1) Laos, Medicine & French Tradition

- Laos is a small, landlocked country in southeast Asia
- Vientiane’s Faculty of Med. Science was founded with French assistance in 1958, & produced a Francophone medical elite.
- Institut Pasteur is present in Vietnam & Cambodia since 1900, but not in Laos
- * IFMT opening in 1999 as a regional institution run by the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)

2) Laos in S-E Asia

- In the past, Laos was an economic, cultural & religious crossroad in the Mekong basin, amidst the potent Khmer, Siam & China states
- Today, Laos is a transitional state between Vietnam, China and Thailand that experience soarng development
- Laos by contrast, has the lowest GDP, lowest density & natural / industrial resources in SE Asia

3) Major Health Indicators in Laos

- Population 5.2 Million, density 22/km2 (1995) 85% rural
- Illiteracy rate 44%
- Life expectancy 59 yrs; Infant mortality 87 %; USM 7%
- Fertility rate 7.1%; 65% home deliveries; 60% low birth weight
- Vaccine coverage: DTP 55%, measles 68%
- 24 doctors p 100,000 inhab.
- 60 390S, 2.6% dedicated to health
- Bank for human poverty index 46th; 73% people live with <2$/day
- Clean water access: 52%; latrines: 35%
- Diarrhoea / ARILI malaria are the 3 leading causes of premature death

4) Epidemiology of Tropical Diseases in Laos

- Geography, society, culture, politics have a massive impact on health
- mountain / remote areas
- monsoon tropical climate
- 85% rural population > 50% ethnic minorities
- Hunting, fishing, farming, and eating raw food habits
- Human-animal promiscuity pig, poultry, buffalo, fish...
- Food auto-sufficiency: rice
- Socialist ruled organization, economy & health system

5) Viral / Bacterial Diseases in Laos

- Dengue / D. Haemorrhagic Fever: #1 cause of hospitalisation
- Hepatitis B / HBsAg Carriage prevalence 10%
- Avian Influenza, SARS: some emerging threats
- Japanese encephalitis: endemic with a low prevalence
- HIV / AIDS: still very low prevalence (0.01%)
- Typhus fever: J. typhi ranks 1 in hemocultures
- Shigella: endemic
- TB: prevalence 140/50: poor control
- Melioidosis: ranks 3rd in hemocultures

6) Parasitic Diseases in Laos

- Malaria: low endemicity
- P. falciparum: Plasmid Pf 50%
- Neurocysticercosis: endemic (confused w. TB)
- Ascariasis: very common
- Trichinosis: outbreak common (porcine)
- Hookworm & soil transmitted worms: general prevalence: 20-70%

7) Non Transmissible Diseases in Laos

- Beri-Beri: mother & child morbidity-mortality
- Chronic malnutrition: 40% children affected (2000)
- Anaemia: common & neglected, high morbidity
- Diabetes / Hypertension: high prevalence, under-diagnosed
- Urinary stone: n°1 indication for child surgery
- Other: fake drugs, amphetamine addiction, pesticides, pollution, tobacco

8) Future Health Risks in Laos

- Avian influenza, SARS zoonoses (ex-melioidosis)
- Dengue, Malaria
- Pollution
- Non transmissible diseases

9) Health System in Laos

- Public, state planed / controlled, paying system
- Fair health infra-structure coverage
- But poor equipment, weak efficacy & attractiveness indicators
- Low non motivating salaries for health personnel (25$/month)
- Private practice unofficial, but widespread and tolerated as a necessary additional income
- Vivid traditional medicine practices: herbal, magico-myrtical
- 73% of 1st health care is self-medication in village pharmacies
- Most indicators improved in the last 10 years incl. malaria incidence, vaccine coverage, life expectancy, infant mortality.

10) IFMT & Lao National University

- * Offer a master degree in « Tropical Medicine & International Health »
- * To MD from Laos, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Madagascar
- 2-year curriculum in French language on clinics, epidemiology & control of major health topics in tropical / deprived settings
- * This curriculum includes:
  - training through / for research activities
  - both theoretical & practical sessions
  - field practice (8-month)
  - original research & master thesis (international jury)

11) IFMT Offers a Rare Opportunity To:

- * practice medicine and conduct field studies
- * learn French science, language and culture
- * develop skills in epidemiology, clinical & human sciences, language, communication
- * study in an attractive international environment providing: grants, international exchanges, computer & library facilities

12) Common Diseases in Laos