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**JACQUES PARISOT FOUNDATION
FELLOWSHIP AWARD**

Every two years the Jacques Parisot Foundation awards a fellowship for research in social medicine or public health. The Regional Office has been invited to propose three candidates for this year's award. The suggested topics for research are health promotion, care of the elderly and human resources for health. The Western Pacific Advisory Committee on Health Research has reviewed and assessed 12 proposals submitted by Member States. Summaries of the proposals are attached as Annex 1. The Regional Committee should now select up to three proposals to submit to the Foundation Committee in Geneva.

1. BACKGROUND

The Jacques Parisot Foundation was established in 1969 by Madame J. Parisot to perpetuate the memory of Dr Jacques Parisot, former President of the World Health Assembly. Since 1975, a fellowship for research in social medicine or public health has been awarded every two years. The Foundation is administered by the Director-General of the World Health Organization, who implements the decisions of the Foundation Committee, which consists of at least five members appointed by the Executive Board.

Each region takes it in turn to propose three candidates. It is now the turn of the Western Pacific Region to do so. A fellowship to the value of US\$5000 will be awarded to a candidate who submits a worthy project and is considered capable of bringing it to fruition. The research should be completed within a period of 12 months.

The Regional Director for the Western Pacific Region has suggested that the topics for research should be in one of the following fields: health promotion, care of the elderly, and human resources for health. Member States were invited in March 1990 to nominate suitable candidates for the fellowship. The proposals were then reviewed by the Western Pacific Advisory Committee on Health Research (WPACHR) which met in Manila from 2 to 6 July 1990. The Advisory Committee's assessment will be used by the Regional Committee to select three proposals. These proposals will be submitted to the Foundation Committee duly accompanied by the WPACHR's assessment and the Regional Committee's comments.

The Foundation Committee will meet in Geneva in January 1991 and make a recommendation to the Executive Board regarding its choice from among the three candidates proposed by the Regional Committee for the award of the fellowship. The final decision rests with the Executive Board.

A medal will be presented to the successful candidate at the Forty-fifth World Health Assembly in 1992 following the satisfactory completion of the research project, and the Director-General will decide whether to publish the fellow's report in a WHO publication.

2. ACTION TO BE TAKEN

Twelve proposals were received from the Region for consideration. They were reviewed, assessed and ranked according to their scores by the WPACHR during its meeting from 2 to 6 July 1990. A summary of the Committee's findings is attached as Annex 1.

The proposals must now be considered by the Regional Committee, which will select three for submission to the Foundation Committee.

ANNEX 1

**APPLICATIONS FOR THE JACQUES PARISOT FOUNDATION
FELLOWSHIP AWARD**

Twelve applications for the award were reviewed by the WPACHR. Factors emphasized in each assessment were the quality of applicant, as judged by professional qualifications, research experience and relevant publications; the suitability of the project, including its relevance to the public health priorities advertised for the award; and the scientific merit of the project as judged by such aspects as design, methodology, originality, feasibility and adequacy of available research facilities.

Three topics had been suggested by the Regional Director as suitable for this award and nine of the twelve applications fitted clearly under these topic headings. The three topics were health promotion, care of the elderly and human resources for health.

The following notes summarize the discussion of each application. Applicants are presented in order of merit, starting with the highest score, as calculated from the scores of individual committee members.

The following is a summary of the discussion which preceded the scoring of each application.

1. Applicant: Zheng Qingsi

Topic: Health behaviour and health status of the elderly

Summary: This 50-year old applicant had a BA from the Beijing Union Medical University and an MSc from the University of Ottawa. Her current position was Associate Professor and Director of the Department of Social Medicine, Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, Beijing. She was clearly a well qualified applicant although her previous research was not strictly relevant to the proposed field. Her project on health of the elderly involved a cross-sectional survey of a population of approximately 50 000, from which subjects aged 60 and above would be interviewed by household survey methodology. Factors covered in the survey included demographic data, socioeconomic status, health status, individual behaviour information and utilization of health and social services. The project was considered to be important and relevant and there was agreement that facilities would be no problem. The project would be likely to generate substantial information of value within China. There were some minor questions about the method of selecting the sample of elderly persons for study. Also, the estimated sample size of elderly persons had not been stated. Some questions were raised about the appropriateness of the budget, which might be too small. However, the Committee was assured that other funding would be available to allow the project to be completed.

Rank: 1

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2. Applicant: Sharifah Hapsah Shahabudin

Topic: Effectiveness of continuing medical education in general practice management of anxiety neurosis

Summary: This 43-year old applicant was an Associate Professor in the Department of Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine at the National University of Malaysia. Her qualifications were MBBS (University of Malaya), MHP Ed (University of New South Wales) and she was also a member of the Academy of Medicine of Malaysia. It was noted that she was well experienced in the stated field of research and had many publications, although few were in journals outside her own university. The area of study was considered to be important and the planning and design of the project was excellent. The intention of the applicant was to expose practitioners to active interview situations in which the diagnosis of anxiety neurosis would be simulated and thus to test the hypothesis that the best medical education programmes are those which include personal interaction and consultation rather than passive reading and use of audiovisual materials. There were a few criticisms of the application, although the Committee noted that the classification of anxiety neurosis would be changing in the next ICD classification and that this aspect should be taken into account in the study protocol. The research was feasible and the budget satisfactory.

Rank: 2

3. Applicant: Lau Ming Chu

Topic: Study of hip fractures in the elderly.

Summary: This applicant was 36 years old and had qualified as MBBS from the University of Hong Kong and MSc (Epidemiology) at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She was also a member of the Faculty of Public Health of the Royal College of Physicians. Her list of publications showed that she was well qualified to undertake this project, which was a case-control study of elderly hip fracture subjects compared with controls. Various aspects were to be studied (including historical, clinical, physical, biochemical and radiological) in order to derive risk factors for hip fracture and for osteoporosis in the elderly. The project was generally commended by the Committee, which considered that it was potentially important and could lead to the establishment of preventive programmes. The feasibility of recruiting sufficient cases within the year was questioned, in the absence of information on this point.

Rank: 3

4. Applicant: Ho Suzanne Sut Ying

Topic: Health benefits of exercise in the elderly

Summary: This applicant was 45 years old and held three degrees from the United States of America (BA, MSc and MPH) and a PhD from the National University of Singapore. Her training in physiology and epidemiology made her well suited to the proposed study, which was to test the effect of exercise on physical and psychological functions in the elderly. It was intended to randomize a group of 200 elderly home

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subjects into control and intervention groups, the latter being subjected to a daily exercise regime for a period of six months. Cardiopulmonary fitness, objective and subjective health status and neuropsychological factors were all to be tested at the end of the intervention period. An interview at the end of one year would assess the number of falls and injuries sustained in the previous six months in each group. The project was considered to be well planned, although the method of calculation of the sample size was questioned and the scoring system did not appear to have been validated. It was also considered that six months might be too short a time to see changes in cardiopulmonary function. The project was feasible and the budget satisfactory.

Rank: 4

5. Applicant: Pham Khue

Topic: Health of the rural elderly

Summary: This applicant was a 65-year old Professor of Medicine in Hanoi Medical University and Director of the Institute of Gerontology. His qualifications and experience were considered satisfactory and the aims of the project, and its methodology, were clear. He would be studying all the elderly people in Quing Tien village, from a demographic, socioeconomic and health perspective. It was not known how many cases would be studied in this village nor how the results would compare with those from communities in other countries. Although insufficient detail of the project was provided, the research was presumed to be feasible and the results potentially important. The budget was satisfactory.

Rank: 5

6. Applicant: Luan Wenmin

Topic: Dental health of the elderly

Summary: This 50-year old applicant was an assistant professor at the Beijing Hospital and Deputy Director of the Beijing Institute of Geriatrics. He held a DDS degree and a diploma from the Royal Dental College in Denmark. Little information was available on the research experience of the applicant. The proposal was to study 2000 individuals in three age groups from urban, county, township and village areas, by questionnaire and oral examination, using standard techniques. No descriptions of sampling techniques were given and no hypothesis was specified. It was noted that many such studies were being carried out in other countries. The time for completion of the project might well be insufficient. The Committee had no major criticisms of the application and agreed that dental care needs of the elderly were changing with changing life-styles and needed to be studied from time to time.

Rank: 6

7. Applicant: Liao Susu

Topic: Factors influencing mental development in two-year old children

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Summary: This was a 35-year old applicant from the Department of Epidemiology, at the Peking Union Medical College, Beijing, China. She had graduated with a Basic Bachelor in Medicine Degree four years ago, had a nursing diploma and was now working towards her PhD. No list of publications was provided and her experience in research was not known, although she would be working within a good department. The project was to study up to 150 two-year old children in an urban community. A mental development scale would be used to decide baseline levels of mental development. The cohort would then be randomly divided and a subgroup of about 50 children selected for an intervention programme. This would comprise two pamphlet deliveries to the parents on the subject of child psychology, child care and early education. All children would then be reassessed at about the time of their third birthday and the results analysed. The project was considered to be feasible, although a question was raised about the difficulty of implementing two of the steps in the proposed protocol, which involve household visits. There were also some doubts about the relative importance of this topic now that the one-child family was more fashionable in China. The contents of the pamphlet were not available.

Rank: 7

8. Applicant: Xu Liying

Topic: Use of the Cornell Medical Index in identifying health needs of the Chinese

Summary: This 29-year old applicant held a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Medicine and was currently a lecturer in the Department of Social Medicine, School of Public Health, Beijing Medical University. She had some field experience in research and some of her research publications dealt with application of the Cornell Medical Index. There were three criticisms of her application. The first was that the three populations to be studied using the Index (college students, factory workers and military personnel) might not be truly representative of the whole population. The second was that her budget included a large component for a visit to the United States of America, which was not considered to be appropriate. The third was that the Cornell Medical Index is now outdated, having been developed over 40 years ago for screening of recruits to the US Army; the applicant should be encouraged to use more recent adaptations of the index for use with a civilian population.

Rank: 8

9. Applicant: Wong Tze Wai

Topic: Risk behaviour for AIDS among attendees at a Methadone clinic

Summary: This applicant was 41 years old, qualified as MBBS (Hong Kong), and MSc in Public Health from the National University of Singapore. He was also qualified in applied epidemiology and biostatistics and was a fellow of the Australian College of Occupational Medicine. The Committee considered the candidate to be suitably qualified and to have adequate facilities for the research. It was expected that he would also be capable of finishing the project within the allocated time. There was insufficient information on his research experience although training details suggested that this would be satisfactory. Research publications were not provided. The study

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involved a control group and an intervention group that would be given counselling and health education in addition to the Methadone treatment. The relevance of the project to public health was high but the scientific merit was difficult to assess, particularly with regard to the probable compliance of attendees at a Methadone clinic. A poor response rate would make the outcome of the project difficult to assess. The ethics of the study were questioned, in regard to whether it would be ethical to withhold health education from a control group in such circumstances. The budget was satisfactory.

Rank: 9

10. Applicant: Robert L. Haddock

Topic: Source of salmonella infections in children

Summary: This 52-year old applicant held a Veterinary degree from the Michigan State University, United States of America, and an MPH from the University of Hawaii. His current position was as Epidemiologist for the Department of Public Health and Social Services in Guam. No information was available on the research experience or the previous publications of the applicant. The proposed study built on an earlier study, the outcome of which was not fully stated. It consisted of a microbiological examination of material from the external environment of homes and the comparison of these results with a similar study of samples within the home (from vacuum cleaners) and from infants in the home with known salmonella infections. The hypothesis was that salmonella organisms found in vacuum cleaners may have been brought in from outside the home, and were not necessarily a contaminant from the infected infants. It was not clear how the proposed new study would add useful information, or how important was the problem posed by the applicant. The need to send samples to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta was questioned. The project was considered to be feasible and the budget satisfactory.

Rank: 10

11. Applicant: Pham Huy Dung

Topic: Traditional healers in Viet Nam

Summary: This applicant was 53 years old and held the degrees of MD, MSc and PhD from Hanoi University. He was an expert in health statistics as well as being a malaria specialist. His qualifications were not considered relevant to traditional healing and there was a concern that he would have difficulty with the proposed literature review, as well as other aspects of the study, which was based mainly on interviews and questionnaires to traditional healers and communities where they practise. There was no indication of how the traditional healers would be selected and the questionnaire method and the study design would not evaluate the popularity or value of traditional medicine adequately. The Committee did not believe that valid conclusions could be obtained from such a study.

Rank: 11

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12. Applicant: Pham Song

Topic: Dengue fever and dengue haemorrhagic fever epidemiology in Viet Nam

Summary: This 58-year old applicant was qualified in medicine, microbiology, hepatology and immunology of infectious diseases. He was well experienced in the area of his research, which included the collection of epidemiological, virological and clinical data on cases of dengue fever and dengue haemorrhagic fever from different areas of Viet Nam. There were few details on the data to be collected and it was unclear whether this would relate to current or past patients. It was pointed out that many similar studies had been conducted in other Pacific countries and the originality of this project was not clear. The main problem for the Committee was that this project appeared to be clinical in nature and not sufficiently close to the priorities proposed for this award.

Rank: 12

Summary of ranking of applicants for the Jacques Parisot Foundation Fellowship Award (Highest = 1; lowest = 12)

1. Zheng Qingsi
2. Sharifah Hapsah Shahabudin
3. Lau Ming Chu
4. Ho Suzanne Sut Ying
5. Pham Khue
6. Luan Wenmin
7. Liao Susu
8. Xu Liying
9. Wong Tze Wai
10. Robert L. Haddock
11. Pham Huy Dung
12. Pham Song