



New York State International Training and Research Program

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TWO KEY FOGARTY GRANTS RENEWED

We're pleased to announce that the Fogarty International Center has made two key awards to the New York State International and Training and Research Program following competitive review. The renewal of these programs will allow us to continue our training efforts in Central and Eastern Europe. These continuing grants are the AIDS International Training and Research Program (AITRP) and the Global Infectious Diseases Research Training Program (GID).

The AITRP (Director-Jack DeHovitz, Co-Director-Dale Morse) was initially funded in 1993 to focus on epidemiology and basic science training in the

Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. The US institutions that were initially involved included SUNY Downstate Medical Center, The University at Albany School of Public Health and the New York State Department of Health. During the first 6 years, activities expanded to include the Baltics, Armenia and Georgia. With our renewal in 2000, we expanded our activities into Russia, and added on a new training track in blood safety and the New York Blood Center was added on as a training partner.

Activities for the next five years will focus on four countries in Eastern Europe. These will include Estonia, Russia, Georgia and

Armenia. This evolution reflects the relatively stable transition of Central European biomedical and public health institutions, their recent integration into the European Union, and their relatively stable HIV case rate. We will however continue to support our trainees and key contacts in Central Europe and will continue to coordinate our regional activities with them.

In recognition of the role of injection Drug use (IDU) behind the accelerating epidemic of HIV in the region, we have strengthened our resources in this area by engaging a new US collaborator, National Development and Research Institutes, Inc. (NDR.I). This New York

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NY HIV Consortium: "Identifying Future Directions in International Research"

The New York State International Training and Research Program played a key role in organizing a conference held May 16, 2005 in New York City entitled "Identifying Future Directions in International HIV Research." This

conference was presented by the New York HIV Research Centers Consortium, an organization of over 20 AIDS Research Units in the New York City area. Both the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the

HIV Center at SUNY Downstate are members of this consortium and Dr. DeHovitz served as one of the three members of the steering committee. This year, the steering committee chose to focus on the contributions of these



Dr. Kenneth Bridbord talks about the Fogarty program's many training opportunities

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**Interview with Dmitry Lioznov, MD, PhD
Director, Center for Preventive Medicine
Head, Center for Chronic Viral Infections Research
Pavlov State Medical University, St Petersburg, Russia**



How did you come to be acquainted with the Fogarty Program?

My first training in the Fogarty program was in April 2002; Dr DeHovitz arranged a clinical rotation in management of HIV disease at Weill Cornell Medical College (funded by the Arthur Ashe Foundation for the Defeat of AIDS). In 2003, I directed a World AIDS Foundation funded conference (in three parts) with Dr DeHovitz. These conferences were especially important because they oriented Russian clinicians and researchers with the HIV disease, in order to care for HIV+ patients. We covered epidemiology of HIV, the natural history of the virus, laboratory monitoring, co-infection (with TB), exposure and prophylaxis and many other topics. Then I was a trainee at the International Public Health Summer Institute, John Sparkman Center for International Public Health Education, University of Alabama at Birmingham, USA, from July 7-August 7, 2003. The training increased my knowledge of epidemiological and preventive studies. It also enhanced my understanding of the importance of management and leadership qualities in public health. This summer, I completed a three-week intensive course in biostatistics at Johns Hopkins University.

Describe the focus of your work:

Our work focuses on the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and related diseases, and care for individuals infected with HIV/AIDS, HCV and drug addicts. In 2003, Pavlov State Medical University (PSMU) developed the Center for Chronic Viral Infections Research (which includes an out-patient unit). and in 2004, the Center for Preventive Medicine was created.

Who is at the highest risk for HIV in Russia?

As of November 2004, there were almost 300,000 verified cases of HIV infection in the Russian Federation (RF). According to UNAIDS (*AIDS Epidemic Update: December 2004*; <http://www.unaids.org/bangkok2004/report.html>) it is now estimated that up to 1.5 million people aged 15–49 are living with HIV in the RF, representing 1% of the total population. While the HIV incidence in Russia is 185 per 100,000 in 2003, in St. Petersburg the HIV incidence is far higher at 471 per 100,000. HIV disease prevalence rates are high among young people: 80% of all HIV infected persons had been infected through injection drug using and are younger than 30 years old. According to the non-government organization

Humanitarian Action, which conducts harm reduction programs, in St. Petersburg the HIV and HCV seroprevalence among IDUs is 21% and 80% respectively. While IDU remains the leading risk factor for HIV, heterosexual transmission of HIV is responsible for an increasing percentage of cases (6% in 2000 to 12.6% in 2003).

Which grants are you working on?

In collaboration with SUNY Downstate, we have submitted a proposal entitled *Alcohol Brief Interventions among HIV High Risk Population* to the Civilian, Research and Development Foundation (CRDF). The overall goal of the project is to estimate the impact specific alcohol intervention will have on decreasing self-reported sexual risk behavior and problem drinking among former injecting drug users. We plan to recruit 200 former injecting drug users and provide them 1) a single session brief intervention covering problem drinking and sexual risk, or 2) a three session series of brief interventions covering problem drinking and sexual risk behavior. Both groups will be followed for three months from their last intervention session. Pre-post comparisons will be used to separately assess the effectiveness of the one session intervention and the three session intervention. Comparison of the follow-up data will be used for a comparison of the effectiveness of the three session intervention to the one session intervention. As a result of this study we anticipate that we will be able to develop alcohol interventions appropriate in content, frequency and duration for persons at risk for sexual transmission of HIV and for alcohol abuse. We believe that it is critical to test the effectiveness of brief interventions since these could be implemented in a wide variety of settings at relatively low cost. Given the very limited resources for public health in Russia, identifying effective but inexpensive interventions is a critical research task.

PSMU and SUNY also collaborated on the submission of an NIH (ICOHRTA) grant, *Yale-St. Petersburg TB/AIDS Research and Training Unit*, which was awarded in 2004 (Dr Andrei Kozlov, Director of Biomedical Center in St Petersburg, is the Russian PI). The goal of the project is to secure the resources necessary to build a response to HIV/AIDS and TB epidemics by developing a center of excellence in research training in St.Petersburg. Several clinicians from Russia began training this summer, rotating through clinics at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. A few trainees spent four weeks at the University of Alabama's annual Summer Program in International Health Issues.

Recent Publications by Current/Former Trainees

Holub M, Beran O, Kalanin J, Hnykova J, Spala J, **Rozsypal H** CD38 antigen as a marker for Immunological follow-up in HIV positive patients. *Klin Mikrobiol Infekc Lek.* 2004. 10(5):229-35.

Indrova M, **Reinis M**, Bubenik J, Jandlova T, Bieblova J, Vonka V, Velek J. Immunogenicity of dendritic cell-based HPV16 E6/E7 peptide vaccines: CTL activation and protective effects. *Folia Biol (Praha).* 2004. 50(6):184-93.

Holub M, Helcl M, **Beran O**, Hnykova J, Prihodova J. Kinetics of immune parameters in a patient with sepsis caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes* treated with activated protein C. *Scand J Infect Dis.* 2004. 36(6-7):485-8.

Krekulova L, **Rehak V**, Killoran P, Zavoral M, Riley LW. Distribution of HBV genotypes in the Czech population-pilot study. *Vnitr Lek.* 2004. 50(2):106-111/

Lukacs J, Tubak V, **Mester J**, David S, Bartfai Z, Kubica T, Niemann S, **Somoskovi A**. Conventional and molecular epidemiology of tuberculosis in homeless patients in Budapest, Hungary. *J Clin Microbiol.* 2004. 42(12):5931-4.

Bohacs A, Kocsis J, **Somoskovi A**, Meszaros Z, Sapi Z, Tamasi L, Bartfai Z. Chronic necrotizing pulmonary aspergillosis in an immunocompromised patient. *Orv Hetil.* 2004. 145(35):1811-5.

Parsons LM, **Somoskovi A**, Urbanczik R, Salfinger M. Laboratory diagnostic aspects of drug resistant tuberculosis. *Front Biosci.* 2004. 9:2086-105.

Stefanoff P, Eidson M, Morse D, **Zielinski A**. Evaluation of tickborne encephalitis case classification in Poland. *Euro Surveill.* 2005. 10(1):9-10.

Uusküla A, Nygard-Kibur M, Cowan FM, Mayaud P, French RS, Robinson JN, Brown DW. The burden of infection with herpes simplex virus type 1 and type 2: Seroprevalence study in Estonia. *Scand J Infect Dis.* 2004. 36(10):727-32.

Uusküla A, Nygard JF, Nygard-Kibur M. Syphilis as a social disease: experience from the post-communist transition period in Estonia. *Int J STD AIDS.* 2004. 15(10): 662-8.

Uusküla A, McNutt LA, DeHovitz J. Treatment of sexually transmitted diseases in Estonia: consistency with the evidence-based medicine principles. *Sex Transm Dis.* 2004. 31(10):631-5.

Tkeshelashvili-Kessler A, del Rio C, Nelson K, **Tsertsvadze T**. The emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic in Georgia. *Int J STD AIDS.* 2005. 16(1):61-7.

Zaller N, Nelson KE, Aladashvili M, **Badridze N**, del Rio C, **Tsertsvadze T**. Risk factors for hepatitis C virus infection among blood donors in Georgia. *Eur J Epidemiol.* 2004. 19(6):547-53.

Alatrakchi N, Duvivier C, Costagliola D, Samri A, Marcelin A, **Kamkamidze G**, Astriti M, Agher R, Calvez V, Autran B, Katlama C. Persistent low viral load on antiretroviral therapy is associated with T cell mediated control of HIV replication. *AIDS.* 2005. 19(1):25-33.

Amor YB, **Shashkina E**, Johnson S, Bifani PJ, **Kurepina N**, Kreiswirth B, Bhattacharya S, Spencer J, Rendon A, Catanzaro A, Gennaro ML. Immunological characterization of novel secreted antigens of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. *Scand J Immunol.* 2005. 61(2):139-46.

Grants

The Global Health Research Initiative Program for New Foreign Investigators (GRIP)

All Fogarty students who completed at least two years of training in the US after September 1, 2000 on a D43 grant or one year of such D43 training experience coupled with one year of significant, well documented mentored research experience (e.g. through an NIH research award) are eligible for this award.

This program, now available in two tracks— basic science and behavioral science- is intended to promote productive re-entry of NIH-trained foreign investigators into their home countries as part of a broader program to enhance the scientific research infrastructure in developing countries, to stimulate research on a wide variety of high priority health-related issues in these countries, and to advance NIH efforts to address health issues of global import. This award is a great opportunity for those trainees who have recently returned to their home country.

Please see the Program Announcement (<http://www.fic.nih.gov/programs/GRIP.html>) for detailed information about research objectives, eligibility, and funds available. Dr Aron Primack is the primary contact for the GRIP grant [Email: primacka@mail.nih.gov].

Deadline: September 21, 2005

New Grant Announcement from NIH:

NIAID INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH IN INFECTIOUS DISEASES (IRID) R03 PROGRAM

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) encourages the submission of R03 applications from institutions in eligible foreign countries to conduct preliminary or pilot studies or to explore the feasibility of, and initiate the planning of, collaborative infectious diseases research among investigators and institutions at international sites where NIAID has significant investment in research and/or infrastructure. These grants will serve to build independent research capacity by providing direct funding to investigators who do not currently have NIAID funded grant awards for research projects.

Additional information can be found at:

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAS-04-111.html>

14th Annual International Conference Held in St Petersburg: "AIDS, Cancer, and Related Problems"

The week of May 23rd marked the 14th annual "AIDS, Cancer, and Related Problems" in St Petersburg, Russia. The conference, hosted by the Biomedical Center under the leadership of Dr Andrei Kozlov, covers a wide spectrum of topics, from the molecular biology and epidemiology of the HIV virus to social and behavioral components, which has facilitated the spread of AIDS throughout the Russian Federation.

This year's conference marked upon some of the most pressing issues that face Russia in her battle with the HIV virus, like the exploding IDU population and the message of prevention. Many of the abstracts presented focused on social issues, such as HIV in the prison population and reaching teenagers with ideas of how to halt the spread of HIV. Also included were discussion of co-infection, such as Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C. In attendance were several members of the AITRP faculty, such as Dr Jack DeHovitz, Dr Dale Morse, Dr Louise-Anne McNutt and Dr David Strogatz. Dr Jay Valinsky from the New York Blood Center also attended. Dr DeHovitz was a member of an international organizing committee at the conference.

Also in attendance were several Fogarty alumni: Drs Dmitry Kissin, Nikolai Starkov, Leonid Levchenko and Vladimir Zarubaev.

One particular topic that has gained enormous presence in the fight against HIV is the issue of blood-safety. Dr Jay Valinsky, who is Vice-President of Information and Technology at the New York Blood Center (NYBC), discussed the current status of blood safety in the United States. Several recent and new Fogarty students have made blood-safety the focus of their

training, and received training at NYBC.

During the conference, there was also opportunity to discuss the impending launch of Russia's first Public Health degree program. St Petersburg State University is slated to move forward with the opening of the program in September 2005. Russian physicians and researchers who are involved in the HIV field were quick to recognize the value of developing a program of public health; indeed, research on risk behavior and economics are just as essential to the study of disease as the laboratory might be.

The workshop, organized by faculty members from SUNY Downstate Medical Center, the SUNY School of Public Health in Albany, NY, Emory University and Yale University, focused on faculty development in the areas of biostatistics and epidemiology. This gathering represented a unique opportunity for seasoned faculty in the field of public health to share curricula and teaching methodologies with their Russian colleagues. On hand were several AITRP faculty from the School of Public Health in Albany, such as Dr Dale Morse, Dr Louise-Anne McNutt and Dr David Strogatz. They presented lectures on chronic disease and infectious disease as they relate to epidemiology. Also in attendance were Dr Jack DeHovitz, who presided over the Epi Practicum workshop with Dr Carlos del Rio (Emory University) and Dr Henry Blumberg (also from Emory). Dr Kaveh Khoshnood (Yale University) presented a talk on public health issues, as they directly relate to HIV/AIDS. Drs Ed Davis and Anastaria Ivanova from the University of North Carolina discussed Biostatistics.

City based organization has developed a strong NIH funded research effort focused on developing a greater understanding of the intersection between HIV and IDU.

The GID (Director-Dale Morse, Co Director-Jack DeHovitz) represents a successor to the emerging infections and tuberculosis training grants. Unlike these grants, however, each application can only fund collaboration with one country. This successful application focused on biomedical and epidemiologic training as it relates to Hepatitis and emerging infections in Georgia. The infrastructure created by this grant will also allow us to address other key infectious disease challenges in the country. The US institutions involved in this application include the New York State Department of Health, the University at Albany School of Public Health and SUNY Downstate Medical Center. We hope to expand this program to include other countries in the region as extramural funding resources increase.

Training opportunities going forward will include the following:

- Post-doctoral laboratory trainings primarily at the Wadsworth Laboratories in Albany
- MS Degree programs at the School of Public health in epidemiology, biostatistics or behavioral health
- Certificate course (9 months) in epidemiology primarily for individuals interested in clinic-based research
- Internship in substance abuse research at NDR.I-a 3-6 month rotation for trainees with substance use experience
- Blood Safety-A 14-month training program at both the School of Public Health and the New York Blood Center.

The renewal of these programs represents an appreciation of the productivity our efforts over the past 11 years. We have provided long-term fellowships to almost 60 trainees and reached over 5000 healthcare professionals through our regional conferences. Equally as impressive, our trainees have produced over 400 manuscripts and abstracts and have competed successfully for research and training grants.

We want to sincerely thank everyone who was involved in helping us with both the program and/or our renewal efforts.

The Global Health Research Initiative Program for New Foreign Investigators Meeting: June 2-3, 2005

Two Fogarty alumni were in attendance at a recent meeting for GRIP (Global Health Research Initiative Program for New Foreign Investigators) Investigators. Dr Anneli Uusküla and Vratislav Rehak traveled from Estonia and Czech Republic, respectively, for the June 2005 meeting. Dr Uusküla research focuses on the screening of STDS using home sampling in Estonia. Dr Rehak, who is co-investigator on this grant with his wife Laura Krekulova, has been assessing Hepatitis C in the Czech Republic. Incidentally, Dr Rehak was our first trainee in the Fogarty program.

One of the highlights of the conference was a talk by Dr Elias Zerhouni, who is Director of the National Institutes of Health. Dr Zerhouni made reference to Dr Uusküla in his remarks to participants.

Dr Jack DeHovitz and Dr Louise-Anne McNutt also attended the meeting.

Centers to understanding the HIV epidemic outside the United States. The conference was funded largely through a grant to SUNY Downstate from the Fogarty International Center.

The conference took place in two parts: a morning plenary session and an afternoon session, with workgroups, allowing participants to take part in the topic of their choice. Plenary speakers included Dr Quarraisha Abdool Karim, who presented an overview of the global AIDS epidemic, followed by Dr Kenneth Bridbord, who is Director of the International Research and Training Programs Divisions at the Fogarty International Center, NIH. Dr Bridbord provided an update on international HIV research, as well as the current training opportunities available through the Fogarty program. Finally, Dr Judith Auerbach, Vice President of the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFAR) and Dr Gerald Friedland, who is Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology and Public at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA) at Yale University, concluded the morning session with a talk on international research from a social science and biomedical perspective.

The afternoon workgroups provided a unique opportunity for attendees to get together and exchange ideas, and possibly generate future collaborative research. The first session workgroup focused on current 'hot' topics in international HIV research: stigma, coinfections, the impact of drug and alcohol use of the spread of HIV, ethical issues and integrating programs that promotes prevention of HIV. The second session workgroup discussed issues in various geographical areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa, South America, Center/Eastern Europe, South Asia, East Asia and the Caribbean.

The New York State International Training and Research Program was well represented at this meeting. In addition to Dr. DeHovitz's role as a member of the organizing committee, group facilitators included Dr. Dale Morse and Harold Burger (NYSDOH) as well as Don Des Jarlais (NDRI). Other attendees from our program included Drs. Louise-Ann McNutt (SUNY-Albany), Barbara Weiser (NYSDOH), Susan Holman (SUNY Downstate), and Jay Valinsky (New York Blood Center).

Arthur Ashe HIV Training Program

The New York Presbyterian Hospital-Weill Cornell Medical Center is inviting qualified physicians to apply to for 2006.

They are offering a one-month training program (April May, October or November of 2006) to physicians who are currently treating HIV infected individuals. This is a good opportunity to strengthen clinical skills, as the curriculum includes training in inpatient/outpatient HIV units in Medicine, Pediatrics and Obstetrics, observation in AIDS units in NYC, participation in conferences and use of the Cornell Medical College library. Anyone is who clinically active and has a good command of spoken and understood English is encouraged to apply! Please let us know if you are interested (**david.odegaard@downstate.edu**).

This opportunity is part of an endeavor by Cornell to train physicians in HIV care, in memory of Arthur Ashe, who was firmly committed to AIDS education and patient care.

GEORGIAN RESEARCHERS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO SCIENCE

CRDF (The United States Civilian Research and Development Foundation) recently honored several Georgian officials for their contribution to scientific collaboration. We are proud to say that included in that honor is our own Dr. Tengiz Tsertsvadze, who is Director of the Georgian AIDS and Clinical Immunology Center in Tbilisi, Georgia. Dr Tsertsvadze has been our in-country contact in Georgia for many years and we have had the good fortune of being able to work with many researchers from the AIDS Center.

This celebration marks CRDF's 10th year of collaboration with Georgian Health officials, providing an opportunity to reflect on a decade of growth in the scientific field as well as Georgia's commitment to further scientific endeavors in the country.

Recently, Dr. Tsertsvadze received notice that he was the recipient of a CRDF award, to study the prevalence of HIV subtypes and drug resistant strains among certain populations in Georgia.

You can reach Dr. Tsertsvadze at: **aids@gol.ge**. The website of the AIDS Center in Tbilisi is: <http://aids.gol.ge/>.

Moving On...

We want to note that Kelly Hamilton is resigning, effective September 2. As the International Training Coordinator, she has made extensive contributions to our Fogarty Program at SUNY Downstate for the past two and a half years. Many of our Fogarty trainees have met her, or have been in correspondence with her on publications, updates, and training opportunities. We are sad to see her go but happy that she is moving to Rome, Italy to pursue her goals. Until we hire someone else for this position, please feel free to contact David Odegaard (david.odegaard@downstate.edu) if you have questions related to the program.

News.....

Paata Chikvaidze (Georgia) was awarded an MPH in January, 2005. **Sona Orbeylan** (Armenia), **Nino Badridze** (Georgia) and **Liliya Sinyavskaya** (Kazakhstan) were awarded the MPH degree in May, 2005. **Magomed Nashkoev** also received his MPH in May.

Nino Lomia, MD is our newest Muskie/Fogarty fellow. Dr Lomia hails from Tbilisi, Georgia.

Lana Gatserebia, MD, is also from Tbilisi, Georgia. Lana works at the Georgian AIDS and Clinical Immunology Center and will be training in the labs at Wadsworth during her fellowship.

Sona Orbeylan was the recipient of a scholarship this summer to attend the 13th Annual Principles of STDs and HIV Research course at the University of Washington's Center for AIDS and STDs.

Ketevan Shermadini, MD, is our newest Fogarty trainee. Dr Shermadini is an Epidemiologist at the AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center in Tbilisi, Georgia. She will be participating in the One-Year Certificate program at the SUNY School of Public Health, and continue on to the New York Blood Center in NYC next summer to complete blood safety training.