

**LRC Highlights**  
**January – March 2003**

AIHA information coordinators recently reported the following activities and accomplishments in their monthly activity reports for the Learning Resource Center (LRC) project.

If you would like more information about any of these highlights, please contact the information coordinator at the partner institution. The e-mail addresses of all AIHA partnership information coordinators are available on AIHA's Web site at:

[www.aiha.com/english/programs/lrc/direct.cfm](http://www.aiha.com/english/programs/lrc/direct.cfm)

For more information about AIHA's Learning Resource Center project, please see AIHA's web site at [www.aiha.com/english/programs/lrc/](http://www.aiha.com/english/programs/lrc/) or contact Mark Storey, AIHA Program Officer for Information and Communication Technology, at [mstorey@igc.org](mailto:mstorey@igc.org).

Contents:

Applications of Evidence-Based Practice  
LRC Outreach Into the Community  
LRCs as Health Promotion Centers  
Promoting LRC / Partner Sustainability  
Application of Information Technology, Telemedicine, and Databases

---

---

**Applications of Evidence-Based Practice**

In order to optimize diagnosis and treatment of patients with acute cystitis, staff at the Oblast Student Hospital in Kharkiv, Ukraine, decided to check whether their existing standards complied with the principles of evidence-based medicine. Their research showed that bacteriological tests for non-complicated cases of cystitis are not justified. Controlled clinical trials have proven the effectiveness of short three-day courses of antibacterial therapy, but a longer (seven-day) treatment was indicated for patients with a higher risk of recurrent infection. Also, they found that the development and implementation of guidelines for acute cystitis therapy usually results in a significant reduction of both diagnostic and treatment costs. Indeed, after the introduction of the guidelines into practice at the hospital, the costs of treatment have decreased by 37%. Following this successful work, the staff are beginning to study and prepare guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of myasthenia.

With the support of the LRC at the Krai Clinical Hospital in Stavropol, Russia, a group of 30 local physicians created a regional chapter of the Russian Society of Evidence-Based Medicine Specialists. The information coordinator, who serves as the vice president of the Stavropol chapter, also represents her region on the board of directors of the Russian EBM Society. The Stavropol EBM chapter members have recently received a donation of the *Clinical Evidence* annual reference guides in Russian from the head of the MediaSphera publishing company who also serves as the president of the Russian EBM Society. At the Stavropol hospital, the LRC is being utilized by an evidence-based practice working group, which includes representatives from most hospital departments. The group has organized monthly seminars for physicians to introduce EBP concepts and discuss popular EBP Web sites. The next phase includes practical training sessions on search strategies and critical appraisal skills.

The LRC staff at the Mirkasimov Republican Hospital in Baku, Azerbaijan, have been actively promoting evidence-based practice among hospital staff and patients. They organized two introductory training sessions for a group of about 20 physicians focusing on the basic concepts, search strategies and appraisal of information. The physicians are considering establishing an association to promote EBP concepts among a wider audience. Patients and members of the community who participate in the *Diabetes Club* at the hospital learned about EBP during one of the recent club meetings. Patients were very interested to hear about the difference between evidence-based medical advice and information taken from other sources. Following this discussion, many patients and their families came to the LRC requesting evidence-based information on diabetes.

Several LRCs have been making their evidence-based resources available to institutional as well as regional mortality review committees. At the Republican Center for Emergency Medicine in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, physicians used MEDLINE and other resources to help determine the cause of death for an appendectomy patient. The physicians came to the conclusion, which was separately confirmed by a pathologist, that the patient died from adult respiratory distress syndrome, which was brought on by several unsuccessful attempts of gastric intubation. In another case, in Astana, Kazakhstan, an obstetrician-gynecologist used EBP resources to justify another physician's actions in the death of a young woman who went into anaphylactic shock during a surgical procedure.

Unsure about the effects of hormone replacement therapy (HRT), a group of physicians from Hospital #2 in Vladivostok, Russia, decided to research the latest evidence on this topic. They found that long term hormone replacement therapy should be offered to women at high risk of osteoporosis or with established osteoporosis. However, long term treatment is associated with increased incidence of breast cancer. Additionally, HRT should not be offered for prevention of cardiovascular disease or to women with a high risk of cardiovascular disease. Vladivostok physicians concluded that women should be counseled about the risks, benefits, and uncertainties of hormone replacement therapy before deciding to start or to stop treatment. For these purposes, they developed a flowchart showing who should be offered hormone replacement therapy.

With the strong support from the institutional administration, the information coordinator at the National Institute for Health Research and Development in Bucharest, Romania, developed a short three-day course on the principles of evidence-based practice for the staff. The course, which was attended by 45 physicians, dentists and healthcare managers, focused on EBP resources, search strategies, critical appraisal, and steps in EBP implementation in health care, health policy and health management.

The LRC staff at the First State Medical Institute in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, have conducted a literature review on the issues of probability and reliability in clinical practice. This review, which was disseminated among university faculty, helped staff to see the advantages and understand the basic concepts of evidence-based practice.

Using EBP resources, the LRC staff and a reproductive health specialist from the Women's Wellness Center in Kutaisi, Georgia, have developed a protocol on epidemiology and diagnosis of osteoporosis. The information coordinator has also conducted several training sessions on the principles of evidence-based practice and disseminated educational EBM booklets at the local OB/GYN hospital, Regional Children's Hospital and Kutaisi Hospital #1.

The LRC staff at the Main Family Medicine Center in Gjilan, Kosovo, has been using Ovid and Cochrane databases to research several treatment questions raised by local physicians. The resources helped to determine drug therapy to reduce high fever in children, suggesting the use of Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen. They were also able to determine conditions for hospital referrals of patients with hypertensive crises and which drugs to use for the treatment of different types of colicky pain.

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

Following an Open House at the Maternity Hospital #1 in Kurgan, Russia, the LRC staff received several collaboration offers from local organizations. The head of the professional training center suggested creating a training course for first aid instructors using LRC resources. Local teachers were interested in using the LRC for curricula development in informatics and healthy lifestyles to educate students as well as teachers. The local health promotion center plans to invite the LRC and several hospital staff for a series of lectures on healthy lifestyles. Lastly, the staff of the Kurgan Medical College decided to replicate LRC capabilities at their location and asked for assistance in technical aspects and conceptual design.

Using the Internet, several faculty from the Public Health Department at the Second State Medical Institute in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, found information about the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) and sent a proposal to establish a public health association in Uzbekistan. Three faculty members received a grant to travel to the EUPHA conference held in Germany. Currently, they are in the process of further developing their plans to establish a Public Health Association of Uzbekistan.

To promote family medicine and to organize special family health programs in Albania, a group of about 30 physicians in the Lezha district of Albania decided to create the first family medicine association in the country. With the help of the LRC information coordinator at the Primary Healthcare Directorate in Lezha, the physicians have established contacts with the European and global chapters of the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) who promised to assist in the initial setup of the Albanian association. The physicians hope to eventually expand their membership to all family physicians in Albania and to join the European chapter of WONCA.

The LRC staff at the Emergency Medical Scientific Center in Yerevan, Armenia, is publishing a four-page newsletter called *Medicine News* for distribution among staff and patients. The newsletter includes articles and new information found on the Internet, seasonal disease prevention advice and LRC contact information and resources.

The LRC staff at the Fergana Affiliate of the Republican Center for Emergency Medicine in Uzbekistan is collaborating with the staff of the locally produced pharmacology bulletin, which is being disseminated among city and regional healthcare institutions. One section of this native-language publication is devoted to the information and resources available at the LRC.

### **LRCs as Health Promotion Centers**

The staff of the Center for Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Diseases at City Polyclinic #36 in Minsk, Belarus, used information found on the Internet to prepare a presentation on low cholesterol nutrition for a patient training session at one of the city polyclinics. The new information drew a lot of attention not only from patients, but from physicians as well, who asked for additional resources. In response to this request, presenters and the LRC staff decided to

develop an educational brochure with information and further reading suggestions on healthy lifestyles, and on prevention of cardiovascular and chronic noninfectious diseases. The staff plan to disseminate this brochure among patients, nurses and physicians.

The LRC staff at the Schuche Rayon Hospital in Kurgan oblast, Russia, has been providing the local sanitary and epidemiologic surveillance service with the latest information about HIV/AIDS. The LRC plans to participate in a regional educational and awareness action, which is being spearheaded by the surveillance service, and will prepare lectures, brochures and presentations for local health professionals.

As part of a health education campaign for miners, the LRC staff at the City Hospital #25 in Donetsk, Ukraine, developed materials on varicose disease prevention. They have also created educational brochures on prevention of hemorrhoids and tetanus.

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

Using grant funds from the Exxon Azerbaijan Operating Company, the LRC staff at the Mirkasimov Republican Hospital in Baku, Azerbaijan, have developed and printed 2,000 copies of educational brochures: "A Healthy Child," "Your and Your Child's Nutrition" and "Controlling Your Pain." These Azeri-language brochures will be distributed in cooperation with the International Medical Corps (IMC) among refugees. As part of the same grant, the LRC staff are also working on a publication for diabetes patients and their families.

The LRC at the Republican Education Center for Family Medicine in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, has leased its LCD projector and other equipment to a local advertising newspaper for its photo contest. In addition to the monetary contribution, which helped the LRC to replenish office supplies, the newspaper advertised the LRC and its services to the public.

The department of Preventive Medicine at the Odessa State Medical University in Ukraine has applied for a Soros Foundation grant for a *Tobacco Control Policy* project. In addition to the project activities, the requested funds are planned to cover supplies and Internet connectivity for the LRC through 2004.

As part of a Soros Foundation grant, the staff of the Kazakhstan School of Public Health (KSPH) in Almaty are using the LRC to research international educational standards and to develop curricula materials, which will be used to publish a textbook on public health. Additionally, KSPH received another Soros grant for distance learning as well as World Health Organization funding to install a dedicated line to support distance learning activities.

With the grants from the Czech Ministries of Health and Education, the medical library at Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic, has purchased a specialized collection of pharmacology and toxicology periodicals, installed a video data projector for the LRC room, and set up a reading room for biomedical research, which includes six computers with Internet access and a 120-book reference library.

The Department of Public Health and Health Management at the Moldova Medical and Pharmacy University in Chisinau has received a \$20,000 grant from CDC and the Open Society Institute to develop e-learning courses in public health.

### **Application of Information Technology, Telemedicine, and Databases**

In addition to the teleconsultations that regularly take place between physicians at the Medical Sanitary Unit #50 in Sarov, Russia, and the specialists at the Institute of Pediatrics and Children's Surgery in Moscow, the two sides are now using videoconferencing technology for distance education. The first distance learning session, conducted by a psychoneurology and epilepsy specialist in Moscow, focused on cephalgia among children. The videoconference, followed by a question and answer session, was attended by 25 Sarov pediatricians.

Physicians from the City Polyclinic #36 in Minsk, Belarus, have been actively using the Surginet and Onconet Web sites to consult with other colleagues about two special cases. In the case of a young woman with lymphoma of the mediastinum, oncologists suggested additional diagnostic tests, which helped to correctly identify the type of lymphoma, leading to successful polychemotherapy treatments. The second case of a patient with a metastatic spread of the stomach cancer, which was discovered during an operation, was discussed among several surgeons who suggested various treatment approaches.

The LRC staff at the National Center of Pediatrics and Children's Surgery in Almaty, Kazakhstan, have provided support and offered computer training to twelve pediatric nurses who participated in a distance learning experiment conducted by the Republican Medical College. The LRC received all lectures and informational materials on pediatric emergency medicine via e-mail and passed the resources to the participating nurses. After two weeks of studying and preparation, the nurses were trained to use the computers and to fill out and submit their exams electronically. The nurses were very satisfied with the convenience of this educational experience. The Republican Medical College is working to set up similar distance learning programs with other healthcare institutions in the country.