available in Thailand at that time. Her father, HRH Prince Damrong Rajanubharb, the Interior Minister, asked for permission from HM King Vajiravudh to establish a centre of vaccine production and vaccination against rabies. Medical equipment and facilities needed were purchased by a fund initially donated by the King's mother, HM Queen Saovabha and Thai people. This centre was officially opened on April 26, 1913 under the name "Pastura Sabha", which was later changed to "Sathan Pasteur" in recognition of Louis Pasteur, the pioneer in rabies vaccine production. In 1920, it was changed to a name of "Sathan Saovabha" for a memorial of HM Queen Saovabha and being one division of the Thai Red Cross Society.

*The major activities of the Institute are as follow;*

### **Service**

Service activities include the operation of the clinic for managing animal bites, veterinary and human rabies laboratory diagnosis, routine vaccination for local residents and travelers and giving advice for prevention of travel-associated illnesses to Thais and tourists. Snake education is provided to the public.

Snake bite injuries of man are most common in the tropics. Thailand is the home of more than 180 varieties. Since imported antivenoms are not effective in neutralizing Thai snake venoms, it became necessary to

establish local production that utilizes the venom of snakes from this region for making antivenoms. A snake farm was thus established at the Queen Saovabha Memorial Institute (QSMI), and was opened on November 22, 1923. It became second oldest snake farm in the world after the Butantan Institute in Brazil. The snake farm keeps a variety of poisonous and non-poisonous snakes used for antivenom production, research and public education.

QSMI operates a traveler immunization clinic which is open to Thais and visitors alike. Treatment of animal bites and vaccination against rabies, hepatitis A and B, typhoid fever, meningitis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, Japanese encephalitis, influenza and cholera are available. Information regarding regional health risks is provided to tourists. The QSMI pharmacy stocks currently effective malaria prophylaxis medications. QSMI also has an animal clinic which provides diagnosis for animals especially dogs suspected to have rabies. The animals are kept under close observation under human conditions and laboratory diagnosis is made on dead animals.

### **Production**

Production activities at the Institute include manufacture of BCG (a tuberculosis vaccine), tuberculin PPD, equine rabies immunoglobulins (ERIG), antivenoms for poisonous snake bite, diagnostic reagents and intravenous fluids. A production plant was constructed in compliance with GMP regulations (Good Manufacturing Practice) and completed in May 2002.



## Research

Emphasis is placed on research for improvement of production, service and diagnosis. Nevertheless, biomedical and clinical research activities covering the areas of rabies, snakes and snake venoms are equally important. Active collaboration and joint projects exist between the Institute and other educational and research institutes in Thailand and abroad.

Highlights of successful clinical and laboratory research by QSMI staff during the 1980 to 2004 period had an international impact. The Thai Red Cross economical intradermal rabies treatment schedule was confirmed to be effective in a major clinical study. It is now spreading into rabies endemic neighboring countries, allowing abandonment of dangerous and poorly effective brain tissue derived vaccines. It saved funds and many lives and has been accepted by WHO in 1992. Beside this, snake related research covers several areas including biochemistry, toxicology, and gene cloning of snake venoms. Studies on taxonomy, physiology, pathology and effects of ecology on snake venom composition are in progress. QSMI work in snake husbandry is internationally recognized. Staff had been invited to lecture at various international snake husbandry meetings.

## The Asian Reproductive Health Graduate Education and Training Programme (TARGET)

The Asian Reproductive Health Graduate Education and Training Programme (TARGET) is an international education programme established jointly by Mahidol University's Faculty of Public Health (MU) and the School of Public Health of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). TARGET represents a new concept in graduate level professional training for reproductive health professionals in Asia. In TARGET, distance learning technology, including the internet, offers busy health care professionals the opportunity to enhance their skills and earn advanced degree credits while they continue to fulfill their professional duties. The TARGET combines distance education and classroom based learning. The participants begin with an intensive, month-long course in reproductive health conducted at Mahidol University. TARGET then shifts to distance learning, where participants choose between two separate groups of courses, one in reproductive health and the other in public health, offered on an on-going basis through the internet. Mahidol University and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, have worked together to develop the curriculum, resulting in an international standard curriculum with a special focus on Asian needs and realities. The first intensive month-long course was held in Bangkok at Mahidol University in March 1999. For further information contact Dean, Faculty of Public Health, Mahidol University at our website: [www.ph.mahidol.ac.th](http://www.ph.mahidol.ac.th)

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