

# PROJECT FEEDBACK



## PROFESSOR GUY MARKS

### Training doctors and public health professionals in research methods for lung health

The Australian Respiratory Council (ARC) continues to support Professor Guy Marks and his team by contributing funds towards the annual Methods in Epidemiological, Clinical and Operational Research (MECOR) course. In 2018 the course was held in Da Nang province, Vietnam. The MECOR training was conducted successfully with 44 students across three levels of the course. They were supported by 4 experienced international faculty and 12 Vietnamese faculty and teaching assistants who had previously graduated from MECOR level 3 and were experienced in implementing lung health research in Vietnam.

The course is an intensive one week residential activity with the following objectives:-

**Level 1:** The objective of the training is to strengthen capacity and leadership in Methods in Epidemiological, Clinical and Operations Research (MECOR) related to respiratory conditions.

The course content includes subjects on epidemiology, research design, research methods, biostatistics, and research protocol development. MECOR level 1 students are divided into small

groups to develop a research protocol based upon agreed research questions with close support from faculty and teaching assistants.

**Level 2:** The objective of the training is; to extend the knowledge of research design, implementation and analysis, develop skills in critical appraisal of scientific evidence and assist participants to individually develop a research protocol for implementation.

The course content includes subjects on advance epidemiology, research design, research methods and biostatistics at an advanced level. The Level 2 students were required to develop their own research protocol.

The Level 2 course is available to graduates from the previous MECOR level 1. All Level 2 students must be prepared to commit to designing, conducting, analysing and writing up for publication a research study over a three year period with the support of a mentor.

**Level 3:** The level 3 course is designed for those students who have data ready for analysis and writing up. Students work in small groups on exercises and, over the course of the week will develop and present a research protocol. There is a high faculty to



student ratio to provide guidance throughout this process.

Students are coached in data analysis and writing manuscripts. Students are encouraged to work closely with their mentors after course to finalise their manuscripts to submit to relevant peer journals.

On the last day of the training, participating students presented their research proposals to the faculty and other students in a formal presentation session.

After the one week intensive training course, all students;

- Have learnt to develop a testable research question
- Understand the various study design options for finding the answers to these questions
- Have developed a research proposal, some of the proposals are ready to implement.

After completion of the course, participating students will continue to consolidate and implement the research proposal with their mentors. The students have access to the Vietnamese faculty at the National Lung Hospital (NLH) who have joined the

course and mentor some of the students.

Students who wish to be continuously supported and improve their knowledge, skills and experience have joined an online Journal Club, which is led by Professor Guy Marks, or otherwise chose to be in touch with their mentor to get support individually.

During the course, it has been clearly recognised there is a need to have an e-learning platform for students to better prepare prior to coming to the course.

MECOR is very appreciative of the continued support provided by its partners. The NTP provides experienced staff as teachers or mentors and has shared experiences on good practice in conducting clinical and operational research in their hospitals/ program.

At the welcome reception the coordinator of the course provided a short presentation to acknowledge the financial support ARC provides towards the conducting the course. In addition all training materials, presentations, banners and certificates contain ARC's logo as recognition of this support.

