

# REGION & GROUP NEWS

## GROUP KENYA TO LAUNCH A FOUR-WEEK COURSE IN EPIDEMIOLOGY AND MEDICAL STATISTICS

Plans are under way for a joint effort by the Group Kenya (GKe) and the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) to launch a four-week course at AMREF's Headquarter in Nairobi on the above subject. AMREF is an international NGO established in 1957 and with its Headquarters based in Nairobi, Kenya but with activities also in Uganda, Tanzania, Sudan and Somalia.

The course is intended for medical officers of health, practising physicians, surgeons, health planners, health economists, hospital administrators, clinical officers, nurses, public health officers, and other graduates who work in medical research, academic or health service organizations but who have had no formal training in epidemiology or statistics. The course will also be relevant for members of the District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) and District Health Management Boards (DHMBs) in those countries which are involved in the service decentralization process like Kenya. Participants will be drawn from all over Africa through a Scholarship Scheme to be funded by a donor.

Although training in epidemiology and medical statistics is offered in some medical schools in Africa, this is primarily done at postgraduate level and with a high quantitative tone. For the younger generation health workers, training in these subjects are currently being offered at the Medical Training Schools as is in Nairobi, Kenya. But the older generation staff who never had such opportunities are already out in the field without these crucial skills. Thus there is a need for an institution in Africa to undertake in-service and refresher courses for those health workers already in the field. In this direction, AMREF will exploit its long term experience with training of health

workers in community medicine in the Region and have designed a curriculum which is participant-friendly teaching strategies and which will suit the target categories of participants. Teaching will be through lectures, seminars and practical sessions.

With this letter we wish to solicit for the opinion of the other biometricians especially from other countries in Africa over the idea. We welcome any ideas. Those interested in the idea and would like to have more information should get in touch with the undersigned.

**H.M. Oranga**  
Secretary  
Group Kenya (GKe)

## SPANISH

**IV Conferencia Española de Biometría**: The Fourth Spanish Conference of Biometry took place in Sitges, just outside Barcelona (Spain), from February 2 to 4, 1994. Professor **Lynne Billard**, President of the Biometric Society, gave the Opening Conference on the theme "Inferences for the Exponential Autoregressive Time Series Model". Professor **Robert R. Sokal**, Distinguished Professor of the Department of Ecology and Evolution, State University of New York, USA, and Professor **J.C. Gower**, former director of the Department of Biomathematics and Statistics, Rothamsted Experimental Station, England, gave invited talks entitled "Taxonomic Distances, Mantel Tests and their Partition" and "Biadditive Models", respectively.

The Conference attracted 70 participants from around Spain. In all 40 papers were presented. Topics covered included Medical Biostatistics, Applications of Cluster Analysis, Generalized Linear Models, Log-Linear Model, Survival Analysis for HIV and AIDS Epidemics, Quality Aspects in Clinical and Epidemiological Studies, Statistical Methodology in Social Sciences.

A special session of the conference was devoted to a workshop on "Statistics and Research in the Different Areas of Application of Biometry". Four speakers discussed the problems of the use of statistical methods by research workers in the fields of agriculture, biology, medicine and psychology. They prepared the stage for a vivid discussion from the floor.

The ordinary meeting of the Spanish Region of the International Biometric Society was held at the end of the Conference. At the meeting, it was agreed that Valencia will be the site of the next Spanish Biometric Conference to be held in 1995 and that Dr. **Guadalupe Gomez** be the next correspondent for the Biometric Bulletin representing the Spanish Region.

Abstracts from the meeting will appear in the next Biometric Bulletin.

**Lupe Gomez**  
Spanish Correspondent

## GERMAN

The German region has elected a new board. In 1994 the following members serve as officers:

- President: Prof. Dr. **H.-P. Thoehni**, Hohenheim
- Vice-president: Prof. Dr. **N. Wermuth**, Mainz
- Treasurer: Ass. **H. Hochadel**, Mannheim
- Secretary: Dr. **L. Kreienbrock**, Wuppertal

## AUSTRALASIAN

**Harold Henderson** (AgResearch Ruakura) is the new president of the New Zealand Statistical Association, **Ray Littler** (University of Waikato) is secretary, and **Gary Dunnet** (Statistics New Zealand) is treasurer.