

## **LRC Highlights July - December 1999**

- Applications of Evidence-Based Practice
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- Internet Consultations
- Communications And Information Exchange
- Health Policy Change and Medical Curriculum Reform
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### **Applications of Evidence-Based Practice**

Based on information obtained from Medline, Ferenc Szirko and his colleagues at the Tallinn Central Hospital in Estonia have introduced a new method for fetal assessment. Instead of relying upon acid-base status measurement, they learned of the possibility of measuring the presence of lactate in fetal scalp blood. After reviewing the literature, Ferenc got in touch with another hospital, which is using the lactometer. Ferenc also found a European company, which helped to find a lactometer distributor in Estonia. After obtaining this equipment, Ferenc and his colleagues gathered several medical articles and prepared a workshop on how to use the device in clinical practice. They also made a report on using lactate estimation for fetus wellbeing during delivery during the Estonian Perinatology Association meeting in September.

Physicians in the gastroenterology department at Children's Hospital No. 4 in Minsk used the Internet to find information on the diagnosis and treatment of H. pylori infection. Using this information, they have introduced a new treatment plan for patients with acute and chronic gastroduodenitis associated with the infection, in accordance with European and Russian experts. This has led to reduction in time of treatment with expensive drugs to a 7-10 day course.

Alexander Dubikov from Vladivostok City Hospital No. 2 has developed a course on evidence-based practice for staff at the hospital. Course lectures, which are given once each week, are designed to give staff at the hospital an understanding of the rationale for an evidence-based approach to clinical practice and to enable staff to critically appraise articles about diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy.

In preparing patient education materials to be published in their monthly newspaper, Dr. Natalia Osipova from Dubna, Russia, used an evidence-based approach to prepare an index of effective drugs which can be used to treat various medical conditions.

Staff at Tallinn Central Hospital have created "white and black lists" of treatment methods, similar to those developed by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in Great Britain.

### **LRC Outreach Into the Community**

The web server of Odessa Oblast Hospital (<http://www.mednet.odessa.ua/>), developed by information coordinator Grigory Tyapkin was recently named as one of the 20 most visited Russian language medical sites by the Russian Medical Server ([www.rusmedserv.com](http://www.rusmedserv.com)). The hospital's web site includes an on-line drug index as well as several on-line medical journals.

Kaliya Toguzbaeva from the Institute of Obstetrics and Pediatrics in Bishkek gave four presentations on Kyrgyz national radio during which she disseminated health information obtained from the Internet. Kaliya has also recently spearheaded efforts to train nurses from the Institute on using computers and the Internet.

In July, the LRC of the Niyazov Medical Consultative Center in Ashgabat was featured on central Turkmen television during the program, "World of Computers."

The LRC at the University of Trnava in Slovakia has organized several courses this year, including a very successful course for nurses from all over Slovakia on how to use the Internet, an international course on the use of a new software for monitoring the quality of drinking water (conducted in cooperation with National Institute of Hygiene), and several computer and Internet training courses for the administrative staff of the university.

Ion Gutu, the information coordinator from the Public Health Directorate in Constanta, Romania, is working to open an affiliate of the LRC at Constanta Municipal Hospital.

In cooperation with Institute for Health Sector Development (IHSD, London, UK), European Observatory on Health Care System (at the WHO-EURO, Copenhagen, DK) and the National Health Management Center (NHMC, Tbilisi, Georgia), the National Information Learning Center (NILC) in Tbilisi, Georgia has begun participating in the Repository of Health Care Reform Documents project. Through this project, which is being funded by DFID (Know How Fund, UK), the NILC Web site will serve as a mirror server for making electronic documents dealing with health reform more widely available.

Per the request of the Ministry of Health, Dmitry Zverev, information coordinator from the Moscow EMS Center, is developing a web page for the Institute of Continuing Education.

Following the Y2K preparation training provided during the information coordinator workshop in July, Julia Muravievskaya from Dubna City Health Administration gave a presentation to colleagues at the Moscow Oblast Health Department to help them prepare their own information systems for Y2K. Julia offered to provide the Health Department with resources and support in dealing with any problems they encountered.

The Donetsk Oblast Trauma Hospital has registered its Web site (<http://www.trauma.donetsk.ua/>), which provides a wide range of health information, with the "Health on the Net" Foundation (HON), a Geneva-based not-for-profit, which has elaborated a code of conduct for the provision of authoritative and reliable medical information on the Internet (see <http://wolfgang.hcuge.ch/>). By signing up to the HONCode, the Donetsk partners have agreed to regulate their site to guarantee that the health information that they provide meets a range of criteria intended to ensure that readers know the source and purpose of the information they are reading. Also, Svetlana Chelakh and her colleagues at the hospital have recently created a web page for the Donetsk Oblast Cardiology Dispensary ([www.trauma.donetsk.ua/cor](http://www.trauma.donetsk.ua/cor)) and are now working on creating personal web pages for doctors in the region.

Jarmila Potomkova of Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic, took part in the international workshop "Towards quality in medical information services - the virtue of the virtual environment," held in Tartu, Estonia on 30 June - 2 July. The seminar was organized by the European Association for Health Information and Libraries. Jarmila co-authored a poster session on the "Contribution of modern information technology to enhancement of medical library services in the Czech Republic".

During the November 1999 technology workshop, Yuri Filts, information coordinator from L'viv polyclinic No.5, created an informative Ukrainian-language Web site for his institution. The site introduces each of the polyclinic's departments and staff; partnership relations with health care organizations in Cleveland, Ohio; the Learning Resource Center; Internet searching capabilities; and numerous links to local area resources such as medical institutions, regional and city information, Internet providers, media and technology. (<http://www.aiha.com/english/partners/lviv3/index.htm>)

In November 1999, Ion Gutu, information coordinator from Constanta, Romania, created a Web site for the Public Health Directorate of Constanta County. This Romanian-language Web site offers visitors a detailed directory of family medicine physicians, information request forms, a collection of Internet medical resources and extensive demographic data for Constanta county. The Web site also hosts an on-line discussion forum "Discutii" open to everyone. (<http://www.aiha.com/english/partners/constantawwwroot/>)

### **Promoting LRC / Partner Sustainability**

Eva Lesenkova of the Postgraduate Medical School in Prague, has written a grant proposal to the Czech Ministry of Health to support the LRC's efforts to produce professional publications.

Jarmila Potomkova of Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic submitted a grant proposal in November to the Czech Ministry of Education Grant Agency. The grant would cover the costs of a 4-year subscription to 11 different pharmacology and toxicology journals as well as the purchase of a copier and printer, which would enable the University library to provide a digital document delivery service.

Since the end of 1998, the LRC at Semipalatinsk Gynecology Hospital has been charging fees for various computer services (copying, printing, etc.) in order to cover the costs of maintaining the LRC. The hospital has also begun inputting patient discharge summaries into a database and charging patients a nominal fee for a printout of the record. Together, these fees have been used to finance the purchase of paper, printer cartridges and diskettes for the LRC.

The Women's Clinic at Tallinn Central Hospital is planning to purchase a new ultrasound device, which will come with a DICOM workstation, which will enable staff to conduct on-line consultations during ultrasound examinations.

The commission for accreditation of oblast health care institutions in Donetsk Oblast recently visited the Donetsk Oblast Trauma Hospital. According to the information coordinator, Svetlana Chelakh, who is also the deputy chief physician for the Department of Administration, the commission was impressed with the hospital's use of information technology, including the information provided through the LRC as well as the use of databases to monitor patient outcomes.

In collaboration with Zhyldyz Ismailova from the Kyrgyz Medical Academy, Galina Sergeeva from the Institute of Oncology and Radiology in Bishkek successfully negotiated a subscription to Medline on CD-ROM with SilverPlatter, Inc. SilverPlatter offered a special discount for a 3-year subscription to the CD-ROMs, which will be shared by the two partner institutions. The Medical Academy also donated 7 used 386 computers to the Institute.

### **Internet Consultations**

In September, Alexander Meshkov from Stavropol City Hospital No. 2 corresponded with physicians at a burn center in Nizhny Novgorod to get a consultation in treating a burn patient. As a result of this correspondence, a consultant from the burn center went to Stavropol to treat the patient.

Alexei Nekrasov of the Medical Consultative Center in the name of Niyazov in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan has been helping staff from the MRI department with consultations by scanning MRI images and sending these by e-mail. They have developed an active collaboration with a physician from the Almaty Diagnostic Center, which has greatly helped the Turkmen neurologists in improving their diagnostic capabilities.

Andrei Ureche from Republican Clinical Hospital in Chisinau, Moldova, recently worked with Larisa Konovalova from Kiev Children's Hospital No. 2 to support the treatment of a child with phenylketonuria. Dr. Ureche helped Larisa by negotiating with a local company in Chisinau to obtain the dietary supplements needed to treat the child.

Tereze Veinberga of the Riga Maternity Hospital recently scanned an ultrasound picture and sent it by e-mail to the Neonatology Department at Kosice Faculty Hospital to request a consultation on a newborn with renal problems. Working with Dr. Peter Krcho from Kosice, Dr. Veinberga was able to diagnose the patient with hydronephrosis and successfully treat the patient.

In November, Ilya Razmadze from Tbilisi State Medical University helped a colleague from the OB/GYN department consult by e-mail with a colleague from the University of Virginia in order to diagnose a patient.

In December, Galina Sergeeva from the Institute of Oncology and Radiology in Bishkek helped her colleagues with an e-mail consultation for a patient with inflammatory breast cancer. Using the AIHA partnership electronic discussion lists and other e-mail contacts, they received 7 useful responses from health professionals in the US and Russia who had experience with similar cases. As a result of the consultation, the patient has been able to avoid surgery and is continuing radiotherapy and chemotherapy. A physician from North Carolina also wrote Galina to let her know that their local newspaper and television station are planning to do a story about this e-mail connection.

### **Communications And Information Exchange**

Anesthesiologists from Murmansk City Ambulance Hospital are regularly communicating by e-mail with colleagues from Petrozavodsk University. As a result of this collaboration, physicians have been receiving information on new directions in medical research as well as methodological recommendations.

Trnava University in Slovakia has been working on a health education project in Nairobi, Kenya and has been actively using e-mail to communicate with teachers there. Through this project, the University has setup a clinic in Nairobi, and using the Internet they were also able to contact WHO to receive useful worksheets and textbooks on malaria, sleeping disease and other tropical diseases.

Olga Asatiany and her colleagues at the EMS Training Center in Tbilisi are working on a project funded by the Georgian Ministry of Health to develop a disaster management system for Georgia and the Caucasus region. As part of this project, they are planning to develop a toxicology information consulting service, which will involve a network of centers and health care institutions throughout the region, all of which will be connected to e-mail and the Internet in order to facilitate effective communication.

Nazir Buriev, information coordinator at the Tajik Medical University, frequently presents scientific reports on the scientific capabilities of e-mail and the Internet to the Student Council and at scientific conferences held at the University and at the Tajik Institute of Postgraduate Education. The materials from these conferences are published and disseminated throughout Tajikistan.

The Aid to Children at Risk Foundation in Petržalka, Slovakia has regularly been using information technology to promote its goals of ending domestic violence. Using the Internet, Jana Sturova, the director of the Hope Center, is comparing cases of abused women in Slovakia with cases in the U.S. While she finds many social and cultural differences, she has found that following the approved approach to managing cases of domestic violence has improved the effectiveness of their work.

Larisa Shevtsova from Murmansk City Ambulance Hospital assisted Dr. Slavkina, an endocrinologist, in preparing an e-mail solicitation for colleagues to participate in joint research on thyroid problems. She received several replies from specialists throughout the NIS who are planning to collaborate with her.

Physicians at Vladivostok City Hospital No. 2 recently attended an on-line symposium on "Recent Novel Therapies in the Treatment of Acute Coronary Syndromes." Information from the symposium was also disseminated among physicians at the hospital.

### **Health Policy Change and Medical Curriculum Reform**

Besik Lukhutashvili, information coordinator from the new LRC at the National Health Management Center in Tbilisi, recently helped his colleagues to find information on the structure of health and social affairs ministries in various European countries. The information he collected (from Austria, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Denmark, Iceland, Estonia, and Finland) will be used in planning for the optimal unification of the Georgian Ministries of Health and Social Security.

For most of the past four years, full Internet access has not been available in Tajikistan and partners in Dushanbe have had to rely primarily on e-mail to access information. Doing searches by e-mail using FTP and email-request servers, however, Timur Khasanov from Dushanbe Medical College has been able to access information to create updated literature reviews. Timur reports that this has enabled faculty to introduce new methods in the clinical and nursing curricula at the College.

Staff at Moldova Medical and Pharmacy University in Chisinau have been using the ZdravReform CD-ROM (provided to all partnership LRCs) to obtain information on health care reform. They are using these materials to publish methodological guidelines on setting up health insurance as well as licensing and accreditation systems.

### **Application of Information Technology, Telemedicine, and Database Information Systems**

The Hope Center, working with domestic violence victims in Slovakia, has developed a database of clients, which they are updating daily. The database also includes specialists who provide support to the Center, including psychologists, police stations, and legal institutions. The database helps the Center's staff to prepare useful information sheets and contact lists for clients.

Saule Kozhabekova, the information coordinator from the new LRC at the Almaty School of Public Health, has begun an e-mail distance learning program to help students who have been trained on using computer technologies. The school provides e-mail addresses to each of the students so that they can

complete assignments electronically. All students of the School of Public Health receive training on computers and the Internet as part of their regular curriculum.

Working with a graduate student from the pulmonology department, Zhuldyz Abdrakhmanova from the Institute of Pediatric and Children's Surgery in Almaty has created a database on the epidemiology of asthma. This database contains information collected during epidemiologic research surveys, and will support the Institute's participation in an international research program on pediatric asthma and allergies.

Larisa Shevtsova from Murmansk City Ambulance Hospital developed and implemented a database software program for the ambulatory polyclinic department of our hospital. This program automatically converts patient data into statistical reports, which are required by state medical insurance system.

A nurse from the epidemiology department at the Inspectorate of Public Health in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, has created an Access database for monitoring the distribution of vaccines through the Inspectorate's various vaccination campaigns.

Utilizing the powers of the Internet to improve health management education and training, the Web site for the Faculty of Management of the University of Economics in Jindrichuv Hradec, Czech Republic had recently expanded to include a new section of downloadable materials for students. These downloadable electronic documents, in MS Word, PDF, PowerPoint and HTML formats, were developed by the university faculty and include health management-related case studies, lectures and reports. The new section also offers students information on schedules and exam results. ([www.fm.vse.cz/isfmpublic/](http://www.fm.vse.cz/isfmpublic/))

Following the database training provided at the information coordinator training workshop in July, Helen Phagava of the National Information Learning Center in Tbilisi has developed a pharmaceutical database, which provides information on the various medications available at pharmacies in Tbilisi.

Physicians at the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Zagreb, Croatia, are regularly using the newly acquired digital camera at the LRC to capture images of skin rashes and other conditions. These images are being saved in a database and are being used for lectures and continuing medical education.

Physicians at Kosice Faculty Hospital are using the LRC's digital camera to document congenital malformations and to capture digital images of X-rays. The hospital also recently acquired a new computer for running the Neonatology Department database.