



Winter 2002

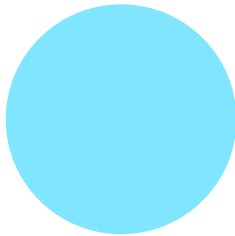
MIRT News

Multidisciplinary International Research Training Program, 206-543-7559

MIRT 2002 Fellows:

Twelve Fellows to Present at 2003 AAAS Meeting

- 12 MIRT fellows to present in Denver!
- Featured Faculty: Dr. Patricia Garcia
- MIRT Memories from one of the first UW fellows, Patrick Moran!



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The 2002 MIRT Fellows returned to the U.S. in August after a busy summer analyzing multiple data sets and learning about epidemiology field work research in Quito and Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador, the Northern Andean region of the country. Twelve MIRT Alumni developed their work into abstracts and submitted them to the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences Annual meeting. Proudly, all TWELVE were selected to present their work at the Student Poster Session, Social Sciences category of the Conference in Denver, CO on February 15, 2003. **2002 Fellows: Troy Abernathy, Chami Arachchi, Geraldine Chery, Anna Fortin, Michelle Godínez, Samantha Gomez, Jaime Hernandez, Nga Huynh, Kenyetta Johnson, Ursula Lang, Jennifer Maria and Carlos Navarro** each will develop a poster presentation outlining their work with Dr. Jose Suarez at the *Fundacion CIMAS del Ecuador*. Good Work!

Here is the list of titles for the published abstracts for the AAAS 2003 Annual Meeting:

Troy Abernathy: *Assessment of the Ten Leading Causes of Mortality Among Men and Women in Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador: 1991-1999*

Chami Arachchi: *Incidence of Mortality due to Infectious and Respiratory Diseases in Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador, 1991-1999*

Geraldine Chery: *Social and Housing Environmental Risk Factors Influencing Infant Mortality Attributable to Respiratory Infections in Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador*

Anna Fortin: *A Descriptive Epidemiological Study of Chronic Diseases and Causes of Mortality Among the Elderly in Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador*

Michelle Godínez: *The Effects of Maternal Health, Standards of Living, and Access to Health Care on Neonatal Mortality in Pedro Moncayo, Ecuador, 1991-2001*

Samantha Gomez: *Analysis of the Epidemiological Transition Taking Place in Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador*

Jaime Hernandez: *Informed Consent: Challenges in the Application of the American Standard When Using the Quichua Population of the Andes as Subjects*

Nga Huynh: *The Incidence, Trends, and Risk Factors of Malignant Neoplasm: An Epidemiological Surveillance in the Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador*

Kenyetta Johnson: *An Assessment of Trends and Risk Factors of Mortality in Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador During the Years of 1991 and 1999*

Ursula Lang: *Disparities in Maternal Health and Utilization of Health Services among Women Residing in the Five Parishes of Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador*

Jennifer Maria: *Cross-Sectional Study of Availability of Health Care Services and Living Conditions for Indigenous vs. Mestizo Population in Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador*

Carlos Navarro: *Risk Factors of Hypertension in Adults Over 30 Years Old in Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador*



Having fun! Nga Huynh, Samantha Gomez, Geraldine Chery and Michelle Godínez



Jennifer Maria (center, front) and Michelle Godínez, (4th from left) celebrate Inti Raymi, the festival of the sun, with the community in Cotacachi, Ecuador.



Featured Faculty Mentor, Dr. Patricia Garcia

MIRT is especially thankful to Dr. Patty Garcia for providing our MIRT fellows high quality mentoring and research experiences in the area of STD/HIV/AIDS prevention.

Dr. Patty Garcia has been an active collaborator to the MIRT program since 2000. She is a University of Washington alumna and graduated with a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology in 1998. She is the Vice Dean of Research at the School of Public Health, the Head of the Unit of Epidemiology, STD/HIV at the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia in Lima, Peru. Over the years she has welcomed and been an excellent mentor to several of our MIRT fellows during their internship in Lima. Dr. Garcia has placed our students in exciting research opportunities focusing on the prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS. Our first MIRT Fellow, Miroslava Aroca, worked on a project that aimed to improve the recognition by pharmacy workers of 4 major STDs, and train pharmacy workers to improve the frequency and quality of STD/HIV prevention interventions. In 2001, MIRT Fellow, Carolina Mejia worked with Dr. Garcia on a research project that tested the acceptability of using female condoms among sex workers in Lima, Peru. Both Dr. Garcia and Carolina Mejia were awarded a Fogarty International Fellowship to scale up this research in three regions of Peru. All of these research projects have contributed important data in the area of STD/HIV for the country. On behalf of the MIRT advisory Committee we would like to thank Dr. Patty Garcia for being an inspirational mentor and for her ongoing support of the MIRT program.

From Dr. Virginia Gonzales, Co-Director

There are three words that come to my mind when I think of Dr. Patty Garcia: intelligent, exuberant, and committed. She breathes life into everything she does. I have known Patty for about 7 years and have had the pleasure of working with her on a number of different projects which include UW collaborative training courses on Medical Informatics and on Motivational Interviewing for HIV/AIDS prevention. When you work with Patty you can trust that the job is going to get done in an exemplary fashion. She has been an inspiration to me and to the students she works with. Her own research has been both ambitious and productive. She has found that most young people with sexually transmitted diseases in Peru seek care first in pharmacies. In a randomized controlled trial in Lima, she has demonstrated that care provided in pharmacies for clients with sexually transmitted diseases can be greatly improved by training of pharmacy workers. She then carried out a large study of members of women's clubs in 19 rural villages throughout the mountains, jungles, and coastal regions of Peru, to show that 50% of women had untreated reproductive tract infections. Currently she coordinates a very large study in Peru,

in which 20 of the largest cities are randomized to a preventive intervention designed to reduce the incidence of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. Patty is a superb mentor for MIRT students, and her projects provide an excellent opportunity for trainees. I look forward to ongoing collaboration in the future.

From Carolina Mejia, '01

During the summer of 2001, I was assigned to work at "Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH)" in Lima, Peru as a MIRT Fellow with Dr. Patricia (Patty) Garcia on pilot test on the acceptability of the female condom among sex workers in Lima. I had read about Dr. Garcia's exceptional research publications and outstanding professional achievements. I also knew that she is well-respected and very driven person. I must admit, at first, I was a bit nervous to work with Dr. Garcia because I wondered if I could ever meet her standards given her impressive credentials and achievements.

The first day I arrived at UPCH Dr. Garcia showed up after I arrived and she gave me a cordial, yet quick, greeting and immediately began talking about our work plan. I felt that I did have a reason to be nervous but I dove into my work and made sure I was keeping up with my assigned duties. Gradually, I began to see how I was earning Dr. Garcia's trust with the work that I was doing. After a few weeks, I felt extremely comfortable working with her and I learned a lot from her about conducting research with sex workers. I also quickly realized how caring and compassionate she is about her employees, patients, and study participants. When she was out of the office teaching or seeing clients, I started to miss her witty sense of humor and her charismatic personality. In the mornings when she arrived at the office, she would take the time to come in my office space to say 'hello' and to find out how I was doing. Near the end my MIRT assignment, I was flattered that Dr. Garcia would consider me to return and work with her on a larger study on the female condom the following year. The next year, I returned Peru for five months to work on the follow up study. Dr. Garcia welcomed me like an old friend. I had a great time planning the logistics of the project. During my second trip to Peru, I realized that, even though Patty is a hard working researcher and physician, she knows how to have fun at whatever she does. She's a great storyteller, loves to sing, and is an incredible dancer. I am very thankful to the MIRT program for matching me with Dr. Garcia. I could not have asked for a better foreign mentor, role model, and friend!

Troy Abernathy, '02

As the holiday season approaches, I find myself reminiscing about my MIRT experience in Ecuador this past summer and the impact that it has had on my life. I was able to meet some wonderful friends, individuals that I regard as some of the most intelligent, kindhearted, and motivated individuals that I've met thus far in my life. I developed a relationship with a host family that I can call my own. As a young man, I most certainly had to experience the nightlife of Ecuador, a time to show my skills on the dance floor. Several of my fondest moments took place during fieldwork in Tocachi, evaluating children formal nutrition. By the smiles on their faces, one would never know that these children were poor, and yet it humbled me to look at life in a totally different way. Words alone cannot express how grateful I am to the following individuals for providing me with this wonderful opportunity: Dr. Michelle Williams, Dr. Clarence Spigner, Daren Wade, and the entire staff at the Fundación Cimas del Ecuador. I cannot thank you enough for an overwhelming Ecuadorian experience and most importantly, enabling me to learned a great deal about myself, about who I am and how much work is needed to be done to improve the quality of healthcare for those that are less fortunate and underserved. To work under the tutelage of brilliant, compassionate people like your selves does not happen everyday, and I will certainly cherish the experience for a lifetime. To the entire MIRT staff, have a safe and joyful holiday!



Quito, Ecuador

Nga Huynh, '02

I would like to thank the University of Washington and CIMAS for the opportunity to participate in the MIRT Program. The research training experience, as well as the cultural experience, was very rewarding. Not only did I receive expert training on epidemiological research techniques, I was also introduced to a variety of other learning opportunities. Learning how to speak Spanish, experiencing hands-on health assistance in a third world country, living with a host family, analyzing and collecting data, and attending workshops were the rewarding experiences that I walked away with from the program. The MIRT Program has given to me necessary tools that will enable me to further my education in the field of biological health sciences. This experience has shown me how both independence/dependence from/on others are necessary in developing oneself. I have developed many close friendships along the way, along with meeting many people who have the same interest as me. Thank you so much for such a rewarding experience!!!

Arlene Davis, '01

There are so many phrases that can be used to describe my experiences in Zimbabwe. Without stating all the obvious, I just want to use this opportunity to thank you for using your brilliance to create such rooted foundations that students like myself can use as stepping stones for the future. Your commitment to learning, to the development of inquisitive minds and to international research is admirable. Students, like myself have been impressed with your diligence and we are now encouraged to continue to seek similar experiences for ourselves and to share them with others. You have been true to the title, "mentor" and I can only hope that there will be many more students who will have the opportunity to be your mentees.



Harare, Zimbabwe



STAR Program, University of Washington

“Stipends for Training Aspiring Researchers” (STAR)

A Minority Student Research Program

TAKE TIME OUT OF YOUR HECTIC SUMMER PACE TO PARTICIPATE IN
Cutting Edge Research in Laboratories Of Some Of The World’s Best Scientists!

An overview of the program

The STAR Program is designed to offer 10-12 weeks (beginning June 2003) of biomedical and/or behavioral research experience to 18 undergraduate through completion of first year graduate/professional students. STAR students receive a stipend, housing allowance, and airfare (for out-of-state, non-Washington resident students only). The STAR Program focuses its resources on underrepresented (i.e., African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Mexican American) students that are US citizens or permanent residents. No student, however, is denied the opportunity to apply to or participate in the program.

Undergraduate applicants must hold a high school diploma and have successfully completed both the Calculus series in math and one science series (i.e., Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.). Strong undergraduate applicants will also have a cumulative GPA of 3.0, with scores 2.8 or higher in all math and science coursework. Graduate and professional level students must demonstrate an active interest in pursuing a research-related career and be in good standing with their programs of study.

Those applicants selected for the program will:

- be provided first-hand, quality experiences in laboratories of established researchers
- gain the confidence and academic exposure which will allow them to successfully enter graduate/professional level programs of study
- become part of a network which includes a long-term “mentored” relationship with University of Washington advisors, researchers, professors, staff, and support programs for students of color

APPLICATION POSTMARK DEADLINE
February 2003 (Tentative)

The following is an example of the type of research in which participants have been involved

MENTOR: MICHAEL PORTMAN, MD
(SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, CARDIOLOGY DIVISION)

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of altering pH (blood acid level) on myocardial function in the neonate after cardiopulmonary bypass. In these studies, neonatal sheep will be placed on cardiopulmonary bypass and the acid level altered by adjusting the amount of carbon dioxide in the blood, which perfuses the heart and body. These experiments will also utilize hypothermia or cooling which is a method of preserving the heart muscle during surgery. A second aspect of the study is the examination of the effect of pH in cardioplegia solution, which is a special fluid instilled to paralyzed and protect the heart during surgery. The findings in this study should be applicable to open heart surgery in human infants.

Read this section carefully

Participants in the program will be responsible to:

Attend STAR program <u>Seminar Sessions</u>	Weekly
Compose a <u>Research Abstract</u>	Due the 2 nd week in July
Write a <u>Research Paper</u>	Due: last day of program
<u>Present at the Annual Poster Session</u>	2 nd or 3 rd week in August
<u>Present at the Annual “STAR” Talent Show Night</u>	2 nd or 3 rd week in August

(Note: Not having a specific date on this sheet, does not excuse students from participating in all parts of the program)

Notification of acceptance to this program will be made no later than *June 23, 2003*

Patrick Moran, '95

Excerpts from my MIRT journal . . .

Quito, Ecuador - June 1995

On Tuesday the 18th, I found out that my original project was cancelled. The other fellows and I were at a meeting between *CIMAS* and *la Fundacion Juan Cesar Garcia*. We sat at huge, oval table in the central meeting room. Present were two or three doctors from each project, the director of *Juan Cesar*, and Dr. Jose Suarez. The organization of the meeting was professional as they showed us different aspects of each project with slides, literature, and short speeches. I was assigned to a new study that would investigate the progression and distribution of a malaria outbreak in Santo Domingo de los Colorados, a city located somewhere between Quito and the coast that had recently experienced a rapid population growth.

Additionally, Monique (a MIRT Fellow) and I were going to spend a week surveying some of the communities along the Cayapas River. The Cayapas River appears to have the traits of a mysterious river from a movie or a novel - - tropical and not yet fully charted. As I watched the slide show with pictures of Santo Domingo and the River, my heart pounded with anticipation and my mind wandered into another time-space. A thousand questions entered my head about the places I would see, the people I would meet, and about my eventual contributions to the project. As the directors continued to speak in very general terms, I realized that the true answers to my questions could only be found in the reality of experience.

Dr. Tarquino's face lit up with excitement as I told him of my plans to design some sort of research project with the small, but growing, amount of information that I had collected to date. Although leishmaniasis was his "first love", he conceded that the high levels of malaria-associated morbidity deserved some attention as well. He suggested that I go to the *Sistema Nacional de la Erradicacion de Malaria* (SNEM) office to look for more information.

When I arrived at the SNEM office, I found out that Dr. Tarq had just called to alert them that I was on my way. I don't know what he actually told them, but I was welcomed as if I was someone of high importance. They gave me access to a small storage shack where I found multiple stacks of large, dusty books. The books contained patient information for those who had sought treatment for malaria in one of Santo Domingo's many health clinics. Because all of the information was entered as individual patient records, I spent the next three days summarizing the data into what I think describes the malaria incidence for each sector of the city. My idea was to compare the malaria incidence in each sector to specific environmental characteristics that are known to promote the spread of Malaria (i.e.; wells, open sewer systems, construction of houses, proximity to swamps, etc.).

Soon after I sat down, some of the other employees (who were currently on strike) began to crowd around the storage shack where I worked. They just whispered and stared at me through the open windows. Although no one inquired as to what I was actually doing, they all seemed to be amazed with my work. The attention I received made me feel as if I was about to uncover the mysteries of life, or at least the mysteries of life in Santo Domingo...

Patrick Moran, '95 is currently in his second year of medical school at Nova Southeastern University, College of Osteopathic Medicine.



Northern Ecuador



*"As the directors continued to speak in very general terms, I realized that the true answers to my questions could only be found in the reality of experience."
Patrick Moran, '95*

ALUM-NET

Let us know how you're doing and what you've been up to!

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Home Phone Number _____

Work Phone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Affiliation with MIRT _____

About You: (awards, honors, publications, employment, personal, etc)

Permission to use this information in future newsletter? Yes____ No____

About MIRT...

MIRT is a national program designed to encourage students from underrepresented groups to pursue careers in biomedical and behavioral research. This program provides support for undergraduates and graduate students to receive research training in an international setting. Conceived and funded by the Fogarty International Center of the National Institutes for Health, the UW MIRT. Program has been developed in collaboration

with Dillard University and Western Washington University. The program focuses on population-based health research in developing countries and builds on established linkages with academic institutions in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa, Thailand, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina and Brazil.

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Larry Estrada, Western Washington University
Godfrey Woelk, University of Zimbabwe
Jose Suarez, Fundacion CIMAS del Ecuador
Sixto Sanchez, Dos del Mayo Hospital
Patricia Garcia, Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia

Happy Holidays from the staff and faculty at MIRT!

Happy Hanukkah! Happy Kwaanza!

Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo! (Spanish)

Vesele Vianoce. A stastlivy Novy Rok! (Slovak)

Joyeux Noel et Bonne Année! (French)

Chuc mung nam moi va Giang Sinh vui ve! (Vietnamese)

Meri Kurisumasu soshite Akemashite Omedeto! (Japanese)

Idah Saidan Wa Sanah Jadidah (Arabic)

E ku odun, e ku iye'dun! (Yoruba)

Maligayang Pasko! (Tagalog)

Boas Festas e Feliz Ano Novo (Portuguese)

Frohe Weihnachten und ein gl|ckliches Neues Jahr! (German)

Subha nath thalak Vewa. Subha Aluth Awrudhak Vewa (Sinhalese)

Suk San Wan Christmas! Suk san wan pee mai! (Thai)

Boldog Karácsonyt! Jó nyaralast! (Hungarian)

Sol tan ul chuka hamnidah! (Korean)

Shub Naya Baras (Hindi)

Re le lakaletsa mahlohonolo a Kerismese a matle! (South African)

Kung His Hsin Nien bing Chu Shen Tan (Mandarin)

Naya Saal Mubarak Ho (Urdu)

Mele Kalikimaka ame Hauoli Makahiki Hou!(Hawaiian)

Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo! (Italian)