

## **DTRA Q-4 Report**

**October 1-December 31, 2019**

During the month of October, the Resident Advisor conducted two training courses for cohort 2 residents: training in non-communicable diseases and an advanced epidemiology course. The RA traveled to Atlanta during the last week of October to participate in the TEPHINET conference, to participate in one of the preconference workshops, and to meet with staff of CDC WIDB to provide updates of the Ukraine IES program. She will also meet with subject matter experts at CDC to obtain advice and technical assistance to help her and her team in responding to the various outbreaks currently being investigated in Ukraine (foodborne outbreak, meningitis and botulism outbreak). She will also meet with specialists in laboratory diagnostics and non-communicable diseases (diabetes and cancer).

### **Resident training and supervision:**

The non-communicable diseases training course was held during the week of October 15. Dr. Atrash traveled to Ukraine during this week to conduct his semi-annual visit and participated in the training. The advanced epidemiology course was held during the week of October 21. (see agenda for both weeks, Attachments A and B). The RA continued to meet with residents in person and via Skype to discuss their individual and group projects. In particular, the RA reviewed with residents a new spreadsheet for capturing information on outbreaks to implement continuous data collection from regions and ongoing data analysis. She discussed the Antimicrobial project, the protocol on HIV prevalence study in the military, a draft of outbreak investigation SOPS, the implementation of the case-control study as next step for foodborne outbreak investigation related to restaurant chain, and completed field investigation and data analysis of the Salmonella outbreak in Chernovitsi region.

### **Working with Partners:**

The RA continues to hold meetings with partners to update them on the program and its activities and to explore opportunities for residents for analytic projects and field investigations. She met with Roman Lansky (IT head for Emergency medicine database) and Tatiana Dimenko (Director of the National Center of Expertise) to discuss access to data to enable residents to perform analysis. She also met with Dr. Natalya Gopko (Director) and Mariana Ironyuk (Deputy Director) of Chernovtsi Laboratory center and discussed the Salmonella outbreak in one of the districts connected to a wedding party.

As part of Salmonella outbreak investigation, the RA visited the regional ID hospital to supervise residents in conducting interviews with patients and to supervise residents in medical chart abstraction. She worked with residents on developing the questionnaire and microplanning for conduct of the case-control study. The RA discussed with residents the interpretation of epidemiological, environmental and laboratory findings. She met with local epidemiologists in

the Pitula district of the Chernovtsi region and discussed the current outbreak and strategy for further investigation.

### **Coordination and collaboration with CDC and the Ministry of Health:**

The RA met with Ezra Barzalay (Ukraine CDC director) and discussed with him funding and logistical support for the study on HIV prevalence in the military

She met with Igor Kuzin, IES director, and Mikhailo Riabinchuk, head of training department PHC, to discuss funding for local activities of the IES program, especially funding support for the case-control study on foodborne outbreak related to a restaurant chain and the initiation of the HIV prevalence study. Global Funds support of local IES activities expires at the end of this year; the PHC believes that DTRA might be covering local cost starting in July 2020. The PHC applied to Global Fund for an extension till June 2020 and for approval to use remaining Global funds to support IES through June 2020.

The RA also discussed with PHC leadership the issue of certification. The PHC will be able to issue certificates to graduating residents; the certificate can be recognized as CME for physicians. Further discussions will be held with local universities to explore the possibility of offering credit for residents who choose to pursue a graduate degree such as an MPH.

### **Implementing the IES Program:**

In an effort to streamline the IES activities, the RA developed a flowchart identifying the various office processes and the responsibilities of various team members (Attachment C). The RA also prepared a spreadsheet to monitor progress of residents in the various areas of training (Attachment D). She will be keeping track of each resident's progress and assigning scores when competencies are achieved. Residents are expected to achieve a minimum of 80% score to graduate. A detailed description of competencies achieved, and the scores will be issued to each graduating resident to accompany their certificate. This is expected to support the residents' ability to obtain credit for their work at local universities if they choose to pursue graduate studies.

### **Accomplishments:**

The main accomplishment for the month of October was conducting the two training courses in advanced epidemiology and non-communicable diseases. The training courses were very well received by the residents. Several residents from cohort 1 served as faculty and did very well. Another accomplishment was the completion of the case-control study for seafood outbreak and field investigation of Salmonella outbreak that allowed to identify implicated food.

**Plans for the immediate future include:**

The RA will be in Atlanta, GA October 26 to November 3 to participate in the TEPHINET conference and to meet with various programs in support of the IES-UA activities.

During the month of November Dr. Malakmadze traveled to Atlanta to participate in the annual FETP Conference and to meet with CDC subject matter experts to establish collaboration and obtain support for the various projects in Ukraine. She also held several meetings with national and regional public health leaders in Ukraine to establish and continue collaborations on ongoing programs and activities.

**Resident training and supervision:**

During the weeks of November 11 and November 18, the RA reviewed with the residents all the abstracts they have prepared to be submitted to CDC's EIS conference for presentation during the EIS International Night. The RA also worked with residents to prepare abstracts for the 5th Annual BTRP Ukraine Regional One Health Research Symposium. 15 residents from cohort 1 and cohort 2 will be submitting abstracts.

**Working with Partners:**

The RA continues to hold meetings with partners to update them on the program and its activities and to explore opportunities for residents for analytic projects and field investigations:

- Meeting with Dr. Minova, head of ID department at Alexandrovska hospital to discuss the ongoing botulism investigation and the possibility of providing training on botulism differential diagnosis to ID doctors.
- Meetings with Ludmila Koshevaya, Head of Health Care Department at Cherkasy region municipality, with Dr. Michael Symsky, Director of Cherkasy Laboratory Center, and with Ludmila Koshevaya, Head of Health Care Department at Cherkasy region municipality to introduce the IES-UA goals and activities and to establish collaboration on the botulism investigation.
- Meeting with ID Doctors – regional ID hospital, to discuss the clinical manifestations of botulism cases and challenges in diagnostics.
- Meeting with Evgeney Barket, Head of Food Safety Lwow region and with Roman Pavliv, Head of Laboratory Center, Lwow region to provide a briefing on findings of the salmonella outbreak investigation and to discuss the results and further collaborative steps.

- Meeting with Alexandr head of Kiev city medical examiner to discuss collaboration on the suicide study.

### **Coordination and collaboration with CDC and the Ministry of Health:**

During her visit to Atlanta, the RA held several meetings with CDC experts:

- Meeting with Adilya Albetkova, health specialist, to discuss possible CDC assistance in developing guidelines for infectious disease surveillance and laboratory network and in assessing Laboratory systems in Ukraine and the development of a strategic plan for establishing a laboratory network.
- Meeting with Eni Njoh, Health Information Specialist, to discuss steps for further implementation of the Project Tracking Tool in UA (ReDPeTT), to provide Terms of Use Agreement to Ukraine FETP by November 9, 2019, and to provide the English Version of ReDPeTT to Ukraine (include Cohort 1 resident data) by November 15, 2019 via Google Drive. Ukraine FETP Epidemiologist will begin using ReDPeTT internally. Ukraine FETP will provide translation tables by January 2020. Training in ReDPeTT will be provided to Ukraine FETP residents cohorts 2&3 by June 2020.
- Meeting with Dr. Jeremy Sobel and Leslies Edwards, CDC Lead Botulism Epidemiologists, to discuss steps for establishing a Botulism Consultation service and the possible CDC assistance for establishing a Botulism Consultation service in U and to discuss possible CDC team assistance in quality control for enhancement of botulism surveillance in UA
- Meeting with Dr. Carolina Luguez, head of Botulism laboratory, to discuss technical assistance in diagnostics and the possible collaboration on training of laboratorians on botulism diagnostics in Ukraine.
- Meeting with Molly Fredman, Salmonella PULSENET lead to discuss the possibility of establishing Pulsenet Salmonella surveillance system in Ukraine and the possible assistance from CDC Pulsenet team in implementation of the system.

### **Implementing the IES Program:**

The RA met with Dr. Kurpita, Director PHC and Dr. Igor Kuzin, FETP Executive Director, Deputy Director PHC to discuss the establishment of Botulism Consultation services and IES support on development of regulatory documents and manuals. They also discussed the possibility of hiring an assistant editor/writer for IES.

### **Accomplishments:**

During the month of November, the RA was able to ensure collaboration of regional authorities and hospitals on the Botulism and Salmonella outbreak investigations. The IES webinar for

salmonella outbreak was widely attended and well received by public health epidemiologists and food safety personnel. The webinar was followed by a discussion which reflected high interest of the attendees and their willingness to collaborate with EIS. 4 abstracts for EIS International night were finalized and sent to CDC for clearance.

**Challenges:**

- Lack of funds for field work continues to be a challenge limiting the ability of fellows to conduct field activities until next year.
- The program continues to face challenges from some epidemiologists at the regional level who are resistant to change and believe there is no need to modify the old way of conducting investigations.

**Plans for the immediate future include:**

During the month of December, in addition to routine work and activities, the RA will be working with residents to finalize abstracts for the 5th Annual BTRP Ukraine Regional One Health Research Symposium.

Dr. Malakmadze, the resident advisor (RA) spent most of the month of December in one-on-one meetings with residents to assist them in preparing their abstracts for the 5th Annual Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP) Ukraine Regional One Health Research Symposium. She also held a few meetings with partners and Ministry of Health officials to discuss collaboration and ensure successful program implementation.

**Resident training and supervision:**

Twenty-five residents from the IES cohorts 1 and 2 worked on preparing abstracts for the BTRP One Health Research Symposium. Sixteen abstracts were finalized during the month of December. The RA also held meetings with Cohort 1 residents to review their progress in gaining competencies towards completing program requirements.

The RA attended the training of regional epidemiologists where she made a presentation about the IES program and discussed selection criteria for upcoming recruitment for Cohort 3 and encouraged the qualified epidemiologists to apply for the program. One of the residents presented her work on the Diphtheria outbreak during the training.

During the month of December IES residents held two webinars one on the botulism investigation and another on the results of the diphtheria cluster investigation.

**Working with Partners:**

The RA continues to hold meetings with partners to update them on the program and its activities and to explore opportunities for residents for analytic projects and field investigations. She met with Robin Gray, agriculture Attache, US Embassy, to discuss collaboration with the IES

program and providing financial support for training of Ukrainian professionals on CDC laboratories to improve Botulism/EDP diagnostics including bringing the donated secondhand laboratory equipment for genotyping from USA.

The RA met with Maria Ivchenko, project coordinator, World Bank, to follow up on discussions on collaboration on the World bank funded survey on road traffic injury. The IES assistance will include development of the protocol, developing the data collection forms, planning the survey, and conducting field work.

The RA met with Ezra Barsilay, Director CDC-Ukraine, and discussed collaboration on the “HIV prevalence study in Armed Forces of Ukraine” funded by PEPFAR. The IES assistance will include development of the protocol, developing the data collection forms, planning of the survey, and conducting field work.

### **Coordination and collaboration with CDC and the Ministry of Health:**

The RA met with Igor Kuzin, IES director and discussed the following issues:

- Developing a common approach to prioritize outbreaks for investigation by IES team
- Creating a rapid response team from IES residents and developing TOR and SOPs
- Involving mentors in outbreak investigations
- Allowing IES residents to participate in IHR department trainings
- Creating a template for Outbreak Reports and defining a deadline for submitting the reports
- Initiating the development of forms to include in EIDSS for priority diseases
- Presenting case studies at the research department trainings

### **Accomplishments:**

Most of the 25 abstracts for BTRP One Health conference were finalized. The two webinars conducted by resident were widely attended. Two externally funded projects with involvement of IES residents were initiated.

### **Challenges:**

The anticipated changes in the PHC leadership are materializing – the two key local leaders of the program will be leaving their positions: it was announced that PHC director Dr. Kurpita is leaving; Igor Kuzin, EIS director is also leaving for another job

IES program staffing continues to be a challenge. The constant absence of program assistance and part time program epidemiologist create obstacles in program activities.

Funding for local IES budget will not be available until mid of February, therefore no field projects can be carried on until after the mid of February.

### **Plans for the immediate future:**

- Finalizing the remaining 9 abstracts for the BTRP One Health conference
- Developing a common approach to prioritize outbreaks for investigation by the IES team
- Developing TOR and SOPs for a rapid response team from IES residents