

confidently with their students all aspects of health related to water and the environment.

Another finding of the IDWSSD evaluation was that there is still somewhat limited linkage of community/women's participation and health education with primary health care. Water supply and sanitation projects will need to be more effectively integrated in their design, planning, and execution with other pri-

mary health care focuses, such as food and nutrition and maternal and child health care.

It is hoped that the observance of Inter-American Water Day each October in future years will be not just a one-day event but rather the culmination of a year-long program of activities designed to raise awareness and motivate the public to conserve and preserve water resources.

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Health Promotion Conference and Charter for the English-speaking Caribbean

A historic conference on health promotion for the countries participating in the Caribbean Cooperation in Health (CCH) initiative was held in Trinidad on 1–4 June 1993. This First Caribbean Conference on Health Promotion was sponsored by PAHO and hosted by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. One of the primary achievements of the Conference was the drafting of a Caribbean Health Promotion Charter, which was finalized after a process of review in the countries and then approved by the Caucus of Caribbean Ministers of Health in September 1993.

The Conference was attended by 133 persons from the Caribbean health, development, agriculture, education, and media sectors, as well as representatives of universities in the subregion and private sector and nongovernmental orga-

nizations. Staff from PAHO, the Canadian Health Promotion Directorate, and the Wales Health Promotion Authority also participated. The Conference was chaired by Dr. Karen Sealey, PAHO's Caribbean Program Coordinator, and featured addresses by the Honorable John Eckstein, Minister of Health of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Carlyle Guerra de Macedo, Director of PAHO, and Mr. Frank Abdulah, Deputy Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

The design of the Conference favored a high level of interaction among participants. It was structured into three broad phases:

- plenary presentations on health issues and social trends, health promotion concepts, and selected examples of applications in the Caribbean;
- meetings of multisectoral working groups to discuss and develop a common understanding of and framework for health promotion and to identify issues, elements, and

Source: Draft Charter now a reality thanks to health promotion conference held in Trinidad. *CCH Update* May-August 1993;6(2):2–3.

strategic approaches and directions for specific health promotion actions;

- identification by participants of a series of steps that countries could take to sustain interest in health promotion.

A special evening session on the topic of "Media and Health" was open to the public as well as conference participants. It featured a panel discussion between representatives of the health sector and the media, who exchanged views on opportunities for a stronger partnership between their respective fields. Despite differences between the panels on specific points, the conferees found much common ground, as reflected in the charter's identification of the media as a participant and valuable partner in health promotion.

The conference concluded with a ceremony at which Sir George Alleyne, Assistant Director of PAHO, formally presented a draft version of the charter, which had been developed by an editorial committee on the basis of the working group discussions and synthesis in plenary session. According to the charter, the achievement of optimal health levels by the people of the Caribbean area depends upon the following strategies: formulating health public policy; reorienting health services; empowering communities to achieve well-being; creating supportive environments; increasing personal health skills; and building alliances, with special emphasis on the media. The media participants at the conference, who were involved in drawing up the charter, were highly supportive of it and committed themselves to helping achieve its goals and objectives.



Development of Molecular Epidemiology in Mexico

Molecular epidemiology is a field that has recently emerged from the integration of molecular biology into traditional epidemiologic research. It focuses on the role of molecular-level genetic and environmental risk factors in the etiology, distribution, and prevention of disease. The objectives of molecular epidemiology are quite broad: (1) descriptive and analytical studies to evaluate host/environment interactions in disease; (2) the development of strategies for the control of bacteria, parasitic, and viral disorders through molecular diagnosis; and (3) the prevention of noncommunicable diseases and genetic disorders by assessing risk

and identifying susceptible individuals through genetic screening.

So far, few countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have developed activities in this field, owing to a lack of trained molecular epidemiologists and a shortage of appropriate equipment, reagents, and supplies. To help countries acquire the necessary capabilities in this field, an International Molecular Epidemiology (IME) Task Force has recently been established by Dr. Janice S. Dorman, Co-Director of the WHO Collaborating Center for Diabetes Registries, Research, and Training at the University of Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania). Its mission is to facilitate the de-