



TRAUMA & GLOBAL HEALTH QUARTERLY

february 2008

<http://www.mcgill.ca/trauma-globalhealth/>

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features

→ mental health practice and research: successful training sessions held in Sri Lanka



Dr. Danielle Groleau receives a thank-you present from the Director of Angoda Hospital

From January 21-26, 2008, the McGill-Douglas team, the People's Rural Development Association (PRDA) and the Institute of Psychiatry at Angoda Teaching Hospital came together to host the *Second International Mental Health Practice and Research Training Course and Workshops* in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The six-day series covered (a) aspects of transcultural and social psychiatry; (b) the complex relationship between trauma and mental health; and (c) qualitative methods used for research in mental health and their relevance for clinical practice. Each session drew more than 70 participants. A full itinerary is available on our website. In the days leading up to the training sessions, the organizers visited Sri Lanka's

south-west region, travelling to Hambantota, where they visited a community based mental health care programme in Angunakolapalessa managed by Basic Needs/Creative Action. The McGill team was able to visit some of the clients of Basic Needs/Creative Action, a team of their village level facilitators, a tsunami affected fishing village and a new resettlement of tsunami affected families. Prior to the Hambantota visit, the team visited the Mental Hospital in Mulleriyawa and a rehabilitation programme run at this hospital by an NGO, *Nest*. Some members of the team visited the wards of Angoda Hospital during the training sessions. On the last day, Professor Laurence Kirmayer, Dr Duncan Pedersen, Dr Jayan Mendis, Dr Harischandra Gambeera, Mr Chamindra Weerackody and Dr Suman Fernando met representatives of the media and answered questions from them.



Devastation along the southwest coast of Sri Lanka

notes from the field: Colombo

I can hear the waves from my room overlooking the Indian Ocean. We are back in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and today the skies are light blue, the ocean looks cobalt green (no sharks), and the pool is deep blue, filled with salty ocean water. But if the weather is good, the situation here is not. We just returned from an interesting, but shocking, three-day visit to the tsunami-hit south -- and had to change our itinerary after news that seven corpses were discovered near our hotel. Since the end of the ceasefire, the Tamil Tigers are getting closer to Colombo with remotely activated clay mines and suicide missions. On Monday, we start a six-day course on trauma and global health and hope everything will go as planned (and with no casualties).

- Duncan Pedersen, *Canada Team Leader*



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notes from the field: Nepal

At sunset, we arrived in Chitwan – a 900 sq km protected forest area and former hunting reserve for Nepali and British aristocrats – after a six-hour drive on a sinuous, busy road 160 km south of Kathmandu, navigating against hordes of speeding motorcycles, overloaded trucks and overflowing buses, a sea ambulant vendors, oscillating figures of porters with huge bulks in their shoulders, bicycles and tricycles, Buddhist and Hindu road side shrines and pagodas, screeching loudspeakers, drowsy buffalos and hyper-alert goats. We walked through the maze of small farmers' houses and stores, playing children and curious early risers, slowly rolling towards the edge of the village to interview a couple of informants. Our pace was slow, stopping to greet intercepting children and local villagers with our praying hands closed to our chest and our first word in Nepali: namaste, meaning, "I greet the divine inside of you".

- Duncan Pedersen, Canada Team Leader

features

→ McGill-Douglas team visits Nepal



McGill team members Duncan Pedersen and Laurence Kirmayer with Bhoghendra Sharma at CVICT

In early February 2008, the McGill-Douglas team travelled to Nepal, where they visited the Centre for Victims of Torture (CVICT) in Kathmandu and collaborating organizations in Tanahun, Chitwan, and Dang. Field visits included interviews with respondents to a mental health survey conducted by CVICT and a visit to a local health centre. In Kathmandu, nine participants attended a course presented by Dr. Duncan Pedersen and Dr. Laurence Kirmayer on how

to publish an academic paper. The workshop was preceded by a student presentation on the development of a curriculum for primary health care givers addressing psychosocial interventions. The McGill-Douglas team also had the opportunity to meet with Ed Doe, a Canadian Development Officer, to exchange information on the Trauma and Global Health Program and on Canadian programs in Nepal. The team later met with the Dean and Assistant Dean of Tribhuvan University, who were very receptive to the possibility of collaboratively organizing an international course on social and transcultural psychiatry in Nepal in 2009. Please check our website – www.mcgill.ca/trauma-globalhealth – for an upcoming photo essay on the McGill-Douglas team's visit to Nepal.

→ call for fellowship candidates

We are now accepting applications for this year's Summer Students' Fellowships and In-Service Research & Training scholarship candidates! Opportunities are offered for candidates from Guatemala, Nepal, and Peru, wishing to strengthen knowledge and skills in mental health research (clinical, ethnographic and epidemiological) as applied to populations exposed to episodic natural disasters and protracted violence. Every year, our fellows take part in the annual Summer Program in Social and Cultural Psychiatry, as well as the McGill Advanced Study Institute in Cultural Psychiatry, an intensive three-day programme on a topic related to ongoing faculty research activities in social and cultural psychiatry. The theme for 2008 is of special interest to Trauma and Global Health Program researchers and will address "Peace, Conflict and Reconciliation: Contributions of Cultural Psychiatry." For more information about our summer program please visit:

www.mcgill.ca/tcpsych/training/summer



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notes from the field: Guatemala

I spent most of 2007 in Guatemala, conducting research on women and violence. Not only are women faced with the residues of war-time violence, but they must also live with present-day insecurity and impunity, where basic economic survival is a struggle. Beyond the femicidal killings, sexual assaults and domestic violence so rampant in the country, generalized insecurity affects women going about their daily lives and creates its own intrusive set of fears: Will my children return home safely? Will my bus ride to work be interrupted by an assault? The women I met shared difficult life stories, ones marked by hardship. But as much as their stories describe adversity, they are also stories of struggle, survival and resilience. They are stories of extraordinary strength, inspired by their children, memories of deceased loved ones, work or community involvement, which provide them with a sense of meaning and a reason for going on— fuerzas para de salir adelante.

- Paula Godoy Paiz, Fellow

in brief

→ your field experiences are now online!

The most vivid descriptions of our activities come from team members in the field. These real-world reports from our investigators, collaborators, fellows and friends, are now available online through a new "Notes from the Field" section on our website. Excerpts are included in this issue of *Trauma & Global Health Quarterly* - visit <http://www.mcgill.ca/trauma-globalhealth/notes/> to read the full accounts.

Do you have a story to share? We welcome you to send your field notes to Tamsyn Farr at tamsyn.farr@gmail.com to be added to this new and exciting section of our website.

→ congratulations to recently selected fellows

The entire Trauma and Global Health Program team would like to congratulate three recently selected applicants to its fellowship program.

Ram Prasad Sapkota holds Master's Degrees in Psychology and Rural Development from Tribhuvan University in Nepal. Since June 2007, Sapkota has worked as a Research Coordinator at the Centre for Victims of Torture (CVICT) in Kathmandu.

Shavindra Dias holds a medical degree in Psychiatry from the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka. Dias is currently employed as a lecturer with the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Peradeniya.

Udeni Appuhamilage received a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology in Chicago, USA. Appuhamilage is currently a consultant researcher for Save the Children Sri Lanka and the Center for Policy Alternatives, as well as a Department of Philosophy and Psychology lecturer at the University of Peradeniya.



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calendar

what's new?

Have something to share with the rest of the team? Send your news and feedback to Ms. Tamsyn Farr at tamsyn.farr@gmail.com

→ **April 29 – May 2, 2008**
Advanced Study Institute
Peace, Conflict, & Reconciliation:
Contributions of Cultural Psychiatry
Montreal, Quebec

This workshop and conference will bring together an international group of scholars, researchers and practitioners to address the relevance of cultural psychiatry for understanding conflict resolution, reconciliation and the rebuilding of communities that have endured prolonged conflict and political violence. The format will be a two-day workshop (April 29 & 30) limited to 25 participants, followed by a two-day public conference (May 1 & 2) aimed at clinicians, practitioners, and policy makers. On the evening of May 1, there will be a poster session and reception, followed by a film screening and panel discussion. For more information, please visit: <http://www.mcgill.ca/tcpsych/training/advanced>

→ **May 5 - June 2, 2008**
14th Annual Summer Program in Social & Cultural Psychiatry
Montreal, Quebec

The program provides the conceptual background for research and clinical work in social and cultural psychiatry and will be of interest to postdoctoral trainees, researchers, and clinicians in psychiatry and other mental health disciplines; residents and graduate students in health and social sciences; and physicians, psychologists, social workers and health professionals. The summer program forms part of the training activities of the Montreal WHO Collaborating Centre and is endorsed by the Canadian Academy of Psychiatric Epidemiology. For more information, please visit: <http://www.mcgill.ca/tcpsych/training/summer/#GENERAL>.

