The Centre for International Child Health (CICH) Quarterly eUpdate

Issue 5: September 2017

Centre Updates

Celebrating World Sepsis Day

The WHO made sepsis a global health priority on May 26, 2017 by adopting a resolution to improve, prevent, diagnose, and manage sepsis. This marks a quantum leap in the global fight against this deadly and often misdiagnosed disease. In low and middle income countries, sepsis accounts for 60-80% of lives lost per year in childhood, killing more than 6 million children yearly. Every 3-4 seconds, someone dies of sepsis.

The Centre for International Child Health’s Chair, Dr. Tex Kissoon – as part of his work as Vice Chairman of the Global Sepsis Alliance – has been instrumental in lobbying for the resolution. Now, with World Sepsis Day fast approaching on September 13, join us and get involved in the fight against sepsis! Need ideas? You can:

(1) Participate in the World Sepsis Conference Spotlight on September 12: This free online congress, organized by the WHO and the Global Sepsis Alliance, will shine a spotlight on the global burden of sepsis. In four distinctive sessions, 25 renowned experts from all over the world will give presentations on maternal and neonatal sepsis, as well as give updates on sepsis in general. The congress will be held in English and is open to everyone with an internet connection. You can register here.

(2) Join us for a Lunch & Learn on September 15: The Centre for International Child Health and Healthy Starts will be streaming selected presentations from the World Sepsis Congress Spotlight over a pizza lunch. Join us in room 2108 of the BC Children’s Research Institute building on September 15 from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. See the News & Upcoming Events section below for more information, or RSVP here.
Survive, thrive, transform: our commitment to Every Woman Every Child

An unprecedented global movement, Every Woman Every Child brings together governments, multilaterals, the private sector and civil society to address the major health challenges facing women, children and adolescents around the world. Action centers around the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health, developed in 2015, which presents a roadmap to ending all preventable deaths of women, children and adolescents within a generation.

In June 2017, the Centre for International Child Health and the Global Sepsis Alliance jointly committed to supporting the goals of the Global Strategy by taking action to reduce the burden of sepsis on children under five living in low and middle income countries. In doing so, we’ve joined hundreds of other global organizations who have, since 2015, collectively made over 215 concrete, time-bound commitments to the health of women and children worth in excess of US$28 billion.

Read more about the Centre for International Child Health’s commitment to take action for healthy and empowered women, children and adolescents.

Check out our revamped webpage!

Everything old is new again. Check out the Centre for International Child Health’s new webpage at www.bccchildren.ca/international. We’ve made it easier to find the information you need about global health work happening at BC Children’s and BC Women’s. Among other things, you can now find information about more than 50 ongoing global health projects (see the Our work tab), a selected list of publications on global health (also in the Our work tab), information on upcoming events (see the Get involved tab), and information on current funding opportunities (ditto).

Have something to add? We’re always looking for new and interesting global health stories and information to share through our
Imagine your child needs treatment for a congenital or acquired heart condition. Now imagine you live in a country where there’s only one pediatric cardiologist. If your child needs more than an echocardiogram, you’ll need to go to South Africa for care, a journey that will take you away from the rest of your family and thrust you into ever more unfamiliar surroundings at a time of already great stress. Though the government will cover the cost of treatment and transport, you’ll need to figure out how to get and pay for passports and additional needed documentation, as well as navigate other social stresses.

This is the reality facing too many parents of ill children in Botswana, a country of 2.25 million that sits just above South Africa. Dr. Thuso David, a pediatrician from Botswana who arrived in Vancouver in early August to continue his training at the BC Children’s, wants to change this reality.

Dr. David was one of the first doctors in Botswana to complete a local residency in pediatrics; he then spent 18 months in South Africa completing training in additional specialties. Though he was initially drawn to pediatric oncology, he decided he could be more useful to his country as a pediatric cardiologist. Transfers to South Africa for pediatric cardiac patients would not be as necessary if there were more Batswana health care workers with the specialized knowledge and skills to care for these children.

With this in mind, Dr. David’s vision for change is twofold. First, he wants to learn as much as possible at BC Children’s so that he can return to his country as a well-rounded cardiologist. Since arriving in Vancouver at the beginning of August, he has hit the ground running, attending morning lectures and seeing patients at the Children’s Heart Centre.

Second, he dreams of creating a program in Botswana to help train other doctors and, more specifically, nurses to care for children with congenital and acquired heart disease. Dr. David sees potential for nurses in Botswana to play a much larger role in pediatric care, but in order to do so, they will need more exposure to clinical work and practice using skills learned in their training but less frequently used in their daily work. Nursing shortages in most facilities also complicate matters.

For Dr. David, achieving his vision will come down to partnership: “when you grow in your profession, you realize how important collaboration is.” A growing partnership between BC Children’s & UBC and the Princess Marina Hospital & University of Bostwana in Gaborone is one example of positive collaboration focused on increasing the knowledge and skills of local health care workers and researchers. So far, this collaboration has included sending Canadian pediatric residents to Botswana and undertaking joint research projects, but the potential exists to do more.
SPRINT-SARI and the quest for high-quality data during outbreaks

The clinical management of severely ill patients during previous outbreaks has never been evidence-based. High-quality observational and interventional data has never been available for clinicians, during the outbreak, to help guide clinical care and improve patient outcomes, particularly in regions of the world that are both data-poor and the most vulnerable to emerging infections.

Srinivas Murthy, at the Centre for International Child Health, has set up a global platform for research preparedness in acute care environments, ensuring that data can be collected and disseminated rapidly to guide clinicians around the world. Collaborating with the World Health Organization and over 40 research and hospital networks on all continents, the first syndrome to be incorporated is Severe Acute Respiratory Infection through the SPRINT-SARI program. Over two hundred sites in 33 countries were engaged through 35 networks to participate in SPRINT-SARI during 2016-2017. Plans are underway to create similar platforms for other syndromes of relevance for outbreaks such as encephalitis and gastrointestinal illness. These efforts will ensure that all regions of the world are ready for future outbreaks through optimizing clinical care for affected patients.

Want to learn more? Read SPRINT-SARI’s most recent newsletter to find out more about the program’s accomplishments and goals.

---

News & Opportunities to Get Involved

World Sepsis Day Lunch & Learn |

Sep. 15, 2017
12:15 - 1:15 p.m.

To celebrate World Sepsis Day and raise awareness about the global burden of sepsis, the Centre for International Child Health and Healthy Starts will be showing video presentations from the World Sepsis Conference.
Spotlight, an online conference jointly organized by the WHO and the Global Sepsis Alliance. All are welcome! A pizza lunch will be provided. RSVP here.

The following video presentations will be shown (re-broadcast from the conference):

- *Sepsis in Newborns - Broad Overview of Sociocultural Issues* | Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta, Hospital for Sick Children, Canada
- *Burden, Definition, and Post-Discharge Mortality* | Dr. Niranjan Kissoon, Global Sepsis Alliance, Canada
- *Addressing Maternal Sepsis in LMICs* | Dr. Jeffrey Smith, Jhpiego, United States
- *The Global Maternal Sepsis Study* | Dr. Mercedes Bonet, WHO, Switzerland

Interested in attending the whole World Sepsis Conference Spotlight on September 12? See the Centre Updates section above for more information.

**MSF Pediatric Days |**

**Dec. 15-16, 2017**

Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF) Pediatric Days is an annual event for pediatric field staff, policy makers and academia to exchange ideas, align efforts, inspire, and share frontline research to advance urgent pediatric issues of direct concern for the humanitarian field. The second annual MSF Pediatric Days are scheduled for December 15 and 16, 2017 and will take place in Dakar, Senegal. In line with MSF’s open access policy, the meeting will also be disseminated through live online streaming in French and English. Join several hundreds of participants from over 25 countries, including MSF staff, academic partners and other NGOs, as they present and discuss their work.

Interested in attending MSF Pediatric Days in person? There's still time to sign up, or submit an abstract. You can also watch the 2016 Pediatric Days event.

**Pediatric sub-specialty faculty needed to teach in Liberia, West Africa**

The Liberian Ministry of Health has launched a Health Workforce Program to increase the number of trained physicians in the fields of pediatrics and other specialty areas. Boston Children’s Hospital is partnering with the Liberian College of Physicians and Surgeons to provide sub-specialty faculty
who will perform 1-2 month visiting professorships to support training starting in October 2017. The main tasks of the faculty will be to teach and mentor residents and medical students while providing clinical specialty care to patients, as well as to provide training to medical interns (if present) and in-service training to mid-level health workers (i.e. nurses, physician assistants, etc.). Faculty must commit to at least one month (and up to 2 months) of teaching. Travel expenses, housing and some salary support are provided.

The specific pediatric sub-specialties that are needed include: cardiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, hematology/oncology, nephrology, neurology, psychiatry, and pulmonology. Other specialties will be considered on a case by case basis. Faculty must be board certified in their sub-specialty area.

For more information or if you are interested in applying for these visiting professorships, please contact: Dr Michelle Niescierenko, Global Health Program Director, Boston Children’s Hospital.

In this quarter’s publication spotlight, we invite you to read a recent review, co-authored by Dr. Tex Kissoon and published in the Journal of Global Health, which examines progress made towards the Ottawa Charter on health promotion. The Charter, developed in 1986, identified five action areas to enable people everywhere to increase control over and improve their health. It laid the foundation for collaborative efforts to improve global health, including the development of the Millenium and Sustainable Development Goals. Now, 30 years on, the questions are: what have we accomplished and where do we go from here?

Want to share something you’ve recently published? We’d love to hear from you.

Funding Opportunities

Thrasher Research Fund Early Career Awards | Sep. 19, 2017

The purpose of this program is to encourage the development of medical research in child health by awarding small grants to new researchers, helping them gain a foothold in this important area. The goal is to fund applicants who will go on to be independent investigators. The grant amount is based on the actual needs of the project, with a maximum of $25,000 USD in direct costs for the entire grant. The duration of the project can be up to two years.

For more information and to apply, visit the Thrasher Research Fund website.

Grand Challenges Canada Saving Brains Round 6 | Oct. 11, 2017

Saving Brains seeks bold ideas for innovative solutions that address the risk factors facing children living in adversity by promoting health and nutrition, providing enrichment and nurturing, and protecting against maltreatment. Areas of particular interest include innovations designed for use in humanitarian contexts or supporting adolescent parents. Successful proposals will be awarded seed grants of up to $250,000 CAD over a maximum of 24 months.

For more information and to apply, visit the Grand Challenges Canada Savings Brains website.

E.W. Al Thrasher Awards | Ongoing

The purpose of the E.W. "Al" Thrasher Awards is to improve children’s health through medical research, with an emphasis on projects that have the potential to translate into clinically meaningful results within a few years. The Fund awards grants two times per year, with no fixed number of awards given in each funding cycle or in each year. The grant amount is based on the actual budgetary needs of the project, but averages $320,000 USD. The duration of the project can be up to three years.
Child Growth and Development Fellowship | Ongoing

This call is open to Canadians, permanent residents, and citizens of developing countries who are pursuing or have completed a master’s or doctoral degree at a recognized university. Recipients will undertake a one-year paid program of research at the IDRC offices in Ottawa on the topic they have submitted, and will receive hands-on experience in research management, grant administration, and the creation, dissemination, and use of knowledge from an international perspective.

For more information and to apply, visit the Thrasher Research Fund website.

Have questions, suggestions or information to share? Email us at cichinfo@cw.bc.ca so we can include it in our next quarterly eUpdate.

Centre for International Child Health | BC Children’s Hospital | cichinfo@cw.bc.ca |