

International Traineeships in AIDS Prevention Studies (ITAPS)

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Project Description: We sponsor three types of training: 1) an intensive 10-week summer course in designing and conducting prevention research, 2) a 6-8 week writing sabbatical/scientific manuscript preparation workshop and 3) formal graduate study. In 2002, 2003 and 2004, we accepted 23 visiting scientists from developing countries for a 10-week intensive training program at UCSF; the product of this course is a study protocol for implementation in the trainees' home countries. Subsequently, we provided assistance to these visiting scientists to obtain funds to conduct these pilot studies with technical assistance from a CAPS faculty mentor. In 2005 and 2006, 29 scientists who completed data collection came to CAPS for a scientific writing workshop, in which we provide statistical support and faculty consultation for preparation of a scientific manuscript. An additional six scientists attended individual writing sabbaticals during the funding cycle and received similar support and consultation. The scientific writing workshop is open both to returning scholars who attended our research methods courses, and to other international collaborators who are ready to complete scientific manuscripts. We also serve as a "portal of entry" for the AIDS International Research and Training Program at UC Berkeley for MPH and PhD degrees in epidemiology (Arthur Reingold, P.I.).

Significance: Training of scientists from developing countries in US academic institutions has traditionally been through formal long-term instruction leading to advanced degrees or postdoctoral fellowships. We have developed an alternative training model, which combines short-course training in the US, faculty-supervised pilot studies in scientists' home countries, and assistance in completion of scientific manuscripts.

Interesting Findings: Over the years, our emphasis has shifted from descriptive studies to intervention trials. ITAPS has trained 150 scientists from 39 countries over the past 18 years, of whom 39 have participated in one or more Scientific Writing Workshops, or returned to participate a second time in our summer intensive research methods program to design a new research protocol or an intervention phase of a descriptive study. Our alumni have published more than 600 peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals.

Project Website: www.igh.org/programs_activities/CAPS_International_Program.html

Project Recruitment Dates: Each year 6-10 scientists from developing countries are selected to participate in the program through an application process initiated by our international core faculty.