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Importance of field epidemiology training program (FETP) in China

Chinese Field Epidemiology Training Program (CFETP) was officially launched in 2001 to fundamentally meet the demand for high level professionals in field epidemiology. It has also further helped to develop and enhance the system of disease control and prevention in China, as well as improve the emergency response capacities, initiated by MOH and supported by WHO and UNICEF. The mission of CFETP is to train and develop eight capacities of trainees through the principle of learning by doing with the spirit of dedication, teamwork, exploration and commitment to truth and integrity.

Eight Capacities:

- Individually organize field epidemiology investigations in times of urgent public health affairs
- Respond to natural disasters; prevent and control epidemic outbreaks under such settings
- Design, evaluate and manage disease surveillance systems
- Advocate for public health actions through communications with the community, the media and decision-makers
- Gather, analyze and utilize information
- Apply, plan, implement and manage research programs
- Write investigation reports, academic thesis and deliver presentations
- Conduct training and academic consultation

While committing to the responsibilities of major emergency responses designated by China CDC and MOH, CFETP developed long-term cooperation relationship with WHO and US CDC. In 2006, CFETP was written as an important part in the Memorandum of Cooperation between the MOH directors of China and US. CFETP has overcome the difficulties and frustrations of its early stage and stood up to the challenges with all new thoughts. In hundreds of field investigations, especially in the battles of combating SARS, AVI Prevention and Control, conquering Yunnan Sudden Death, the investigation of the Risk factors of EV71, disaster assessment after 5.12 Wenchuan Earthquake, the investigation of “melamine-tainted milk”, the investigation of the outbreak of pandemic (H1N1), as well as being invited to join the assessment to government’s pandemic H7N9 response. No matter how rigorous the difficulties were, CFETP held up to its mission and never gave up. CFETP constantly develops graduates and technical leads at provincial CDC as mentors that directly advise CFETP trainees at the field base. Since 2001, CFETP has recruited a total of 243 trainees, covering all provinces in mainland China. 170 people have graduated, and they are distributed in 28 provinces, working in the national and local health departments. At present, CFETP has become the largest field epidemiology training programs outside the United States. CFETP has three training direction, including emergency training, chronic disease and environmental health. According to China’s specific needs and referring to the successful experiences of other countries, CFETP has gradually developed a set of field training format with Chinese characteristics. CFETP has not only been active in the public health stage of China but also presented great capacities of Chinese field epidemiology and won many awards at Bi-regional TEPHINET Scientific conference, US EID and the Global TEPHINET Scientific Conference. Through training of field epidemiology, CFETP has graduated many excellent field epidemiologists for national and provincial CDCs. CFETP has gained the name of the West Point in field epidemiology of China. The footsteps of CFETP have been across the nation in the form of epidemiologists, firefighters for urgent public health affairs and specialists of field epidemiology investigations. They accomplished numerous achievements in different fields of public health and have made significant contributions to major epidemic outbreak investigations.

Biography

Guang Zeng is the Founder and Executive Director of CFETP, who is also the chief epidemiologist of China Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

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