

AIHA Directions

Two Neonatal Resuscitation Training Centers Open in Ukraine

High-risk infants throughout Ukraine now have a greater chance of survival, thanks to the advanced resuscitation skills of neonatologists, nurses and midwives throughout the country. AIHA is helping to expand the resuscitation skills of hospital staff in Ukraine with the opening of Neonatal Resuscitation Training Centers (NRTCs) in Kiev and Odessa.

Neonatologists at the Center for Maternal and Child Health on the Right Bank celebrated the opening of the Kiev NRTC in October. As part of the ceremony, neonatologists from the center discussed their achievements in training the region's neonatologists, nurses, midwives and other health care personnel in lifesaving resuscitation procedures. And in January, staff of the Odessa Oblast Hospital Neonatology Department celebrated the opening of their NRTC.

Staff at the Kiev and Odessa NRTCs were trained at AIHA's first neonatal resuscitation training center in L'viv, Ukraine by US partner representatives. A joint initiative with the Ukrainian Ministry of Health, these centers serve as replication sites for neonatal resuscitation training throughout Ukraine. Audiovisuals and Ukrainian-language versions of American Heart Association/American Academy of Pediatrics resuscitation training manuals provide trainees with standardized instruction tools.

Attending the opening ceremony in Kiev were Richard Morningstar, special adviser to the US President and secretary of state for assistance to the NIS; William Miller, US Ambassador to Ukraine; Gregory Huger, director of the Regional USAID Mission for Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus; Roger Yochelson, director, Office of Democratization and Social Transition, USAID Mission for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova; Raisa Bogatyriova, deputy Minister of Health, Ukraine; Olena Sulima, MD, PhD, director of the center and chief neonatologist of Ukraine; and Leonid Kovinko, deputy head of the Kiev City Health Administration.

First Infection Control Training Center Opens

Partners opened the first regional Infection Control Training Center at the St. Petersburg State Medical Academy in the Name of Mechnikov in Russia last November.

The opening occurred during a three-week training program on basic infection control and epidemiology that was attended by epidemiologists from hospitals throughout Russia. The course was taught by faculty from the Infection Control Training Center at the St. Petersburg Medical Academy. Participants discussed approaches to hospital infection control, including surveillance activity, risk factors and prevention of major nosocomial infections. The program was based on the infection control curriculum that AIHA developed jointly with the Society for Hospital Epidemiology of America (SHEA), the Russian and Ukrainian Ministries of Health and faculty from US and NIS partnership hospitals. Faculty from the Medical Center of St. Petersburg in the Name of Sokolov played an active role in the development of the center. The partnership hospital will serve as a practical site for future training of infection control specialists, clinicians and microbiologists in Russia.

Dr. Ludmila Zueva, MD, PhD, head of the Department of Epidemiology at the St. Petersburg Medical Academy, will serve as the director of the Center. Zueva is also a member of the international editorial board for the Basic Infection Control Manual, which AIHA published in fall 1997 as a standardized training tool for the centers. As head of the Center, Zueva said she hopes to promote greater infection control surveillance in Russian hospitals.

A second regional Infection Control Training Center will open at the National Institute of Epidemiology in Kiev, Ukraine early this year.

Albanian Minister of Health Visits US

Albania's Minister of Health, Leonard Solis, MD, traveled to New York City and Grand Rapids, Michigan in December to meet with US representatives from Tirana's health management education and hospital partnerships. During a follow-on visit to Washington, DC, Solis met with USAID officials and health policy experts from the US Department of Health and Human Services. At a roundtable discussion on December 8--an event hosted by AIHA--Solis discussed the status of Albania's health care system and the newly-elected government's priorities for health reform.

Pirro Prifti, director of hospitals for the Albanian Ministry of Health and Environmental Protection; Mustafa Xhani, general director of AIHA partner University Hospital Center of Tirana "Mother Theresa" and Petrit Bushati, Albania's Ambassador to the US, also participated in the discussion.

Solis said the Ministry is focusing on enhancing primary care delivery; remedying the skewed concentration of physicians and nurses in urban areas; and expanding the nation's health insurance system, which currently covers only primary care physicians. "The health care system takes only 5 percent of the state budget. This is not enough to cover all the needs and to fill all the gaps we have in the system," he noted.

Prifti added that establishing Internet links between the Ministry of Health and district health offices and providing training in emergency medical services also are priorities. "Emergency medicine does not exist as a specialty in Albania, and it is really needed," he said.

NIS Nurse Leaders Address Management Issues at Workshop

From Almaty, Kazakstan to Odessa, Ukraine, AIHA's Nursing Resource Center (NRC) directors are promoting advanced nurse management training programs.

During the AIHA Nursing Management Workshop in L'viv, Ukraine last November, directors and assistant directors from 10 AIHA Nursing Resource Centers in the NIS discussed ways to enhance existing nurse training programs and promote interpartnership NRC activities. Topics of the week-long management and computer training program at the L'viv Institute of Management included worksite management education and a four-day basic computer training seminar. Nurses also participated in a two-day seminar on workplan development and grant application writing.

According to Svetlana Puriy, director of the Kiev NRC, the workshop gave her the tools necessary to develop an effective workplan for future nursing programs at the Kiev NRC.

Ludmila Kapitonova, director of the Odessa NRC in Ukraine--the first AIHA NRC--pointed out the importance of the program in enhancing nurse management skills. "If I would have had this information before my center opened, I could have avoided a lot of difficulties and problems," she said. Kapitonova plans to start a new management training program for nurses in the Odessa area.

Moscow Diabetes Workshop Convenes

AIHA and WHO/Europe hosted a workshop on quality management in diabetes in Moscow, Russia last December for clinicians from six Moscow Region Diabetes Schools participating in the Moscow Region Diabetes Replication Initiative.

Marking the second AIHA/WHO collaborative workshop on quality management, the two-day agenda focused on analysis of patient data collected by staff of the six centers in Balashikha, Dmitrov, Dubna, Krasnogorsk and Moscow over the past four months. The data will also be compared with patient information from other Schools of Diabetes in Russia and CEE that collaborate with WHO/Europe, and will help guide future goals of the Project Peer Review Committee. A third AIHA/WHO workshop is scheduled for March 1998.

Infection Control Conference Hosted in Kiev

More than 150 infection control specialists from West NIS participated in a conference on hospital-based infection control and surveillance in Kiev, Ukraine in December.

Hosted by AIHA and the Ukrainian Health Ministry, the conference included the participation of head physicians and epidemiologists from the Ukrainian Health Ministry, oblast and Kiev city hospitals, the Ukrainian National Institute of Epidemiology in Kiev, and West NIS hospital partnerships. Microbiologists from AIHA partner hospitals and participating institutions addressed the role of microbiology laboratories and surveillance and infection control protocols. Participants also discussed plans for opening a regional infection control training center in Kiev in early spring.

EMS Task Force Members Cite Successes at Conference of Emergency Physicians

Gregory Ciottone, MD, an emergency physician at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester, Massachusetts, outlined the AIHA initiative in emergency medical services at the American College of Emergency Physicians Annual Conference, held in San Francisco, California in October. The presentation addressed EMS in the republics of the former Soviet Union and the AIHA standardized EMS curriculum in nine sites. Overall, the EMS program has trained more than 2,500 physicians, 1,600 nurses, 1,100 feldshers, 700 ambulance drivers, 1,300 medical students, and 1,200 first responders-- including security service personnel, firefighters, schoolchildren and nuclear station personnel.

"The training center concept was so successful for a large number of trainees," said Ciottone. Yerevan-Boston partners hope to expand the "train-the-trainers" model in basic and advanced life support to include other courses, and successfully field tested a course on pediatric emergency medicine in Yerevan last fall.

George Soros Pledges \$100 Million for Russian Health Care

Philanthropist George Soros will donate about \$100 million to improve health care in Russia. The donation, which was announced last October, is part of a \$500 million pledge to Russia for such programs as expanding educational opportunities and retraining of those now in the Russian military for civilian jobs.

Hungarian-born Soros has already contributed millions of his personal wealth to countries in the NIS and CEE to foster "open societies" that include civil liberties and a free press. The newest contribution will be made over three years and earmarks money for fighting tuberculosis, curbing drug resistance and reconstructing the public health infrastructure.

At least \$6 million will be used to eradicate TB in the Russian prison system, where up to half of the prisoners may be infected with the disease. Prison personnel will be trained to administer directly observed treatment, the World Health Organization's recommended method for ensuring patients take the correct medication for the prescribed length of time. Another TB project will target treatment in the general population, introducing new diagnostic equipment and drugs. Money will also be used to improve infection control in hospitals, including a state-of-the art laboratory to teach clinicians and microbiologists.

Nursing Resource Centers Open

A young drug user roams aimlessly down a corridor of the Medical University in the Name of Pavlov in St. Petersburg, Russia. Dressed in black, the actor represents a young person who has just been told he has the HIV virus. A nurse then speaks about preventive measures to avoid contracting the disease.

This was the scene in a skit that was performed by six nursing students at Pavlov last November to illustrate the important role played by nurses in educating patients on the modes of transmission of the HIV virus and other sexually transmitted diseases. The play was performed as part of the opening of a Nursing Resource Center (NRC) at the hospital.

The actors demonstrated this innovative approach to dealing with a controversial issue to an audience of over 75 professionals, and convinced many that preventive messages like this could catch the attention of St. Petersburg's youth--who comprise one of the fastest growing populations infected with AIDS today.

Also in November, a second St. Petersburg center opened at the Postgraduate School of Medicine at the Medical Center in the Name of Sokolov. These centers were created under the auspices of the AIHA nursing initiative to foster ongoing learning opportunities and to support partnership nursing activities. AIHA plans to open its 12th NRC in Tbilisi, Georgia early this year.