

Report of the Laos IHS Grant, November 2023.



The IHS Visiting Professor (VP) grant awarded to Dr Soma Sahai-Srivastava in 2023 for Laos provided travel expenses to two headache specialists for headache education held in Vientiane, the capital of Laos on November 27th. The course was taught by Dr Sahai and Dr Liza Smirnoff, both headache specialists from the USA. The event was well attended by 45 participants from Laos which included neurologists, general physicians, family medicine doctors, psychiatrists, emergency physicians and residents.

We are grateful to Dr Saysavath, Chief of Neurology department at Mittaphab Hospital, for facilitating the symposium. Mittaphab hospital is one of the most important public hospitals in Laos PDR and the day-long headache program was held at the conference center there. We are Thankful to Dr Sonexay Rajvong, Director of Mittaphab Hospital for providing all the resources needed for the symposium & workshop. The program was held in collaboration with the University of Health Sciences (UHS), Vientiane, which allowed their medical students, residents, and faculty to attend the symposium. The morning session included lectures on neurobiology of migraine, case-based discussions, and treatment approaches to primary headache disorders, especially migraine and cluster headaches in a resource-limited setting. This was a highly interactive format with audience participation, and emphasis on Q and A during the presentation. A hands-on demonstration of the neurological examination with specific focus on a head and neck examination, was especially appreciated by participants.

The afternoon session began with a lecture on procedural treatments of headache disorders such as trigger point injections and nerve blocks. This was followed by live demonstrations of procedural treatments like sphenopalatine ganglion blocks which was demonstrated on Dr Sahai who volunteered for the occasion and was performed by Dr Smirnoff on her. Dr Somchit, who is a Laotian neurologist trained in headache medicine with a busy headache practice who supervises neurology education at the UHS was especially appreciative of the workshop, which highlighted multidisciplinary approach to treatment of common headache disorders and the procedures that were taught during the workshop.

This comprehensive approach to teaching headache disorders in resource-limited settings included basic neuroscience, neuroanatomy, neuroradiology, and clinical and procedural topics and we used an integrative neuroscience model of teaching to fill the knowledge gap for headache diagnosis and treatment given the time constraints. The participants were highly appreciative of the unique hands-on approach of the day-long symposium, especially the live demonstration of some simple techniques that were deemed possible within the local hospital and clinic setting.

Program details:

Headache Symposium, Vientiane, Laos
Monday, Nov 27, 2023

08:00 - 08:15	Welcome and Introduction: Treating Headache Disorders in Laos <i>Soma Sahai M.D</i>
08:15 - 08:45	Overview of Primary Headache Disorders <i>Liza Smirnov, MD</i>
08:45 - 09:30	Migraine Update <i>Soma Sahai, MD</i>
09:30 - 10:30	Secondary Headache Disorders <i>Liza Smirnov, MD</i>
10:30 - 10:45	Coffee break
10:45-12:00	Headache Neuroexam workshop <i>Soma Sahai, M.D and Liza Smirnov M.D</i>
12:00	Lunch break
14:00-15:00	Migraine, nutrition and the environment <i>Liza Smirnov M.D</i>
15:00-16:00	Nerve block and Trigger Point Injection workshop <i>Soma Sahai, M.D and Liza Smirnov M.D</i>



