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Participants attending the Community Engagement Workshop

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Welcome to issue five of the APMEN newsletter. In these pages, you will receive news about APMEN and *P. vivax* malaria elimination efforts in the Asia Pacific region. We encourage you to circulate this publication to colleagues.

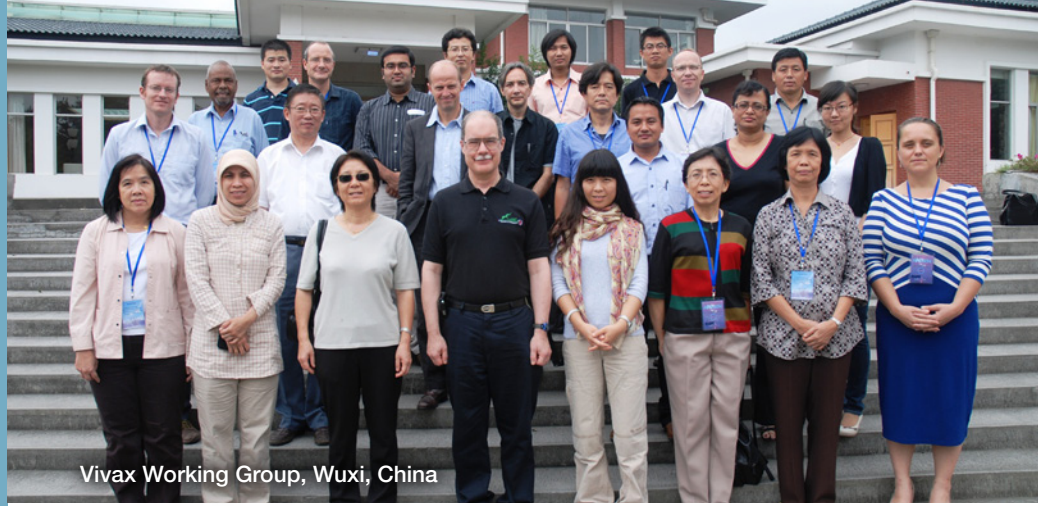
'Building Competence in Community Engagement for Malaria Elimination': APMEN Workshop, Chiang Mai, Thailand

The APMEN Workshop on Community Engagement for Malaria Elimination was hosted by the Thailand Bureau of Vector-Borne Disease Control in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 22–24 November, 2011. The workshop was attended by over 40 participants, which included representatives from 10 of APMEN's Country Partners, WHO and a number of regional organisations working in the community engagement and malaria elimination. Country Partner representatives included a range of people working at provincial levels particularly in border regions and from the health promotion units within the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Wichai Satimai, Director of Bureau of Vector-borne Disease Control in the Thailand Ministry of Health welcomed the Asia Pacific Malaria Elimination Network partners to Chiang Mai and drew attention to the challenges to controlling malaria along the borders of Thailand, especially in the provinces bordering Myanmar and Cambodia. Dr Satimai called for APMEN Country Partners to work in partnership to devise strategies for engaging communities in border regions to attempt to arrest the spread of artemisinin resistance as well as address broader development objectives.

"I believe that if the Asia Pacific members can work together and produce concrete results in addressing both transnational and developmental issues, this will be a significant contribution to malaria elimination and progress of the region. It will make our valuable partnership more holistic and complete. Dr Wichai Satimai, Director of the Bureau of Vector-borne Disease Control, Thailand (APMEN Country Partner representative).

The workshop reviewed lessons learnt regarding successful and sustained community engagement in infectious disease and malaria control and elimination from history, from a range of infectious diseases models, and from vignettes presented by Country Partners on their practices in community engagement for malaria elimination. The participants discussed the challenges and explored options for future scalable approaches to community engagement in current malaria elimination strategies. A key historical lesson embraced by participants was the need for better documentation of evidence of what works in terms of community engagement strategies, especially in terms of impact on disease.



Vivax Working Group, Wuxi, China



Participants attending the Community Engagement Workshop



Prof John Reeder at the Vivax Working Group meeting in Wuxi, China

Throughout the workshop common foci for community engagement in malaria elimination were highlighted namely: support for adherence to the treatment regime for *P. vivax* malaria, reaching mobile populations and community engagement in surveillance and holding the line. A field trip to sites in neighbouring provinces engaged in community engagement in vector borne diseases reinforced the lessons on the broad range of community groups to consider in engagement strategies, the importance of maintaining community and community volunteer commitment to the interventions, and of the linkage with the formal health sector and other sectors to help meet community development needs. During the workshop, participant and guest presenter, William Brieger of the Malaria Free Future blog, provided daily summaries of the workshop which can be found here: www.malariafreefuture.org/blog/.

During the final sessions of the workshop, APMEN Country Partners summarised and prioritised their training and research needs developed action plans for 2012 which included brainstorming by Country Partners on a broad range of ways to resource activities to support community engagement for malaria elimination. Despite the challenges, participants remained optimistic and agreed on the need to consolidate lessons, establish good practice guidelines, build capacity and create an infrastructure for community engagement that is appropriate for the inevitable move away from universal coverage of interventions and more towards integration into broader primary health care priorities as countries get closer to elimination.

The participants expressed their sincere thanks to the Thai Vector Borne Disease Control programme and Ministry of Public Health for its hosting of and support to the workshop.

Vivax Working Group gathers to discuss planning a multi centre primaquine trial

In September, Country Partner representatives and clinical and malaria experts from Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vanuatu and Australia met at the Jiangsu Institute of Parasitic Diseases in Wuxi, China. The purpose of the meeting was to look at the challenges involved in setting up a multi centre primaquine trial across such a diverse range of sites, what sort of trial would be most relevant and meaningful to countries involved and to set protocols for the trial.

In working towards establishing a consensus trial protocol that would be useful to all, the first day of the meeting was dedicated to setting the scene and getting an update from APMEN Country Partners regarding current *P. vivax* treatment policy and their experiences in clinical trials. Presentations on this day also looked at Good Clinical Practices and what lessons had already been learnt from other large multicentre malaria drug trials.

Other News

APMEN would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Prof John Reeder on his recent appointment as Director of the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, or TDR, commencing February 2012. TDR is based at and executed by the WHO, and is sponsored by UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank and WHO. Prof Reeder is a valuable member and supporter of APMEN and has contributed to our collective thinking of malaria elimination in the region and globally. APMEN looks forward to continuing to work with Prof Reeder in this new role in 2012 and beyond.



Participants attending the Vivax Working Group meeting, Wuxi, China



Dr. Qin Cheng at the Vivax Working Group meeting, Wuxi, China



Participants attending the Community Engagement Workshop

Over days 2 and 3 discussions focused on five key points:

1. Choice of Schizontocidal Treatment
2. Choice of Primaquine Regime
3. Treatment Arms
4. Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion in the trial
5. Follow up and End Points

Throughout the meeting a great deal was learnt in terms of the different barriers countries would face in participating in such a trial, the wealth of experience that already existed amongst the group and what additional benefits such a trial could bring by tailoring additional components to address specific needs and interests in each particular country. The Vivax Working Group Clinical Coordinator Dr Lorenz von Seidlein will continue to work with Country Partners and Partner Institutions interested in participating in the trial to develop consensus document. It is hoped that the plan will commence in early 2012.

The Vivax Working Group would like to thank Professor Gao Qi and the staff from the Jiangsu Institute of Parasitic Diseases for hosting this event. Their generous support and facilities ensured that this was a successful meeting.

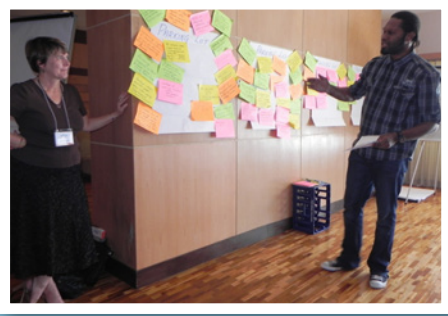
This has been an excellent workshop. Everyone had chances to express their ideas and participate in discussions. It has been a major achievement for all to acknowledge the importance of a multicentre primaquine trial, to agree on a 12 month follow up period and to identify key issues associated with the trial, Dr Qin Cheng, Australian Army Malaria Institute (APMEN Partner Institution).

APMEN GIS Training course

Geographic information systems (GIS) training was identified during APMEN III as priority area in malaria elimination efforts in the Asia Pacific Region. In collaboration with the National Institute of Parasitic Diseases, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (NIPD, China CDC), the Malaria Atlas Project (MAP)/Oxford University and the University of Queensland, APMEN funded its first GIS training from 7-11 November 2011 at the NIPD in Shanghai, China.

The APMEN GIS training course was attended by 35 participants from APMEN Country Partners and Partner Institutions. Participants attending the course came from a range of backgrounds including Ministry of Health malaria technicians, public health specialist and GIS/mapping/software officers. The course focussed on how advances in mapping, GIS database, Decision Support System technologies, and progress in spatial and temporal-spatial modelling can be harnessed to work towards efforts to eliminate malaria. Emphasis was made on the methodology and practical application of epidemiological tools,

Wishing all of
APMEN's partners
a happy and safe
holiday season.



Participants attending the Community Engagement Workshop



APMEN GIS Training Program participants, Shanghai, China

interpretation of data, and decision making. The course provided participants with skills and knowledge to make more informed decisions in the real-world based on viewing, querying, analyzing and communicating spatial data in a malaria elimination context.

There was a variety of learning needs and experience levels using GIS within the group but the freeware program that was installed and used by the facilitators was new to everyone. Those more advanced in GIS assisted others in the group and there was enriching group discussions and collegiality. Overall, the overwhelming majority of participants who attended GIS thought the training was well organised and very relevant. From the survey distributed after the workshop, over 75% of the participants were impressed by the quality of the presentations and computer exercises, while 78% of participants enjoyed the study tour. 84% of participants claimed that they were either extremely or moderately satisfied with the GIS training.

On completion of the APMEN GIS training Program, all attendees were asked to join the APMEN GIS user's network Google group. This network will be up and running in January 2012 and aims to promote sustained information sharing and collaboration on malaria elimination and GIS and to encourage continued engagement with APMEN.

APMEN would like to thank Professor Zhou Xiao Nong and his team at NIPD in Shanghai, for their support and assistance in organising the training course. APMEN also acknowledges the time and input from Dr Jon Cox (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Health), Erick Hale (Solomon Islands), Gerald Kelly and Ricardo Soares Magalhaes (University of Queensland). We also wish to congratulate Ricardo Soares Magalhaes for his recent Young Investigator Award presented at the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene Conference for a paper on GIS.

Date Claimer

On behalf of the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) and the Asia Pacific Malaria Elimination Network (APMEN), we are pleased to inform you of the dates for the Forth Annual APMEN Meeting and Working Group Meetings.

APMEN IV: Annual Business and Technical Meeting 7 - 10 May, 2012, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

APMEN Vivax and Vector Control Working Group Meetings: 6 - 7 May, 2012, Incheon, Republic of Korea.

Further details will be available in January, 2012.

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a happy and safe
holiday season.