

(Abroad • Domestic) Internship report form (Student)

2015/02/04 (Year/Month/Day)

Name	Kiyeon KIM
Laboratory	Division of Bioinformatics
Year (Grade)	DC 3
Internship institution	World Health Organization (Western Pacific Region)
Internship period	3 November 2014 – 31 December 2014
Purpose	Overseas internship activity

- The reason why you chose this institute

I was thinking about having a job in world organization such as WHO, FAO or OIE. Furthermore, fortunately, I had a chance to visit WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) for “pre-internship” last March. During last visit, I observed their work flow and had a chance to partially attend their meetings for 3 days. I had impressive 3 day in WPRO but I was not satisfied with observation. I want to know whether I could make a role in that organization and this is the reason why I chose WPRO for my overseas internship.

- Result of the activity (about 800 words、 provide photos, tables and figures that clearly show the activities during the period)

WHO Western Pacific Regional office (WPRO) is one of six regional offices that presides over Asia and Pacific region—37 countries and areas: 27 member states, 1 associate member and 9 areas—from Mongolia to New Zealand (from north to south) and from China to pacific island countries (from west to east). And the office is located in Manila, the Philippines (Figure 1). This area is one of the most diverse areas in the world. There are the world’s most populous nation and small island states with a few thousand people. And there are various climatic zones—desert, temperate, tropical climate through both hemispheres. In addition, this region harbors a numerous emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases “nest”.

Basically, Medical Officer of Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) supervised my all activities as a Rumor Surveillance Officer and had a weekly interview. My terms of reference (TOR) in WPRO were as below. At first,

monitoring the situation on all hazard acute public health events on behalf of Division of Health Security and Emergencies (DSE) at WPRO by collecting rumors from various sources, verification of rumors, assessing the risk of an event prior to more formal notification and presenting the potential or real events on a daily and weekly basis to the wider DSE and WHO audience. The Second was participating in the risk assessment process for daily based event notification with risk assessment, potential outbreaks for rapid risk assessments, and possibly undertaking risk assessment of the potential for spread of disease relevant to the FETP fellow's country of origin and the magnitude of impact on public health in that country. The last was extra activities, which are requested by the coordinator of the surveillance team, Emerging Disease and Surveillance and Response (ESR).

For these tasks, there were routine activities of the week. Daily, each rumor surveillance officers start collecting rumors and conduct first filtering, which could be a public health concern in our region through official or non-official internet media—event information site (EIS), WHO DON, UNMEER, Global Public Health Intelligence Network (GPHIN), CIDRAP, ProMED and other surveillance webpage—around 5:30 AM. Then ESR team gathers all together at 7:00 AM and does pre-morning meeting for second filtering out. After data sharing and brief discussion, I prepared ppt presentation, which will be used for upcoming morning meeting. Then the DSE leader opened the morning meeting at 8:30 AM with all available DSE members in each unit. After my presentation, we all discussed about the selected issues and conducted rapid risk assessment. During the morning meeting, rumor surveillance team added the issues to following-up list and we checked further information on the list and if there was no additional updating information and the issues were under controlled then closed the case as days went by. Everyday, I made a summary using the result of morning meeting and prepared for “daily disease event alert and response news (A&R)”. This report was distributed to more than 90 contact lists over the region and HQ so this task was one of the most important duties given to me.

While I was staying there, the biggest issue was ebola virus disease (EVD) in western African countries—Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Mali. Though the likelihood of EVD outbreak in our region is very low, once it happened in some countries, which does not have enough capacity to manage disease threat

it would result in huge disaster. So every morning, I confirmed the most updated information of EVD in West African countries and introduced that during morning meeting. So far, there was no report of confirmed EVD case in our region, but some member states dispatched peacekeepers or sent health care workers in highly affected West African countries. And these members showed big concerns for the biosecurity and quarantine system. Also there is frequent report for person under investigation (PUI) who showed EVD similar symptoms who had visited those highly affected countries for traveling or working.

Also there was avian influenza weekly update on Friday. In this report we focus on human infection with avian influenza—H5N1 and H7N9, and on animal infection with avian influenza A in our region. Recently, chicken and wild bird infection of H5N8 in Korea and Japan, H7Nx in China was issued for its possible bird to human infection.

For biweekly report, official data of the three most concerning disease—Hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD), Dengue and influenza—were downloaded and assimilated and finally was published on official WPRO web page.

And there was a regular teleconference for issues that has been topic in each area for the week with counterpart country office and South–East Asia Regional office (SEARO) and WHO headquarters weekly. The most interesting discussion was PUI case that showed EVD positive in sample from semen. Scientifically, Ebola virus could be detected for 90 days after negative result from serum sample. And WHO also recommend using condom for sexual intercourse after the EVD patient released from hospital. But there was no regulation how to dispose the used condom with bio security. So, WPRO, SEARO, HQ, and country office discussed with this topic.

There was the first Regional Forum of WHO Collaborating Center (CC) from 13 to 14 November. For two days, WPRO introduced their present priorities and tried to promote partnership between WPRO and each centers. Also I could attend various presentations that explain the current situation in CCs (Figure 2).

Though, there were daily and weekly routine job from early morning during weekday, WPRO guaranteed weekend for free time. So I could visit some famous place in Manila such as Intramuros, Chinatown and Manila Bay. Also I had a chance to go to the sea to enjoy marine sports with other interns in WPRO.

During this time I could really enjoy tropical Philippines. Also, there was a year-end party with the theme “Rock&Roll” on 12 December. So every body, even regional director, attended the performance per each division with flashy make-up. These trivial happy memories make my WPRO life more meaningful to me.



Figure 1. WPRO area and office in Manila



Figure 2. View of the first Regional Forum of WHO Collaborating Center



Figure 3. Happy moment with surveillance team



Figure 4. 2014 year-end party, themed with Rock&Roll

- What do you think the positive impact of the activity will have on your further research, student life and career path?

Such a chance to go abroad and have an internship activity helped me to have a mind of wide scope on my future plan. Having a professional knowledge in my research field could be utilized not only to get further research output but also to support problem-solving process in immediate reality where our knowledge is in need. The activities in WPRO really affect my future career plan. Thanks to this chance, I could experience what world organization does in real situation and I had a confidence that I could do something in world organization not as an observer but as a piece of organization. On the other hand, I could figure out my weak point as a real piece such as narrow range of my knowledge in human disease and conversation skill to persuade counterpart. So I have chance to improve my ability before I face the real situation. The other important thing that I got from WPRO is human network. For two months, I could meet lots of specialist in various fields—medical doctors, nurses, epidemiologists, public health specialists, and lots of general staffs in office. This network would be great opportunity for me to be involved in realistic problems confronting our region and world.

- Advice for your junior fellows

I want junior fellows to have basic understanding of risk analysis and have an English conversation skill that enable to understand discussions and to express your opinion clearly.

Approval of supervisor	Institution • Official title • Name Research Center for Zoonosis Control • Professor • Kimihito ITO <div style="text-align: right;">印</div>
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- ※1 Send the electronic file to the Leading School section, International Affairs Office, also submit the original print out with seal of supervisor to the Leading School section, International Affairs Office.
- ※2 Attach a copy certificate of the content of internship activity that is prepared by the counterpart at the internship institution (any form with a signature of the counterpart).
- ※3 The Steering Committee of the Leading Program will first confirm the content of this report and report will be forwarded to the Educational Affairs Committee for credits evaluation.

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