

**COLLABORATIVE CENTER FOR
HEALTHY WORK & ENVIRONMENT
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**

*School of Public Health and Community Medicine
Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences
Seattle, Washington 98195-7234
Box 357234*



Final Report on Conference grant # 2R13OH008566-02A1

Title: Third International Scientific Conference on Occupational and Environmental Health.

P.I.: Keifer, Matthew C

Institution: University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Date: 11/30/09

The overall goal of the Third International Scientific Conference on Occupational and Environmental Health was to enhance occupational and environmental health research and professional capacity in the rapidly industrializing countries in Southeast Asia.

The primary focus of the conference was the four Southeast Asian countries—Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos—that are active partners with the University of Washington Collaborative Center for Healthy Workplace and Environment (formerly, International Scholars in Occupational and Environmental Health- ISOEH). However, presenters were welcome from throughout the world.

The conference took place at the Fortuna Hotel, a handicap accessible hotel, (one of the few that could be contracted in Hanoi). The conference built on the experience of two previous International Scientific Conferences, held in Hanoi in 2003 and 2005. It was organized collaboratively by the same institutions responsible for the previous conferences—the University of Washington, the Vietnam National Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health (NIOEH), and the Vietnam Association of Occupational Health (VINA OH).

The specific aims of the conference were to:

- Bring together researchers and practitioners from Southeast Asian countries and countries throughout the world to present research papers on high priority occupational and environmental health problems encountered in industrializing countries.
- Build on existing partnerships and foster new ones that will increase the capacity in Southeast Asian countries to address occupational and environmental health problems.
- Provide an international venue for scientists and professionals in the region to discuss the occupational and environmental health and safety needs and capabilities of the region.
- Provide an opportunity for public discussion of workplace and environmental regulatory issues facing countries with rapidly expanding economies.

A secondary goal of the conference will be to further establish *visibility* of the Vietnam National

Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health as a regional center of excellence for occupational and environmental health.

The conference was held in Hanoi on October 21-23, 2008. Under the theme of "*Occupational and environmental health in sustainable development*" and was held in conjunction with the 7th National Scientific Conference on Occupational Health in Vietnam. The Conference had 12 invited keynote speakers, a total of 163 oral presentations and more than 300 participants from 13 countries around the world. The exact number of posters was not obtained but was in the neighborhood of 200. Discussions included issues ranging from pesticide exposure in Puerto Rico to arsenic in water in Southeast Asia. The conference secretariat was the director of the National Institute of Occupational & Environmental Health (NIOEH) of Vietnam, the Vietnam Association of Occupational Health and the University of Washington.

Major themes emphasized by plenary speakers included child labor in Asia (Yi Kannitha-Cambodia), challenges of older workers in Japan and Vietnam (Masaharu Kumashiro-Japan and Nguyen Ngoc Nga - Vietnam), Occupational Health workforce development in Vietnam (Nguyen Thi Hong Tu- Vietnam), Occupational health challenges in developing countries (Shyam Pingle- India) and injury prevention research internationally (Dr Ian Noyes Director of the Liberty Mutual Institute for Safety USA) and in Vietnam (Dr Khuc Xuyen- Vietnam). The keynote presentation was given on arsenic contamination in drinking water worldwide by Dr Alan Smith (UC Berkley). This was followed up by a review of the known situation with respect to arsenic water contamination in Vietnam (Dr Nguyen Khac Hai – Vietnam).

Separate oral presentation sessions focused on diverse topics and included some 150 presenters. Discussion was generally lively. Presentations were conducted in English or Vietnamese. Translations were simultaneous and participants were provided with headsets.

Funding for the Conference:

Conference support came primarily from two sources. The greatest bulk of funding came from CDC/NIOSH by way of this conference grant. A second major source came from participant registration. Registration for developing country participants (the vast majority of the participants) was kept low at \$50.00 whereas the cost for developed country participants was \$200.00. Additional support was obtained from the Liberty Mutual Foundation and some support was provided by the University of Washington's Collaborative Center for Healthy Work and Environment. Ten Scholarships were awarded to developing country participants. These scholarships covered travel housing and registration. The source of these funds was the Liberty Mutual Foundation.

Comments on Specific Aims:

- *Bring together researchers and practitioners from Southeast Asian countries and countries throughout the world to present research papers on high priority occupational and environmental health problems encountered in industrializing countries.*

The conference provided a venue for interaction between participants from 13 different countries, the majority being from Southeast Asia. High priority topics including child labor, arsenic in water, workplace injuries, pesticide poisonings and occupational health workforce

development were covered. While several papers did focus on developed country issues, the vast majority of papers were focused on issues in developing countries.

- *Build on existing partnerships and foster new ones that will increase the capacity in Southeast Asian countries to address occupational and environmental health problems.*

The conference provided an excellent opportunity for participating partners in our Fogarty funded Collaborative Center for Healthy Work and Environment to meet potential trainees from our four CCHWE countries; Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand. Several presenters at the conference have subsequently become involved as trainees in CCHWE or have made application to graduate studies at the University of Washington. An additional collaborative outcome that resulted directly from the 3rd International Conference is the establishment of a resident exchange between University of Washington Occupational Medicine Residency and the Bandar Seri Begawan Health Centre residency program in Brunei Darussalam. Our first resident from the UW will be spending a rotation in Brunei in February or March of 2010. The conference also permitted closer contact with the Intel Inc. worker health and safety group, who have served as initial contacts from within South Vietnam for our Professional training initiative within our CCHWE project. During the conference, Dr Catherin Karr, whose travel to the conference was supported by CCHWE, met with researchers from the Hanoi School of Public Health and identified several potential collaborators for her EPA/ATSDR funded Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit which subsequently received additional funding from EPA/ATSDR for international activities in Southeast Asia.

- *Provide an international venue for scientists and professionals in the region to discuss the occupational and environmental health and safety needs and capabilities of the region.*

This was unquantified but apparent throughout the conference as researchers and professionals from many countries discussed presentations and reviewed posters. Substantial time was given to mixers both during the day and in the evenings.

- *Provide an opportunity for public discussion of workplace and environmental regulatory issues facing countries with rapidly expanding economies.*

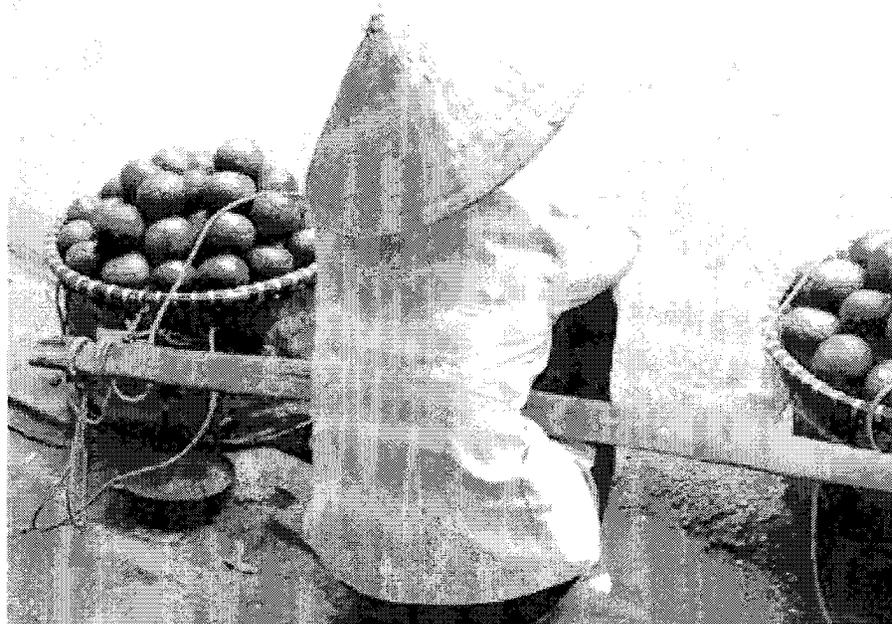
Multiple papers on regulatory issues were presented at the conference starting with a plenary discussing the National Programme on Labour Protection in Vietnam (Doan Minh Hoa) as well as discussion of the role of non-governmental organizations in developing country occupational health and safety (Shyam Pingle).

Overall comment:

This conference could not have happened without the generous support of the CDC/NIOSH. This, now triennial, conference provides the only opportunity for researchers from many countries to come together and discuss the broad array of occupational and environmental health issues confronting the region of Southeast Asia. It attracts researchers from around the globe, facilitating international collaboration and permits young researchers from developing countries in the region to present their findings in a public forum that is less intimidating than the world stage of EPICOH or ICOH. The organizers would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to the funders for their willingness to support this endeavor. It remains an important event for Vietnam and for Southeast Asia.

Challenges:

We did encounter some challenges as a result of the timing of securing funding through our various sources. Due to uncertainty, we faced some issues in scheduling and recruiting. Due to our somewhat late start on organizing the conference we found confirming an available and suitable venue (i.e. a handicapped accessible hotel) somewhat difficult. This in turn delayed our publicity on the conference and ultimately negatively impacted participation. Additionally, we found scheduling the conference a very significant challenge because of other conferences both inside and outside of Vietnam occurring in the September-December time period. In the future we hope to be able to secure funding earlier and if the National Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health is able to install an elevator, we may face less challenge in terms of scheduling as we may be able to use the NIOEH building for the conference itself.



International Scientific Conference on Occupational and Environmental Health

Fortuna Hotel
Hanoi, Vietnam

October 21-23, 2008

Occupational and Environmental Health Challenges in Rapidly Industrializing Countries

Global competition increasingly drives companies to operate in countries where they can produce goods at the lowest cost. Rapid changes in industrializing countries can impose new risks from hazardous substances and dangerous processes, and economic pressures can weaken attention to safeguards for workers and the environment.

The 3rd International Scientific Conference on Occupational and Environmental Health will build upon the success of two previous conferences. Researchers, government officials, practicing professionals, and students from around the world will convene again to share the latest information on occupational and environmental health issues.

The conference will focus on important topics in rapidly industrializing countries, particularly Southeast Asia. Speakers from Vietnam, other nations in Southeast Asia, and throughout the world will discuss a variety of problems, and will describe efforts to characterize, reduce and eliminate hazardous exposures.

The conference will be held in Vietnamese and English.



Conference Sponsors

In Vietnam

Vietnam Association of
Occupational Health

National Institute of Occupational
and Environmental Health

Vietnam Ministry of Health

Vietnam Ministry of Labor,
Invalids, and Social Affairs

In the United States

University of Washington Collaborative
Center for Healthy Work and Environment

The Fogarty International Center,
National Institutes of Health

National Institute for Occupational
Safety and Health

National Institute of Environmental
Health Sciences

Liberty Mutual Research
Institute for Safety





Conference Co-Chairs

Nguyen Duy Bao, MD PhD

Acting Director,
National Institute of Occupational
and Environmental Health, Vietnam

Khuc Xuyen, MD, PhD

General Secretary,
Vice President,
Vietnam Association of Occupational Health

Matthew Keifer, MD, MPH

Professor,
Department of Environmental
and Occupational Health Sciences,
and Department of Medicine,
University of Washington, USA;
Director, Collaborative Center
for Healthy Work and Environment

Conference Schedule

Tuesday, October 21, 2008

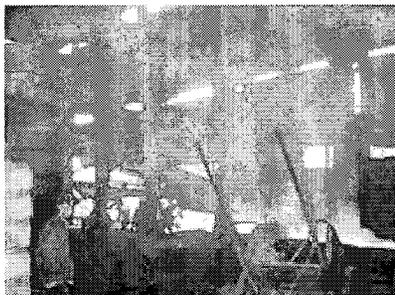
7:30 - 11:30 Registration
14:30 - 15:30 Opening ceremony
15:30 - 15:50 Tea break
15:50 - 17:05 Plenary session
18:00 - 21:00 Welcome party

Wednesday, October 22, 2008

8:00 - 9:40 Plenary session
9:40 - 10:00 Tea break and poster session
10:00 - 11:40 Oral sessions
11:40 - 13:30 Lunch
13:30 - 15:10 Oral sessions
15:10 - 15:30 Tea break and poster session
15:30 - 16:50 Oral sessions

Thursday, October 23, 2008

8:00 - 9:40 Oral sessions
9:40 - 10:00 Tea break and poster session
10:00 - 11:20 Oral sessions
11:20 - 13:30 Lunch
13:30 - 14:50 Oral sessions
14:50 - 15:10 Tea break and poster session
15:10 - 16:10 Oral sessions
16:20 - 17:00 Closing ceremony
18:00 - 20:00 Farewell party



Conference Location

Fortuna Hotel Hanoi
6B Lang Ha Street, Ba Dinh District,
Hanoi, Vietnam
<http://www.fortunahotels.com/>

Registration

Send completed registration form
by email to: HNYHLDQT3@gmail.com
or by fax: 84.4.8212894

A registration and information desk will
be set up at the Fortuna Hotel beginning
at 7:30 am on October 21.

Registration Fees

Delegates from
developing countries,
and students \$50

Delegates from
developed countries \$200

Fees are quoted in US dollars. The fee
can be paid in US or Vietnamese cur-
rency at the conference.

Scholarships are available for del-
egates from Southeast Asian countries.

The full conference registration
package includes:

- All scientific sessions
- Program/abstract book
- Opening ceremony
- Welcome reception
- Refreshment breaks
- Farewell party

Hotel Reservations

Please contact the Fortuna Hotel, and ask
for the conference rate. Email is the best
way to communicate with the hotel:
fortunahanoi@fortunahotel.com.vn

Other hotels in the vicinity of the confer-
ence can be identified at:
www.vietnamholiday.com

Touring Activities

Conference attendees may arrange local
day tours or package tours to sites
throughout Vietnam, at additional expense.
Please contact Hanoi Red Tours to arrange
tours: www.vietnamholiday.com

More Information

National Institute of Occupational
and Environmental Health
1B Yersin Street
Hanoi, Vietnam
HNYHLDQT3@gmail.com

Collaborative Center for Healthy
Work and Environment
University of Washington, Box 357234
Seattle, WA 98195, USA
cchwe@u.washington.edu



Photos: Christopher Schonwalder, Matthew Keifer,
Sharon L. Morris, Nguyen Duy Bao