

IndiaCLEN addresses health research challenges in the new millennium

Members and colleagues of the India Clinical Epidemiology Network (IndiaCLEN) discussed the health research situation in the new millennium at its XIIth Annual Conference on September 20-22, 2001. With the theme, "Challenges and priorities for health research in the new millennium", the conference was held at the M.G.M. Beach Resorts in Chennai, Tamil Nadu,

India. Dr. Vic Neufeld, Team Leader of the INCLEM Leadership and Management Program (LAMP) talked on "Priority setting: strategies and methodology".

Dr. Neufeld's talk was reinforced by presentations on priorities for research in infectious and non-infectious diseases by Dr. Krishnamurthy and Dr. Sathiashekarn, respectively. Principles and methods of priority setting were applied using the IndiaCLEN Infectious Diseases Initiative (IID) as an example. A session on health care delivery and evaluation of health care programs, co-chaired by Dr. Peter Heywood and Dr. Sudhakar from the World Bank, included presentations on "IndiaCLEN program evaluation network activities" by Dr. N. K. Arora and "Challenges in health care delivery, policy & reforms" by Dr. Imrana Quadeer.

Development of linkages with other health organizations and capacity building needs and strategies within the network were also addressed. Sessions on ethical issues in research emphasized the network's commitment to patient protection while the sessions on mental health and HIV/AIDS provided the network a venue for priority setting in these research areas.

Prior to the conference, INCLEM LAMP (Leadership and Management Program) team members, Dr. Vic Neufeld and Dr. M. Manjula Datta, conducted a workshop on leadership and management. The workshop focused on the inclusion of cross-cultural elements to reflect INCLEM's regional diversity, the use of strategies tailored to the realities of participants who are mostly "part-time" professional peers and partnership development with other "like-minded" organizations.

In a two-day Strategic Planning Meeting following the conference proper, IndiaCLEN decided to focus on program evaluation, surveillance research, reproductive health issues, infectious diseases, child health, mental health, non-infectious chronic illnesses and rational drug use.

*R. Sathianathan, M.D.
Organising Secretary, IndiaCLEN XII
and CEU Director,
Madras Medical College
Chennai, India*