Dear Esteemed members of the APACPH:

First of all, I would like to thank our immediate past president Professor Richard F. Southby for his remarkable contribution to APACPH in setting up its system, prospects and strategy. I would also like to thank Professor Walter Patrick, the APACPH Secretary General, for his outstanding ability of coordination and administration. As such, the APACPH members have stayed tightly together as a family. My sincere thanks also goes to our Honorary Secretary, Professor Brian Oldenburg, for his great efforts in organizing the APACPH Directorate Office, to Professor Ian Rouse for his contribution to Treasurer work, and to Ms. Sonya Firth and Mr. Desmond Gul for their help with preparing the conference and communication.

I am extremely grateful to Professor Wahyun Low and Professor Colin Binns and the editorial committee for their contribution to the Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health (APJPH). We will do our best to promote the position of our journal and have it listed in the science citation index (SCI) as soon as possible.

The 2007 Tokyo Meeting was a tremendous success, for which I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Professor Yasuo Kagawa, Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee; Professor Kenji Hayashi, Co-Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee; Professor Masamine Jimba, University of Tokyo, and all the organizing committee members.

The Saitama Declaration: “Strengthening public health programs for the prevention of lifestyle-related diseases in the Asia Pacific region” has made a great impact on public health, especially in the areas of folate fortification, human nutrigenomics, chronic disease causation, modification of lifestyles, the promotion of good nutrition, and physical activity.

The future APACPH developments will follow its strategies, namely:

1. Recruiting 3-5 new members to join the APACPH annually.
2. Supporting the 2008 Hanoi Conference fully and inviting more members to attend this meeting.
3. Making an utmost effort to put our journal into the SCI list and encouraging APACPH members to cite our journal during the year 2008.
4. Encouraging joint research in some specific fields for the APACPH members.
5. Jointly publishing a textbook for public health or some specific fields, such as peace and health, injury prevention, AVN, etc.
6. Emphasizing ethical issues, social responsibility issues (CSR) and humanitarian aids.
7. Creating a great impact on public health fields to attract the attention of the academic field of public health across the world.
8. Doing any other business suggested by the APACPH members.

Finally, it is my great pleasure to take on the position as APACPH president. I am looking forward to the excitement of working with you, my great colleagues. I believe that we can make continued success to improve public health with our conjoint effort.

Sincerely,

Wen-Ta Chiu, M.D., Ph.D.
President, APACPH
Background: The Asia-Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health

APACPH is a consortium of over 50 public health institutions in 18 countries across the Region. The Vision of the Consortium is to achieve the highest possible level of health of all the people of the nations of the Asia-Pacific region. APACPH aims to enhance Regional capacity to improve the quality of life and to address major public health challenges through the delivery of education, research and population health services by member institutions.

APACPH supports activities that forward its five main objectives:

(i) To enhance the quality and relevance of educational and training programs in public health;
(ii) To expand knowledge, improve skills and demonstrate effective interventions;
(iii) To raise awareness of current, emerging, and re-emerging public health issues and develop programs of action for their resolution;
(iv) To enhance the capacity and sustainability of public health systems;
(v) To assist in policy and leadership development for health;

APACPH has five Regional Offices, holds an Annual conference on a topical public health issue and publishes the Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health, the only English language journal of its type in the Region.

APACPH Resource Directory

The Resource Directory is a program to try and capture and consolidate a brief profile of all the member institutions in terms of what education and training programs and research expertise are available in each institution. This program is currently being undertaken by Dr Paula Palmer, Chair of the Program Committee.

As member representatives, you would have received an automated email from the Directorate Office asking you to complete a survey of your institution online. We would appreciate if you could complete the survey in as much detail as you can provide by the end of the month. Once the data is collected, we can then proceed with the next stage to start compiling it and to present it in a Directory format which can be made accessible by others.

If you have not received any emails regarding this, please contact the Desmond at desmond@apacph.org. Thank you for your co-operation and participation in this program.

Online Access to APJPH

By now, as paid member institutions, you would have received your first copy of the Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health (APJPH) for this year, published by Sage Publishing. In addition to your printed copy, you will also be getting online access which you will first need to activate. Sage Publishing would have sent you instructions on this. Please note that single online access is given to each member institution and the access codes would have been sent to the member representatives. If you have not activated you online access, please follow the instructions below to access:

1. Please visit http://apjph.sagepub.com and click on “Activation/Acct Mgr”. Then click on “Activate your editor/society member subscription” on the Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health Subscriber Help & Services page.
2. You will be prompted to enter your Member Number and select your society from a pull-down menu. After you enter your Member Number, select your society, and click “Submit”.
3. Follow the simple instructions on the screen. Activation takes just a few minutes; you need only activate once!
4. Once complete, return to the journal homepage and select the journal cover for access to the current issues or click “Current Issue”.
5. To select an issue from the archive, click “Select an Issue from the Archive”, located in the middle of the screen.
6. To search for articles, either click “Search for Articles” or use the quick search located at the bottom of the screen.
APACPH Mini Grants Announcement

APACPH will be accepting its first round of mini grant applications beginning February. The application packet is available on the APACPH website. The objective of the mini grants program is to provide funding for research and training projects among and between our members resulting in:

• Preliminary, pilot data in support of future larger research and training grant submissions;
• Training and capacity building activities;
• Research (student mentorship) opportunities between students or early career professionals and mid- and senior-level research faculty.

Funding categories and budgetary caps are listed below:
1. Research projects (at least one collaborator must be from a developing nation) - up to $US 5,000
2. Training and capacity building activities (to be conducted in developing nations) – up to $US 5,000
3. Graduate students conducting thesis/dissertation research (a mentor with expertise in the chosen research area is required) – up to $US 1,000

Preference will be given to proposals that have lead investigators from low and middle developing nations; are interdisciplin ary in scope, and that bring together applicants from across institutions. We also encourage proposals that provide matching funds and/or technical support at low or no cost to the lead investigator.

Projects will be funded for up to 12 months in most cases. Upon completion of the project, funded applicants are to submit a report of their study and findings and an abstract for the next APACPH Conference.

All applications need to be submitted by February 29 and notification on successful projects will be given by March 30.

More information are provided in the Guidelines and Application Form, which can be downloaded from the APACPH website www.apacph.org

We look forward to receiving your submissions. Questions about the process or application can be sent to either Paula Palmer: ppalmer@usc.edu or Desmond Gul: desmond@apacph.org

APACPH wishes to thank the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the International agencies for their support.
39th APACPH Conference 2007 Overview

On 22 November, the Asia-Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health held its General Assembly meeting at Kagawa Nutrition University (KNU) in Tokyo, Japan. There were over 30 member representatives from Asia and Australia.

Matters of discussion at this meeting included the new launch of the APACPH journal under Sage Publishing, mini-grants program, Cambodia Initiative program, the publicly available Resource Directory for APACPH and other updates and future developments of APACPH’s activities. The new President and President-Elect were also elected with Prof Wen-Ta Chiu (Taipei Medical University, Taiwan) and Prof Tomiko Hokama (University of the Ryukyus, Japan) taking on those roles respectively. In addition, 2 new members (BRAC University, Bangladesh and Tzu-Chi University, Taiwan) have also joined APACPH but only 1 was able to make it for the induction ceremony.

Following the General Assembly, the 39th APACPH Conference took place over the next 3 days (23-25 November) at KNU. Prof Yasuo Kagawa, Prof Atsuko Isoda and their team successfully organised this conference for about 500 participants. The theme of the conference was ‘Lifestyle-related Diseases Prevention: The Challenge for Nutrition and Public Health’ and had over 15 different theme sessions and tracks for the conference.

Awards were also presented to Dr Hideo Shinozaki (Prof Kazue K McLaren Leadership Achievement Award) and Prof Yoshioko Kagawa (APACPH Public Health Recognition Award) for their contribution to public health in the region.

A lively and varied program and spectacular social events and cultural performances made this a truly memorable conference and experience for the participants.

A series of pre-conference workshops for the Early Career Network, a group of emerging public health students and early career professionals was hosted by the National Institute of Public Health, Japan. It went successfully as participants learnt more about the use of qualitative research methods and field training.

Plans are now underway for the next General Assembly and Conference in Hanoi, Vietnam next year.

Minutes for the APACPH Executive Board Meeting and General Assembly Meeting will be posted shortly on the APACPH website - www.apacph.org - under the 'Members Only' section.

New Courses for 2008 Spring Semester at ICUH

In collaboration with APACPH, the International Cyber University for Health (ICUH) was established at Yonsei University, Korea in May 2004 to provide public health education in the Asia-Pacific region via a distance online learning program, offered free of charge. Lectures are conducted by invited internationally renowned experts and the courses are run on a credit exchange program that may serve the academic needs of graduate students. Credits earned by ICUH students are formally recognised and are counted towards a degree in the Master of Public Health. Certain universities under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement will also allow the transference of course credits to the student’s respective university.

A problem-based learning approach will be adopted in these courses and all courses will be conducted in English. The spring semester starts from March 3 to June 20.

Courses for Spring Semester, 2008: System Analysis and Design in Healthcare
International Child Health
Injury Prevention
Oral Health

For registration forms and more information, please visit the website http://icuh.yonsei.ac.kr or contact icuh@yuhs.ac.kr
2007 was an exciting year for the Early Career Network. Two successful workshops were held on Qualitative research methods; a regional workshop in Sri Lanka in August and the ECN annual workshop at the APACPH Conference in Japan last November. The workshops were facilitated by Dr Ilse Blignault from the University of New South Wales, were well attended and feedback was positive.

The 2007 APACPH Conference in Japan also saw the launch of the ECN organised ‘Reflections’ photo competition. The exhibition made a big impact and five winners were selected from 54 images displayed. Congratulations to Geeta Pardeshi from India for winning first prize for the photo entitled 'Existential Plights and Deprived Rights'. Details of the winners and their winning entries can be found at http://www.apacph.org/site/pages/ECN_Photo_Competition. Congratulations to Ashan Pathirana and Isurujith Liyanage from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka for organising this event. Details of the second ‘Reflections’ photography competition to be held at the APACPH conference in Hanoi, Vietnam this November, will be available shortly.

Activities for 2008 are already at an advanced stage. The University of the Philippines will be the location for this year’s regional workshop (date to be confirmed.) Discussions are also under way with representatives from the Hanoi School of Public Health, this year’s APACPH conference hosts.

The theme for this year’s regional and pre-conference workshop, as selected by ECN members, will be Health Advocacy. This theme was put forward in recognition that research must be translated into policy to have a real impact on health outcomes. A facilitator for these workshops is currently being sourced and further details for both workshops will be posted on the ECN website http://www.apacph.org/site/pages/Early_Career_Network

Another key activity for the ECN in 2008 is to establish an ECN newsletter that caters specifically for the needs of early career professionals. The first issue is due to be published in March.

The ECN has previously facilitated training opportunities and support for its members to attend workshops and the APACPH conference and hopes to continue this service to its members in 2008. The network is indebted to its mentors, APACPH, conference and workshop hosts for supporting its activities.

APACPH members are urged to support the network by encouraging students and young staff to register, by assisting them to participate in ECN activities and by considering acting as a host institution for a regional workshop. For further information on hosting a regional workshop please contact ECN Chair, Kolitha Wickramage - Kolitha@unsw.edu.au

For more information on ECN or to register visit http://www.apacph.org/site/pages/Early_Career_Network or email Sonja Firth at s.firth@qut.edu.au
2 new members have recently joined the APACPH family. One of them is the BRAC University James P Grant School of Public Health in Bangladesh who is led by Prof Mushtaque Chowdhury.

Set up in 2005, two batches of 51 participants from more than 12 countries have now graduated from BRAC through its Master of Public Health (MPH) program. While some have continued on to doctoral-level studies, most are now back in their own countries and have taken up responsibilities in government, donor agencies, media and nongovernmental organisations. Links are thus formed between BRAC and these organisations, ensuring a more effective and practical approach to public health through close interaction with policy-makers and implementers of interventions.

For this year, there are currently 12 students from 11 countries of Asia, Africa, Europe and North America and 18 students from Bangladesh, participating in the 4th intake of the MPH programme.

BRAC has initiated collaborative research with other existing research groups in the country, such as BRAC’s Research and Evaluation Division and the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR). From the research carried out at the school the students learn issues and challenges in global health. The students choose a topic from among the many health interventions being implemented in Bangladesh for their final end-of-the-year course thesis.

Starting with a small nucleus recruited from within the BRAC organisation, the faculty is now growing through recruiting from among the school's own graduates. With the school becoming known, there is also some interest among non-resident Bangladeshis to return. To overcome staff shortage and to bring diversity, adjunct faculty from partner institutions have been employed who also train BRAC's own faculty in good teaching practices.

Curriculum development is an ongoing process and it is constantly reviewed for further improvement and relevance. The BRAC school promotes a field- and problem-based experiential learning approach. Village exposure is the foundation of the program. The students spend half of their 12 months in a village campus allowing continuous interactions with villagers as well as the local health systems. International students are paired with their local counterparts to overcome the language barrier.

The inextricable link between health and economic development is now well established in Bangladesh. Other than the MPH, the school has also initiated short courses for the mid level Health sector managers, government officials and public health experts involved in health sector reform to receive comprehensive knowledge on effects of poverty and improve equity in managing, financing and delivery of health care services. These courses include:

- Health Equity
- Health Care Financing
- Health System Research Development

Earlier this year in January, the James P Grant School of Public Health in conjunction with facilitators from the USA, organised the Writers Without Borders workshop on January 6 and 7 and January 11 and 12. The participants were mainly MPH students (previous batches) and some staff from ICDDR. This workshop was facilitated by teachers from the USA - Dr. Tim Brooks and Dr. Omar Khan. The workshop covered review progress, evaluate writings, share lessons learned from each other - learning how to write scientific information for a general audience and peer-reviewed type writing.
The Chinese University of Hong Kong’s School of Public Health (SPH) is a pioneer in graduate public health education in Hong Kong, introducing the first Master of Public Health (MPH) and the first and only MBA in Health Care in Hong Kong in 1996 and 2002. From 2005 onwards, the SPH has been able to offer research programmes in public health and social medicine as well.

**Master of Public Health**
Each year, some 500 postgraduate students at the SPH receive a firm grounding in professionally recognised public health competencies. The Master of Public Health (MPH) is a globally accepted credential for leadership in the field. Our revised full-time MPH programme, started in 2006, has marked our first step in gaining international recognition as a centre of public health excellence, in both teaching and research. The School’s world-class MPH programme has been successful with graduates from different places, including the USA, Canada, and mainland China.

**MBA in Health Care**
Our MBA in Health Care programme, introduced in 2002, is offered in partnership with The Chinese University of Hong Kong’s Faculty of Business Administration. This MBA is targeted at health care professionals; most of our participants are doctors in administrative roles at public and private health care institutions. In addition to core subjects in business, the programme covers such topics as public health administration, health policy and management, and health care economics. The programme, which reflects an international trend towards specialised MBAs combining general management training with in-depth skills development in specific disciplines, has been well received by the medical community.

**Postgraduate Research Programmes**
Our research programmes set out to support interdisciplinary studies in the field of public health, and to build up the capacity of students in research methodologies associated with public health and populations. Our fields of study are related to the three domains of public health: health protection, health improvement, and health services. Students may specialise in epidemiology, evidence-based health care, occupational medicine, environmental health, infectious diseases, health systems, health policy, health economics, global health, public health law, health education and promotion, social epidemiology, or primary health care.

Other taught postgraduate programmes are available at the SPH, including Master’s and Postgraduate Diploma Programmes. We also offer Diploma programmes, certificate courses, and clinical trial training sessions.

The new School of Public Health building, located at the Prince of Wales Hospital, was opened in 2001. This important asset is the only building in Hong Kong dedicated to teaching and research in public health. The School cooperates closely not only with clinicians, but also with teaching staff from a wide range of disciplines, such as business, sociology, and law. Studies relating to the three interacting domains of public health are both complex and broad.

For more information, please visit [www.sph.cuhk.edu.hk](http://www.sph.cuhk.edu.hk). Inquiries can be made by e-mail to info_sph@cuhk.edu.hk.

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**Call for Abstracts for 40th APACPH Conference 2008**

The call for abstracts for the 2008 APACPH Conference in Hanoi will soon be announced. Abstracts must be in English and not exceed 250 words and submitted online on the conference website [www.apacph2008.org](http://www.apacph2008.org)

Instructions and guidelines will be uploaded on the conference website. Due date for abstracts is 30 May.

The overall theme for the conference is ‘Better public health education and practice for effective response to injuries and emerging public health issues’ and will be hosted by the Vietnam Administration of Preventive Medicine and the Hanoi School of Public Health. For information, please contact the Conference Secretariat at apacph_injury2008@hsph.edu.vn

Please check the conference website regularly for information and updates on the program and abstract submission.
Resource Allocation Phenomenon in a Decentralized Environment
Submitted by Asnawi Abdullah, PhD student, Department Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia and Lecturer, Faculty of Public Health, University Muhammadiyah, Aceh, Naggroe Aceh Darussalam. Email: Asnawi.Abdullah@med.monash.edu.au

Many countries in the Asia Pacific region have implemented decentralized health services to region or district level. The degree of decentralization might be different from one country to another. However, it seems there are similarities in how budgets are allocated to different programmes and services. In theory, under a decentralized health system, with local government having a range of options in planning, financing and service delivery, resource allocation becomes better in terms of both technical and allocative efficiency. Under decentralization, district level has more discretion to allocate the budget as their own priority without any obligations to follow rigid guidelines from a central government. However, in reality, this is not so. There is a serious imbalance in resource allocation between programmes, budget categories and lined items. Since implementing decentralization, some programmes receive sufficient budgets while others face serious insufficient funds, particularly budgets for good public health related programmes such as environmental health and sanitation, health promotion, nutrition and maternal and child health programmes. Interestingly, this phenomenon is happening in many countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, India and in other countries in different regions such as Colombia, Uganda, Paraguay and Ghana. Theses countries have all indicated that budget allocation at district levels need serious attention from both policy makers and researchers.

It is interesting to explore in more detail why this phenomenon is epidemic in many decentralized health systems. Do health planners have similar attitudes and behaviors relating to budget allocation? Can current theories such as principle agent theory, rational choice model of bureaucratic behaviour, and decision space theory help us to understand the underlying factors of this phenomenon? It seems a comprehensive study that involves public health schools in the Asia Pacific exploring such issues is needed to establish soon. I believe under APACPH leadership, a similar model of European Health Systems Observatory can be established in the Asia-Pacific region to study and evaluate this phenomenon.

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World Health Day

World Health Day was created in 1948 by the First World Health Assembly to mark the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO). World Health Day takes place on 7 April annually and serves to raise awareness of key global public health challenges. World Health Day 2008 will mark the 60th anniversary of WHO and the theme for this year is ‘Protecting Health from Climate Change’.

To mark this day, our APACPH member, Monash University will be organising a day symposium in conjunction with the Alfred Medical Research and Education Precinct (AMREP) based in Melbourne. This symposium bears the theme ‘Research supporting policy and practice in low- and middle-income countries’. A series of sub-themes and plenary sessions will be organised such as:
- Climate change and health
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Healthy ageing and non-communicable diseases
- Strengthening district and community health services

This symposium is open to everyone and aims to bring together researchers, practitioners and policy-makers from academia, research institutes, government agencies and NGOs, to exchange experiences, case-studies and ideas on the links between research and improving health program effectiveness and policy in low- and middle-income countries.

Keynote speakers include:
- **Prof Tony McMichael**, Director, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australian National University, Australia
- **Dr Clement Malau**, Secretary of Health, Papua New Guinea
- **Mr Bob McMullan**, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Australia
- **Prof Thandi Puoane**, School of Public Health, University of Western Cape, South Africa
- **Dr K R Thankappan**, Director, Achutha Menon Centre for Health Science Studies, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology, India

Monash University will provide a registration fee waiver to attendees from all non-Australian APACPH member institutions.

Please RSVP your attendance or if you need any assistance or further advice, contact Desmond at the APACPH Directorate Office at desmond@apacph.org

The Symposium will take place from 8.30am-5pm at Coppin Hall, 313 Punt Rd, Melbourne. Visit [http://www.amrep.org.au](http://www.amrep.org.au) for more information.

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Students’ Voice
Calendar of Events

52nd National Conference of Indian Public Health Association
Date: 7-9 March 2008
Location: New Delhi, India
Website: http://www.ipaconference.mamc.ac.in, www.iphaonline.org

Theme - Excellence In Public Health: Key to Global Health
Sub themes: Global Health Security, RCH, NRHM, IPHS & Public Private Partnership, Disaster Preparedness, Adolescent Health,
Health Promotion, Urban Health, Occupational & Environmental Health, etc.
Organized by: Department of Community Medicine, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi 110002, India

Joint Conference - 48th Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention -and- Nutrition, Physical Activity and Metabolism - 2008
Date: 11-15 March 2008
Location: The Broadmoor Hotel - Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA
Website: http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3046690

Join the Council on Epidemiology and Prevention and the Council on Nutrition,
Physical Activity and Metabolism for a unique dual conference at the beautiful The BROADMOOR Colorado Springs. The
two conferences will overlap on March 13, when programs of interest to both councils will be presented.

World Congress of Health Professions
Date: 26-29 March 2008
Location: Perth, Western Australia, Australia
Website: http://www.worldhealthcongress.org/

World Health Day Symposium
Date: 7 April 2008
Location: Melbourne, Australia
Website: http://www.amrep.org.au

Research supporting policy and practice in low- and middle-income countries.
(See article inside for more information)

HEALTH OUTCOMES 2008: Facilitating Knowledge Exchange and Transfer
Date: 30 April - 1 May 2008
Location: Canberra, ACT, Australia
Website: http://chsd.uow.edu.au/ahoc

Health Outcomes Conference 2008 will investigate the state of play of current health outcomes research. The aim is to
consolidate and expand the current knowledge base and to identify best evidence practice to create a healthy and
dynamic health system. Organized by the Australian Health Outcomes Collaboration (AHOC)

Contact

For further information on any of the items mentioned in the newsletter, to include items for the next newsletter, or to
enquire on any APACPH-related business, please contact:

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