

LRC Highlights October – December 2004

AIHA information coordinators from recently established Learning Resource Centers reported the following activities and accomplishments during the last quarter.

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.

LRC Highlights are meant to demonstrate the impact of access to health information, not the effectiveness or otherwise of different treatments. The content is anecdotal and is **not** intended as a source of reliable health information in itself. Healthcare providers are advised not to change practice on the basis of anecdotal material. Healthcare providers should consult evidence-based textbooks, guidelines and systematic reviews before making any changes in practice.

For more information about AIHA's Learning Resource Center project, please go to lrc.aiha.com or contact Mark Storey, AIHA Program Officer for Information and Communication Technology, at mstorey@igc.org.

Contents:

- Improving Access to Resources
- Promoting Evidence-based Practice
- Telemedicine, Information Systems, and Databases
- Update on Progress of Associate Member LRCs

Improving Access to Resources

In November, the LRC staff and volunteers at the First Tashkent Medical Institute in Uzbekistan conducted an Open House/Seminar entitled "Internet Resources in Medical Science and Practice." The event included six presentations: the role of the LRC in improving the scientific process, the LRC Web site, the importance of evidence-based medicine for students, the Cochrane Collaboration, information searching using the Internet, and searching for evidence-based information. The seminar was organized for residents, master's and doctoral students, staff of scientific laboratories, and heads of departments and clinics. A number of outside guests included the prorectors and department heads of other medical institutes located in Tashkent as well as the Ministry of Health representatives. The LRC staff also conducted a brief survey assessing the participants' knowledge of evidence-based practice. All of the seminar materials have been posted on the LRC Web site at www.lrcuz.nm.ru. This Web site also includes the electronic versions of the several national journals, including "Stomatology" and "The Medical Journal of Uzbekistan."

The HIV/AIDS Information Resource Center at the City AIDS Control Center in St. Petersburg, Russia, has been providing Internet access and CD-ROM-based resources to local physicians. A physician working at the "Patient School" used the Internet to find information on nutrition and

the daily regimen of people with Hepatitis B and C for a meeting with patients and their relatives. A narcologist updated her treatment practices based on the “Guidelines for care of HIV+ women” CD-ROM. Finally, an epidemiologist searched the Internet for information on the treatment of HIV/AIDS-related opportunistic infections and other complications for a conference presentation.

Following the initial set up of the LRC at the Family Medicine Center in Gjakova, Kosovo, LRC staff have begun to organize regular IT trainings for the Center’s healthcare professionals and other staff. In total, 20 physicians, 135 nurses, and 12 other (administrative, drivers, etc.) staff have received training on basic computer knowledge, use of e-mail, and Internet searching. Since the initial training, the LRC has become increasingly well-used. For example, prior to the LRC training only about 3% of the staff had active e-mail addresses; now almost 50% of the staff have set up their own individual e-mail accounts, which they are accessing at the LRC. The LRC is also accommodating many physicians who are searching for medical information in Albanian and Croatian. The LRC staff plans to conduct training on such topics as Medline search, Cochrane reviews, and other Internet resources for those healthcare workers who have at least a basic knowledge of English. The LRC staff are also hoping to provide English-language training to those physicians and nurses who do not speak English.

Promoting Evidence-based Practice

The EBP Specialist and the Information Coordinator at Iashvili Children’s Hospital in Tbilisi, Georgia, organized four two-hour training sessions for 15 hospital physicians. The topics covered at the sessions included the basics of evidence-based healthcare, study designs, types of questions/finding the evidence, and health care resources on the Internet. The LRC staff developed Georgian-language materials for each of the sessions.

The EBP Specialist at the First Tashkent Medical Institute in Uzbekistan organized four training sessions covering the basics of evidence-based medicine, the Cochrane reviews, and medical Internet searching for sixth- and seventh-year medical students as well as for medical staff from the departments of physical therapy and neurology. A total of 27 people attended these one-hour sessions. As a follow up to this basic training, the LRC staff are planning to disseminate brochures and CD-ROMs with evidence-based medicine materials for faculty and students.

Telemedicine, Information Systems, and Databases

Using AIHA’s EurasiaHealth Teleconsultation mailing list, the LRC staff at the Gudushauri National Medical Center in Tbilisi, Georgia, received information about a variety of treatment options for a 19-year old patient with acute sepsis following a spontaneous abortion. After the hospital ICU surgeons performed a hysterectomy, the patient’s condition remained severe, so the treating physicians sought advice from a variety of specialists, including general and thoracic surgeons, ICU specialists, and lung ventilator technicians. The LRC staff almost immediately was able to receive treatment recommendations from former partners and other colleagues in Georgia, Russia, Slovakia, and the United States. Thanks to these recommendations, the patient was treated successfully and has now been discharged from the hospital.

Update on Progress of Associate Member LRCs

Several healthcare institutions in Russia have been collaborating with graduated LRCs in order to establish similar capabilities and resources for their healthcare professionals. The Information Coordinator at the Krai Clinical Hospital in Stavropol, Russia, has been providing guidance to the Scientific Society of Students and Young Scientists at the Stavropol Medical Academy who would like to establish an LRC and offer students training and resources on evidence-based medicine. The Information Coordinator has already provided a variety of LRC project materials on EBM and is planning several mini-courses on biomedical information searches for the society members (about 30 people). Interest in the LRC model also arose in Novosibirsk where the Information Coordinator from the Central Rayon Hospital in Tomsk gave a presentation at a recent medical conference. The head of the Novosibirsk City Association of Private Practice Physicians was intrigued by the potential of the LRC model to improve the skills of city healthcare professionals and provide access to up-to-date information. She is interested in establishing an LRC for the association members and has been collaborating with her Tomsk colleague and AIHA staff to discuss ideas, resources, and implementation steps.