

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND TROPICAL MEDICINE

The University of Sydney

N.S.W., Australia

Introduction

The School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine was formed in 1930 by the amalgamation of the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine (founded in Queensland in 1909) and the Diploma of Public Health course of The University of Sydney. The School is funded and administered by the Australian Department of Health, and relates academically to The University of Sydney. The School offers courses towards three postgraduate medical diplomas: the Diploma in Public Health (started in 1910); the Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (1926); and the Diploma in Occupational Health (1974).

The School has always functioned in effect as a national institute of health. In June 1975 a Committee of review recommended renaming of the School as the Australian Institute of Health. Other major recommendations included: masters degree programs for medical and non-medical graduates; priority for research in health services, health education and health surveillance; and increased collaborative support to other nations in the South East Asian and Western Pacific Regions. Because of current economic stringencies in Australia full implementation of the recommendations has been deferred. However plans are advanced towards a masters degree, referred to below.

Academic Staff

Number of Teaching Staff - Full Time: 26

Part Time: 1

Double Appointment from within the University - 15

Lecturers from outside the University - hired on a sessional basis

Student Body

Duration of course:

Diplomas in Public Health and Occupational Health - one academic year
(March - November)

Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene - 6 months (March - August)

Numbers Graduating:

	Diploma in Public Health	Diploma in Occupational Health	Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
1974	17 (Ceylon - 4 (Papua New Guinea - 1)	13	10 (India - 7 (Papua New Guinea - 1 (Malaysia - 1 (Cambodia - 1
1975	11 (Ghana - 1 (Ceylon - 1 (India - 1)	18 (Sri Lanka - 1	7 (Indonesia - 2 (BSIP - 1 (India - 2
1976	15 (Sri Lanka - 2	3 (India - 1 (Indonesia - 2	5 (Papua New Guinea - 1

The School also accepts major responsibility for conduct of the course leading to the Diploma in Nutrition and Dietetics in the Faculty of Science of The University of Sydney. Students enrolled totalled 28 in 1975 and 15 in 1976.

The School offers annual courses in tropical medicine (for lay people), occupational medicine (for physicians) and occupational health (for industry). It also contributes to undergraduate teaching in medicine, science, engineering, social work and architecture in The University of Sydney, and in community and occupational health nursing and the special therapies at the School of Health Sciences.

New Teaching Activities

1. A Master of Public Health degree, the course for which is planned to start in March 1978, will replace the existing postgraduate medical Diplomas in Public Health, Occupational Health and Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. A Diploma of Tropical Public Health of one academic year has been planned to start in parallel with the Masters degree, for students who do not qualify for the latter or who do not wish to undertake the full masters program. The Diploma in Tropical Public Health will constitute the course work for the MPH.

The masters program is to be open to both medical and other professionals. It will offer electives initially in public health and social medicine (including health services research and development), community

health, tropical public health, environmental and occupational health, occupational hygiene, nutrition, and epidemiology and health statistics. The program is to comprise one academic year of course work together with at least two terms for completion of a project and treatise.

2. In 1975 the former sections of occupational and environmental health were combined into one new department, which plans to extend teaching in human ecology and environmental sciences. In 1977, the department is conducting a three-month course in occupational hygiene for graduates in engineering and science who are practising in the field of industrial environmental control and safety. This course will in future years be incorporated as an elective in the Master of Public Health program.

3. The School now houses the Department of Community Medicine of The University of Sydney, which facilitates integration of teaching in the curative and preventive aspects of community health.

4. In 1974 and 1975 the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health conducted 6 and 5 week courses in occupational health attended respectively by 15 and 17 physicians from six countries of the Western Pacific Region, on behalf of WHO, Manila.

Major Research Activities

Environmental Health

1. Thermal stress in New Guinea villagers on coast and highlands.
2. Physiological studies in Antarctica.
3. Acclimatisation to heat.
4. Thermal stress on liferafts in tropical waters.
5. Methods for automatic calculation of heat stress indices.

Medical Entomology

1. Transmissibility of yellow fever by *Aedes notoscriptus* (in conjunction with Virus Research Institute, Entebbe).
2. Prediction of transmissibility of Australian arboencephalitis.

Nutrition

1. Infant feeding practices.
2. Nutritional intake status of vegetarian and non-vegetarian pre-school children.
3. Vitamin C supplementation trial in aboriginal Australians.

4. Dietary sodium intake.
5. Effectiveness of hospital food services.

Occupational Health

1. Segment of National Blood Pressure Study, in public servants.
2. Occupational factors in hypertension, and their control.
3. Health of employees in an atomic energy research establishment.
4. Membrane filter method for estimating airborne asbestos dust.
5. Smoking and absenteeism.
6. Environmental standards for industrial atmospheric contaminants.

Parasitology

1. Alimentary parasitism in Australia, particularly in Aboriginal Australians, immigrants, war orphans and refugees.
2. Susceptibility of Australian freshwater snails to schistosome parasites.
3. Hookworm studies in Indonesia - \$350,000 Australian aid.

Radiation Biology

1. Response of grafted cancer tissue to radiation and chemicals.
2. Clonogenic assay for human neoplastic cells.
3. Spontaneous neoplastic alterations.
4. Mammalian cell systems for testing substances for carcinogenesis.

Tropical Medicine

1. Chloroquine-resistant falciparum malaria in Papua New Guinea.
2. Health of aborigines in a coastal rural town.
3. Provision of health services at primary care level.

Biochemistry

1. Iso-enzyme methodology for diagnostic purposes.
2. Evaluation of instrumentation for clinical laboratories.

Preventive and Social Medicine

1. Family planning services in lower socio-economic groups.
2. Women at risk of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies.
3. Detection of neural tube defects.
4. Leprosy study in Karimu, New Guinea.
5. Haemophilia record and follow-up system.
6. Lung cancer studies.

Service Activities

The School acts as consultant to the Australian Government and to any other body seeking assistance in Australia and internationally. Members of staff are represented on Australian medical research and standards organisations and on other national and international bodies. The School is involved in the development of national health standards and methods; in formulation of codes of health practice and model legislation; in data collection and registry; and as a reference centre for Australia.

Cooperation and Collaboration

Australia's relative isolation is a barrier to the Sydney School's effective cooperation with institutions overseas. Nevertheless, individual staff members maintain personal liaison with colleagues in schools of the Western Pacific and other regions. The School takes postgraduate medical students from all four regions. More extensive interchange of teachers between schools would be welcomed but has till now been limited by cost. However, initial steps have been taken towards regular cooperation between the School and SEAMEO Trop Med countries.

Staff members have visited schools and other institutions in the four regions as consultants, usually under the aegis of WHO. For example, Professor Black of the Sydney School assisted in 1974 in the setting up of the Master of Public Health program in Teheran, the first course for which has just finished.

The School has special strength in the disciplines of community (including tropical) health, epidemiology, entomology, parasitology, occupational health, public health microbiology and climatic physiology, in all of which it invites cooperation and exchange.

Objectives

Teaching, research and service in community health.