

HRH Hub hosts Timor-Leste Day

Following discussions with the Minister for Health of Timor Leste Dr Nelson Martins earlier this year, the Human Resources for Health Knowledge Hub convened a meeting of the four AusAID funded Knowledge Hubs to harmonise support to the Timor Leste health sector.

The intention of the day was to identify common issues and to devise methods for conducting effective work without disrupting the Ministry of Health. Timor Leste has obtained support for their health sector development from multiple funds, agencies and NGOs and, as we have seen elsewhere, officials are at risk of being over-run by development assistance officials and enthusiasts.

The Women's and Children's Hub has ongoing work in nutrition in Timor Leste and the HRH Hub has strong links to both the Ministry and to the Universidade Nacional in Timor-Leste (UTL).

Held at UNSW on October 16th, the Timor-Leste day drew on the expertise of Dr Jaoa Soares Martins of UTL, who until recently was completing his PhD studies at SPHCM.

The main issue of interest emerging at the meeting was the major challenge to Timor Leste in the integration of newly trained doctors into the health system. Doctors are trained in Indonesia, Portugal and Fiji and, recently, in Cuba through its Solidarity Aid program. The final 2 years of the Cuban medical curriculum is now delivered in Timor Leste and new graduates have been produced. The next graduation will be of 500 new doctors and by the end of 2012-13, a total of 677 Timor-Leste medical students will have completed their training to enter the health system.

Dr Martins, the Dean of UTL Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, said Timor-Leste suffered from inadequate and unevenly distributed human resources, and that a deployment plan for new doctors needed to be designed now. Dr Martins outlined the other major challenges in health sector development in Timor-Leste as:

- High child and maternal mortality rates
- High burden of communicable diseases, malnutrition, and inadequate attention to non-communicable diseases
- A weak health information system

The key question identified for the HRH Hub to assist with was: How are new doctors integrated into the health care system and how can they strengthen it?

In his presentation Dr Augustine Asante, HRH Hub Research Fellow, reported that Timor-Leste had made remarkable progress as a young nation in developing its

health sector. However, several issues of concern required attention if the gains made so far were to be consolidated. These included:

- The need for HR management capacity building in the MoH
- Health workforce planning and financing
- Development of HR information systems.

Professor Anthony Zwi encouraged participants to consider developing a combined program of activities that would not burden partners and would be supportive of the needs of research and institutional arrangements in Timor-Leste.

David Fowler, Consultant to Timor-Leste MoH, Global Fund Programs, reported on the likely effects of rapid economic and social change for future management of the health system.

Dr Tim Anderson, University of Sydney, spoke on the topic of social medicine and provided further information on the Cuban-trained doctors.

Participants in the day also had the opportunity to hear from Dr Merita Monteiro, who recently returned from training in Cuba and is now undergoing a two year internship in Timor-Leste. In the evening the group joined SHARE in the presentation of Dr Anderson's recent film on medical training in Cuba as a component of a discussion on Social Medicine.

Timor-Leste Day Presentations:

[Health Sector Development Challenges in Timor – Jaoa Soares Martins \(473KB\)](#)

[Overview of Universidade Nacional, Timor-Leste – Jaoa Soares Martins \(903KB\)](#)

[Human Resources for Health \(HRH\) in Timor-Leste: progress and challenges – Augustine Asante \(1.91MB\)](#)

[Collaboration Experiences: Timor-Leste – John Rule \(280KB\)](#)

[Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: insights into health sector capacity in Timor-Leste – David Fowler \(69KB\)](#)

[Social medicine in Timor Leste – Tim Anderson \(487KB\)](#)

Videos by Dr Tim Anderson on the Cuba - Timor-Leste cooperation program:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6DFuzvcFdXI>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NlSn6_7vefc

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhMAncnEDQQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt5hVkUuL18>

Photo Gallery

[Timor-Leste Day photos](#)