

# Training Course on The Economics of Public Health

The Field Epidemiology Training Program organized a Training Course on the Economics of Public Health in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, Georgia, USA, entitled "Prevention Effectiveness: Decision Analysis and Economic Evaluation". It was first held in Riyadh in the period from 9 to 12/3/1421 (11 to 14/6/2000), followed by Tabuk in the period from 16 to 19/3/1421 (18 to 21/6/2000). The symposium was presented by Dr. Jeffrey L. Fellows, Health Economist, and Dr. R. Doug Scott, Prevention Effectiveness Fellow, both from the CDC.

The primary goal of the symposium was to raise the awareness of Public Health authorities within the Ministry of Health of the importance of cost analysis. Other goals included providing an introduction to decision analysis and evaluation methods for practitioners responsible for conducting prevention effectiveness studies, and those making decisions on the basis of prevention effectiveness study results, in addition to improving the ability of health practitioners to frame, conduct, and interpret prevention effectiveness studies. The symposium also aimed to raise the skills of trainees in estimating the costs of preventive health services and utilizing this information in resource allocation and decision making.

The symposium covered a wide range of topics including:

- An overview of Prevention Effectiveness; the systematic assessment of the effect of public health policies, programs, and practices on the costs and outcomes of preventive health programs in a world of limited resources that have to be used as efficiently as possible, and its importance to public health programs and research activities.
- Identification of health problems, considering intervention options and strategies, and identifying health outcome

measures.

- Decision analysis; using analytic methods to inform complex decisions under conditions of uncertainty in which probabilities of events and their consequences are explicitly stated, what intervention option has the optimum expected value, lowest cost to implement, and highest number of prevented cases.
- Economic evaluation of preventive public health programs using applied analytic methods to identify, measure and compare the costs and consequences of alternative prevention strategies, how intervention outcomes justify their costs, and what additional benefits can be gained with additional resources.
- Related economic evaluation issues such as cost-benefit, cost-utility, cost-effectiveness,

and sensitivity analyses, in addition to basic cost components; direct, indirect, intangible and total costs of an economic evaluation.

- Methods of evaluating a Health Economic study and Basic outcome components whether health related or non-health related.
- Several case studies were presented as training materials.

The symposium was attended by over 60 trainees and health workers from various divisions of the Ministry of Health and Health Regions. This symposium demonstrates the continuing cooperation between the Field Epidemiology Training Program and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the training of Saudi personnel within various public health specialties.

Photo of participants in the course in Riyadh

