



Telemedicine Newsletter

Issue 4, August 2007

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SA / China Collaboration

Three staff members from the unit visited China from the 29th July to 17th August 2007. Each staff member's purpose for visiting China differed slightly but all activities formed part of the SA / China Bilateral agreement.

Dr Molefi's visit to China was on a strategic level as she interacted with the CEO of SunPa as well as the South African Ambassador in Beijing. Jill Fortuin was responsible for drafting a Telemedicine Training and Support Centre proposal, gaining insight into Telemedicine practice & training in China and procuring of Telemedicine equipment for the KZN Project. Maitakhole Mashavhane received advanced training in SunPa Telemedicine Equipment. Two additional members of the delegation were Christopher Maloba (George Masebe Hospital, Limpopo) and Nancy Molokomme (Polokwane Hospital, Limpopo). Both these delegates represented the Department of Health, Limpopo and will be responsible for the future of the telemedicine project in Limpopo.





Eastern Cape Data Collection Skills Workshop, 1-3 August 2007

The Department of Health in the Eastern Cape requested that the MRC conduct data collection training to Health Care Workers from the six sites. This was to ensure that the process of M&E continues even when the MRC is no longer involved. Capacitating the staff with M&E skills would ensure sustainability as they would use them in the future. Millicent and I conducted and facilitated the Data Collection training workshop at the Cecilia Makiwane Hospital in the Eastern Cape from the 1st to 3rd August. Monalisa was also present to assist with administering and organizing the sessions. The team arrived a day prior to the training, on the 31st August to prepare for the three day workshop. The Department of Health (Eastern Cape) arranged a suitable venue at the hospital boardroom, where we proceeded to prepare and arrange folders with the working documents for each attendant. We also took this day to meet the new fieldworkers, Nolitha George and MacBride Kasper, who will be joining the research team. They will be assisting with the data collection in all the six telemedicine sites.

The training workshop was well attended by Health Care Professionals from five sites; Uitenhage Hospitals, Cradock Hospital, Frontier Hospital, Madzikane ka Zulu Hospital and St Patrick's Hospital. A representative(s) from the sixth site, Settlers Hospital, was not able to attend. The first morning of the workshop was opened by Dr Rajeev, Professor Banach from WSU and Jelena, who all gave brief overviews of the telemedicine project in the Eastern Cape. The rest of the three days was facilitated by Millicent and Nonhlanhla with the workshop comprising of sessions on Ethics in research, the review of the data collection questionnaires and practical role plays of interviews using the questionnaires. The practical section of the workshop allowed the participants to practice their interview skills and also provided them the opportunity to critique and advice each other on how to approach different situations that may arise during interviews. The sessions proved to be stimulating and motivating, particularly for the two new fieldworkers.

The third and final day of the session focused on the new fieldworkers as they will be the ones who will be responsible for most of the data collection and general monitoring of the sites. The fieldworkers conducted some role plays during which they were guided and provided with suggestions on how to address and approach certain situations. The two participants indicated at the end of the session that they found this exercise very beneficial as it assisted them to refine their skills.

At the end of the workshop, the participants were provided with evaluation forms and were requested to evaluate the trainers and the training workshop in general. From the feedback it appears that the participants were very pleased with the workshop and all commented that they would like to attend another training workshop of this nature facilitated by the same trainers. The participants will all receive a Certificate of Attendance from the MRC.

Overall, the training workshop proved to be a worthwhile event and learning experience. Our objective to impart data collection skills to fieldworkers and the

Health Care Workers, as requested by DoH-EC, was achieved. The enthused participation of the Health Care Workers made the sessions stimulating and beneficial for all and this was confirmed by the feedback from the evaluations completed by the participants.

Writing Workshop/s

A series of writing workshops was hosted by the Medical Research Council and facilitated by University of Stellenbosch, Language Centre. The courses took place in Cape Town and four staff members, Joleen March, Jill Fortuin, Ashley Bess and Maitakhole Mashavhane, attended.

Joleen March attended the proposal writing workshops. She found that the workshop provided some useful insights into proposal writing, and writing style in general. Participants were also able to view and evaluate examples of 'good' and 'bad' proposals, as well as discuss ways of improving on examples presented.

Maitakhole Mashavhane and Ashley Bess attended the report writing workshop. Ashley Bess reported that an overview was given of the general scientific and business writing skills, to highlight why report writing is important within the business environment. Reports are a major source of communication. Maitakhole Mashavhane found the course very fruitful in the sense that all the aspects for writing a good report were dealt with thoroughly:

The technical report writing workshop was attended by Jill Fortuin. This course was extremely refreshing, as it provided insight into the common mistakes of report writing. In addition it provided skills to improve technical report writing. Most importantly this course focused on methods to make report writing less tedious and more reader friendly.

Primary Healthcare Telemedicine Workstation exhibited at GovTech

The Gov-tech conference took place from the 21 to 23 August at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. The focus of the conference was to evaluate government service transformation in conjunction with the ICT for more effectiveness and efficiency. The conference provided a platform for discussing service transformation as an enterprise-wide initiative, underpinned by technology.

Department of Health, Director Health Information Systems, Dr S Khotu invited the MRC Telemedicine to co-exhibit with them at the conference. The Primary Health Care Telemedicine Workstation was exhibited at the conference. Various conference participants showed interest in the workstation. The interest varied from wanting to purchase units to investing in software upgrades / developments.



Conferences, Courses and Training Opportunities

12th ISfTeH International Conference

Chennai, India

(02.11. - 03.11.2007)

ABSTRACTS DUE ON THE 31 AUGUST FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS