



CIH's First MPH Graduate

Dr Uzochukwu Egere

I was born in rural Eastern Nigeria and had my primary education in four different localities because of the nature of my father's work. I completed my secondary education in June 1987 and proceeded to the University of Jos in Central Nigeria in 1988 where I obtained my primary medical degree in 1995. After the usual one year internship and a compulsory one year national service, I joined the paediatric residency training at the University College Hospital Ibadan, South Western Nigeria, in 1998. During the residency period, I had a stint in Paediatric Neurology at the Eberhard-Karls University Children's Hospital, Tübingen, Germany for a period of one year. This made it possible for me to man the paediatric neurology ward at the UCH Ibadan for a one year period in the absence of a substantive consultant. I obtained the Fellowship of the West African College of Physicians (Paediatrics) in April 2006.



My medical school and residency training experiences brought to the fore in an emphatic manner, the intolerable burden of disease around me, but especially the unacceptable morbidity and mortality associated with this among our precious children. I became more and more dissatisfied with the routine bedside care of sick children as I began to understand the multifaceted contributory factors to burden of disease in children in my environment. I joined the Medical Research Council Unit, The Gambia, in August 2006, to help conduct a large community randomised trial of the 7-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine in rural Gambia. Pneumococcal diseases stand out among the major killers of children in Africa and I was delighted to be part of a team not only investigating how the new conjugate vaccines may affect this, but taking advantage of an outstanding research platform within Africa to understand the epidemiology and public health impacts of diseases.

The Mac-Gibbon Scholarship for an MPH at the University of Otago made possible through the Centre for International Health has been a necessary springboard in my career as the thorough training exposed me to concepts and methods which are lifetime tools for tackling child health challenges in the developing world. I aim at continuing to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for making quality contributions to both local and global efforts to reduce the burden of disease on children, especially in places where this is needed the most.

Currently, I work with a child Tuberculosis team at the MRC Unit, The Gambia, seeking to improve the diagnosis and management of childhood tuberculosis through contact tracing, tuberculin skin testing, clinical examination of suspects and administration of isoniazid prophylaxis to vulnerable child contacts. This project brings together my 'bush' and 'bedside' skills which have been shaped over the last 6 years through my experience at The MRC and public health training at the University of Otago.



The Otago International Health Research Network (OIHRN) is holding the **OIHRN 5th Annual Conference** on November 7th and 8th in Dunedin, and planning is well underway.

- The conference aims to give its members and interested members of public an opportunity to meet and discuss projects they have been working on and the possibility of collaborative efforts.
- The McKinlay Oration Speaker is Dr Stephen Luby. Dr Luby was profiled in the March 2012 newsletter.
- Registrations are now open online
- We invite submissions from interested parties on any subject related to international health. Student submissions are welcome.
- For conference details please see www.otago.ac.nz/oihrnconference.

News in Brief...

Micronutrient powder effective in combating anaemia

Press release, Wednesday 18 July 2012.

Dr Susan Jack was lead author on a study involving more than 3000 Cambodian under two year olds, that has found that mixing micronutrient powder into infants' complementary food reduces rates of anaemia beyond what nutrition education alone can achieve.

For more information see: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/news/news/otago034547.html>



Dr Susan Jack with some of the study children and their mothers in a Cambodian village.

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