

Supercourse Newsletter  
20 Feb. 2013  
[www.pitt.edu/~super1/](http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/)

Dear Friends,

Please forward to faculty and students who want to double research productivity in Tokelau, Saint Helena, Nauru and Western Sahara

Visiting the Library of Alexandria is always a wonderful experience.  
[http://www.bibalex.org/Home/Default\\_EN.aspx](http://www.bibalex.org/Home/Default_EN.aspx) The Library is my second most favorite place on earth after 332 Bridgebrook lane where Jan, Ella 100 deer and I live. If you want a tour of the Library, let me arrange it for you ([ronaldlaporte@gmail.com](mailto:ronaldlaporte@gmail.com)).

The meetings in Egypt were very productive. I meet with Ala Al'wan, M.D. a very good friend and the director general of WHO EMRO. He is interested in partnering with the Supercourse in several areas. One would be to establish a supercourse site where lectures presented at WHO and WHO PowerPoint Guidelines could be found. We also discussed about helping WHO publicize events such as the World Health day because of our reach to academic faculty and students. We discussed several other issues. We are pleased to be able to work with WHO.

The meeting at the Library of Alexandria was indeed outstanding. Robert Janz and I had a personal tour of the Library. Amazingly on the way out there was a statue of Hygeia the goddess of health and global health. In the Sadat room I felt right at home as there was a key to the city of Pittsburgh! Our discussions with Ismail Serageldin and his team were very productive. We are pleased as to how the BA Superhelp desk is evolving. We plan to test it using question and answer emails for a month or so to see about the traffic and the type of questions received. We hope to evolve this into an Answer Wiki. Eugene Shubnikov from Siberia will screen each question so that we do not answer questions like if we have a normal curve, why don't we have an abnormal curve or after doing a "t" test, should we do a coffee test? Eugene will guide people to the research methods wizard door to learn a little about statistics before one of the experts contacts them.

"There is no royal road to Geometry"

When I was in the Library of Alexandria, I was handed a 500 year old book of Euclid's Elements. The book smelt musty, papery, ancient, and wonderful. I felt a book of the ages that presented thoughts that were 5000 years old, but are still in use today. It was a fascinating feeling looking at the book as the triangles, and parallel lines were identical to what I had learned in 9th grade geometry class. It brought back memories of Mrs. Long, my dear geometry teacher. It made me proud to be a scientist, part of a 5000 year tradition. Being close to Euclid and the library was a remarkable feeling, and I hope you can have this too someday.

“A book has got smell. A new book smells great. An old book smells even better. An old book smells like ancient Egypt” (R. Bradbury)

“opening the book, I inhaled. the smell of old books, so sharp, so dry you can taste it.”  
(Setterfield) Doubling research productivity. There is an excellent web site called International Science Rankings where you can assess the publication productivity for countries and territories. <http://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php> The BA Scientific Supercourse will work towards doubling the productivity of the countries who publish the least. These include Western Sahara (6), Nauru (6), Cocos (5), French Southern Territories (4), Christmas Island (3), South Georgia and Sandwich Islands (3), Saint Helena (2), Saint Pierre (2), Bouvet Island (1), Heard Island (1), Tokelau (1). The number presents the number of publications over the 6 year period (2007-2013). The total number of publications is only 50 or on average 8.3 articles for all 12 countries/territories each year, or 0.7 articles for each country/territory each year. The BA SuperHelp desk plans to double the overall publication rate from 8.3 to 16.6 in 2 years.

“It is very rare that publications double in frequency” (Daly)

We are envisioning having mentors work with researchers in each countries/territories to improve their methods and increase productivity.

It will be a remarkable achievement to be able to produce a doubling of publication in the countries/territories having the lowest productivity but the Library of Alexandria can do this. If you know of potential researchers in these countries, please contact me at [ronaldlaporte@gmail.com](mailto:ronaldlaporte@gmail.com). There appears to be research efforts about wildlife biology, geology, and certain infectious diseases and diabetes.

We plan to build research capacity with our mentors and BA Superhelp desk.

“Productivity is being able to do things that you were never able to do before” (Kafka)

Call me Dr. Stata

During my Trip to Egypt, I was quite proud as a friend of mine, Eman, started to call me Dr. Stataphobia. Do a search on Stataphobia, and you will see how the concept of Stataphobia is spreading faster than H1N1 around the world, We the Supercourse team have the cure to the malady.

Think about it, aren't we all a little nervous when doing a logistic regression? What variables should be included, is our sample size large enough, what about missing variables, do you feel guilty about not testing for normality as it is “robust”. Is anyone good at writing a believable statistics section?

Overview of Health Promotion in Taiwan

Lecture of the week is dedicated to Health Promotion in Taiwan, donated to the Supercourse by Dr. Chiu. To visit part I and part II of the lecture, please visit

<http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec49111/index.htm>

<http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec49121/001.htm>

These lectures overview many different steps that Taiwan public health professionals, clinicians, and even politicians have taken to make the nation healthier. The goal of the health promotion program is to encourage healthy living on all possible levels, from nutrition to environment. Mayors and even the president take their time to advocate healthy living.

It's interesting to point out that Taiwan is one position ahead of the US on the list of countries by life expectancy. It is a model that can be used for many other countries.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_life\\_expectancy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_life_expectancy))

I am very proud that one of my former students, Wen-Ta Chiu, M.D., Dr.Ph is not the minister of health of Taiwan. It is wonderful when a former student surpasses his mentor.

Article of the week

Check out article by Almaz Sharman on modernization and growth in Kazakhstan

<http://caigh.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/caigh/article/view/11/11>

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO) Best Regards, Ron, Faina, Eugene, Francois, Nicholas, Gil, Mita, Ismail, Eric, Kawkab, Vint, Ali, Olga