



CACCI

Health & Education Newsletter

Volume 7

December 2015

Message from the Chairman



As Chairman of the Asian Council on Health and Education (ACHE), I am pleased to present the seventh issue of the Newsletter of ACHE to all our colleagues in the health and education sectors.

This issue not only highlights the trends in the Asia-Pacific region, but also includes the latest news from the region and interesting reports on health and education. I hope that you will find the articles included in this Newsletter of great value, and look forward to your contribution to the future issues of the Newsletter.

Since assuming the Chairmanship in 2012, I have found this Council a valuable platform for information exchange and networking for all representatives from the region's health and education sectors. Therefore, all CACCI members are encouraged to take advantage of the Council and the Newsletter as channels to voice their opinions and viewpoints.

My Best Wishes

Dr. Seyed Hassan Tabatabaei Nejad
Chairman
Asian Council on Health and Education

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Breakout Session on Health and Education Discusses Latest Developments in Asia at Hong Kong Conference

In conjunction with the 29th CACCI Conference held on October 29-30, 2015 in Hong Kong, the Asian Council on Health and Education (ACHE) conducted a productive breakout session under the leadership of ACHE Chairman Dr. Seyed Hassan Tabatabaei Nejad from Iran.

To open the Session, Dr. Nejad made a presentation on the current state of health and education systems in Iran as well as the Asian region. Other invited speakers also included: (1) Ms. Elizabeth Wong, Writer, Former Director of Social Welfare and Former Secretary for Health and Welfare of HKSAR; (2) Ms. Rossana Llenado, President, AHEAD Online; and (3) Mr. Mahmood Rumjahn, Founder & CEO, MnS Music. Based on their different expertise, the speakers discussed strategies for promoting regional cooperation in the health and education sectors, as well as shared with the audience their valuable experience in respective fields.



Dr. Seyed Hassan Tabatabaei Nejad from Iran opens the Breakout Session on Health and Education.



Ms. Elizabeth Wong speaks of the health and welfare system of Hong Kong.



Ms. Rossana Llenado shares her own experience on how she started her work in promoting education in the Philippines.



Mr. Mahmood Rumjahn examines strategies for implementing regional cooperation in education.



29th CACCI CONFERENCE
ASIA BEYOND LIMITS

October 29-30, 2015 | Regal Airport Hotel | Hong Kong



Part I

Health

Philippines sees big growth in outsourced medical services



Leaders of the Philippine outsourcing industry said on October 5, 2015 that they expect a big increase in business as the result of a new, highly detailed medical diagnosis coding system adopted by the U.S. for insurance claims.

The Philippines is the world's leader in international call center services. Its information technology and outsourced services industry is expected to employ 1.3 million people by 2016, when annual earnings are seen to reach \$25 billion. The industry has been growing 15-18 percent yearly, earning \$18.9 billion last year.

Dan Reyes, chairman of the IT & Business Process Association of the Philippines, said the new U.S. coding system will open up more processing jobs and the Philippines stands to gain because of its large pool of graduates in medical-related fields.

Earnings have jumped 30 percent a year for the Philippine sector providing medical billing and other services to U.S. companies, making it the fastest growing of outsourced services, said Jose Mari Mercado, the association's president and CEO. It is followed by information technology,

finance and accounting, and contact center operations.

Under the new system, the roughly 14,000 codes used by U.S. health providers to represent diagnoses have been expanded to about 68,000 codes to capture more details of a patient's chart.

The codes, for example, can now distinguish between whether a goose or a parrot nipped a patient.

The U.S. government said the changes should help health officials better track quality of care, spot early warning signs of a brewing outbreak or look for illness or injury trends.

Mercado said the industry is coming up with a new roadmap from 2017 to 2022 that will consolidate plans for different sectors such as health care, animation, contact centers, finance and accounting, and game development.

The likelihood of maintaining or surpassing current growth rates "is very, very strong," he added.

The new roadmap will identify opportunities and what needs to be done to address challenges including the lack of infrastructure, the loss of Filipino workers for better-paying jobs abroad, and adjusting to new business models that require more automation and robots, the industry leaders said.

Source: Associated Press, October 5, 2015

Chinese study links spicy meals intake to human longevity

SPICE OF LIFE: Regular consumption of spicy foods like chili peppers reduced the risk of death by 14 percent, a study of almost 500,000 adults say.

People who request an extra kick to their curry could also be adding years to their life, according to a large study that linked frequent consumption of spicy food to longevity.

Researchers examining the diets



of almost 500,000 people in China over seven years recorded that those who ate spicy foods one or two days a week had a 10 percent reduced risk of death compared with those who ate such meals less than once a week. The risk was 14 percent lower for those who ate spicy food between three and seven days a week.

As the study, published in the BMJ on Tuesday, was observational, conclusions could not be drawn about cause and effect, but the team of international authors, led by researchers at the Chinese Academy of Medical

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Chinese study

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Sciences, suggested that more research could lead to dietary advice being updated.

Experts said that the study did not provide evidence to “prompt a change in diet.”

In an accompanying editorial to the research, Nita Forouhi, who leads the Nutritional Epidemiology program at the MRC Epidemiology Unit at the University of Cambridge’s School of Clinical Medicine, said that there had been suggestions already of many potential benefits from chili and its bioactive compound capsaicin; these included anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.



Scientists had also noted the benefits for gut microbiota and anti-obesity effects from chili.

“Future research is needed to establish whether spicy food consumption has the potential to improve health and reduce mortality directly, or if it is merely a marker of other dietary and lifestyle factors,” the study’s author’s wrote.

The study involved people aged between 35 and 79 from 10 geographically diverse areas across China. The research ran from 2004 to 2008. During a median follow-up of 7.2 years there were 20,224 deaths. Participants with a history of serious disease were excluded, and factors such as age, marital status, education,



physical activity, family history and general diet, were taken into account.

The participants in the study were asked about the type of spicy foods they ate and how often they consumed them. Chili pepper, among the most popular spicy foods eaten in China, was the most commonly used spice noted in the responses.

However, the authors said that the use of other types of spices generally increased with that of chili pepper.

Further analysis showed those who consumed fresh, as opposed to dry, chili tended to have a lower risk of death from cancer, ischemic heart disease and diabetes.

Source: *The Guardian*, August 7, 2015 ■

IBM Crafts a Role for Artificial Intelligence in Medicine

Deal for Merge Healthcare is step toward training IBM’s Watson software to identify cancer, heart disease

IBM is moving from helping hospitals run smoothly to lending a hand in the examination room.

International Business Machines Corp.’s planned acquisition of Merge Healthcare Inc., which sells systems that help doctors store and access medical images, is a crucial step in its plan to put artificial intelligence to use in medicine. IBM announced the \$700 million deal last week.

Merge’s crown jewels are 30 billion images, including X-rays, computerized tomography, and magnetic-resonance-imaging scans, that IBM intends to use to “train” its Watson software to identify ailments

such as cancer and heart disease. The resulting services, it hopes, will help doctors diagnose and treat patients more effectively and efficiently.

Google Inc., Yahoo Inc.’s Flickr unit and others use similar software to identify objects in photos. IBM is betting that the same technology that recognizes cats can identify tumors and other signs of diseases. The nascent effort could help IBM capture a larger slice of the \$7.2 trillion spent worldwide annually on health care.

IBM’s deal also could reshape the \$3 billion market for archiving medical images and breathe life into companies devoted to computer-driven



interpretation of images. It highlights the value of such imagery, which typically is anonymized and shared by hospitals for research purposes, as the software technique known as deep learning becomes more prevalent in medicine.

Deep learning, a technique in which software learns to identify patterns by sifting through large amounts of data, has proved successful at interpreting photographs, improving

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IBM Crafts

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voice recognition in smartphones and detecting fraud in financial transactions.

Identifying a tumor involves similar pattern-recognition techniques, according to John Kelly, senior vice president of IBM's solutions portfolio and research.

In the long run, IBM and others in the field hope such systems can become reliable advisers to radiologists, dermatologists and other practitioners who analyze images—especially in parts of the world where health-care providers are scarce. But medical scans of the human body are complex.

“In medical data, there’s lots of ambiguity and lots of fuzziness,” said John Eng, an associate professor of radiology at Johns Hopkins University. “It’s kind of messy data, and I think that’s going to be a limiting factor with what IBM does with Watson.”

The effort is in a very early stage. Johns Hopkins is using computers to help doctors identify tumors in chest scans and mammograms, but the benefits of existing software tools are limited and radiologists still largely work without computerized assistance.

“It’s a way off to have a general diagnostic machine,” said Dr. Eng.

IBM has made health care a strategic target of its Watson platform, an assortment of artificial-intelligence software at the heart of several of the company’s business initiatives.

It aims to pioneer a new category of software products that mine data for medical insights, which it could sell to large health-care organizations where it already has relationships.

To that end, it has been testing Watson with researchers at Cleveland Clinic and New York’s Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Acquiring Merge brings not only access to the company’s image archive but also its account list of 7,500 hospitals.

“The access to these clinical relationships and the data is valuable,” said Kevin Hobert, the CEO of

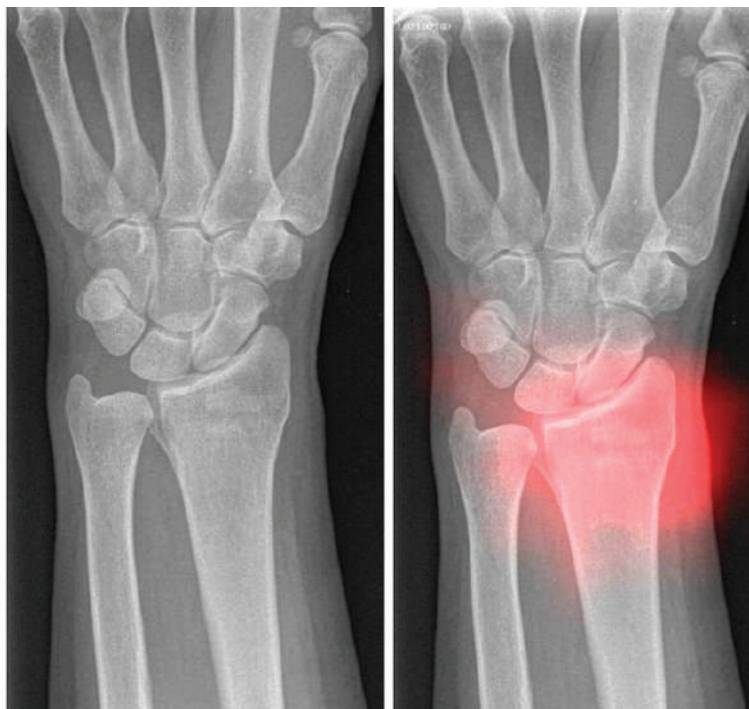
Carestream Health Inc., a Merge competitor.

While IBM hopes Watson will learn to interpret Merge’s images, it also expects the combination of imagery, medical records and other data to reveal patterns relevant to diagnosis and treatment that a human physician may miss, ushering in an era of computer-assisted care. Two other recent IBM acquisitions, Phytel Inc. and Explorys Inc., yielded 50 million electronic medical records.

Smaller companies devoted to automated interpretation of medical imagery felt the impact of IBM’s arrival immediately.

Enlitic Inc., a San Francisco-based startup with \$5 million in angel and seed funding, claims that its software identified malignant lung tumors in X-rays 50% more accurately than a panel of four radiologists.

The company’s CEO, Jeremy Howard, spent the past year approaching hospitals and clinics for access to anonymized images that would demonstrate his system’s utility.



Software from Enlitic scans an X-ray image of a wrist for fractures.
Photo: Enlitic

After IBM’s announcement on Thursday, his email inbox brimmed with messages from hospitals offering images, hospital networks interested in trying his technology, and radiology services looking to improve their own accuracy, he said.

Training such software requires huge numbers of images. Merge’s 30 billion MRIs are only a start for IBM. “The way these machine-learning engines work, the more you feed them the smarter they get,” IBM’s Mr. Kelly said.

But such imagery remains limited by regulations and industry reluctance to share what may be sensitive personal information. Enlitic’s Mr. Howard has been approaching hospitals and clinics one by one to persuade them to share their archives.

“People are starting to realize these archives have value,” Mr. Howard said. “Before, these images were sitting around for 25 years gathering dust.”

Source: Wall Street Journal, August 11, 2015

Startups Vie to Build an Uber for Health Care

Services splint strains and suture wounds on-site; Are house calls better than ER visits?

By Melinda Beck



Eve Rorison, a nurse who works for Pager, conducts a wellness check for Facebook executive Kunal Merchant at his New York offices. Services like Pager are putting a high-tech spin on old-fashioned house calls. PHOTO: MELINDA BECK/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Darren Gold had a stomach virus the first time he used an app called Heal to summon a doctor to his Beverly Hills home. He liked the Stanford-trained doctor who showed up so much that he called Heal again when his 2-year-old son had a fever, and again when the whole family had colds.

The charges—\$99 each for the first two visits; \$200 for the family—weren't covered by insurance, but Mr. Gold, who owns a corrugated-box company, says that was still a bargain compared with taking time off work to go to the doctor. "Now, whenever my son bumps himself, he says, 'Daddy, we need to get the doctor here,'" Mr. Gold says.

Heal is one of several startups putting a high-tech spin on old-fashioned house calls—or "in-person visits," since they can take place anywhere. The services provide a range of nonemergency medical care—from giving flu shots to treating strep throats and stitching lacerations—much like a

mobile urgent-care clinic.

The companies use slightly different models. Pager, in New York City, dispatches doctors or nurse practitioners via Uber, for \$200. Heal, in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Orange County, Calif., promises to "get a doctor to your sofa in under an hour" for \$99. (A medical assistant goes along to do the driving and parking.)

RetraceHealth, in Minneapolis, has a nurse practitioner consult with patients via video (for \$50), and only comes to their homes if hands-on care like a throat swab or blood draw is necessary (for \$150).

Atlanta-based MedZed sends a nurse to a patient's home to do a preliminary exam. Then the nurse connects via laptop with a doctor who provides a treatment plan remotely. Several Atlanta practices use MedZed as a way to offer patients extended hours without having to keep their offices open.

Most of the services don't accept

insurance, but they say patients can pay with health savings accounts or submit out-of-network claims.

Such ventures are fueled by a confluence of trends, including growing interest in the so-called sharing economy, where technology connects providers with excess capacity and consumers who want on-demand services. Many doctors and nurses who work for hospitals are eager for extra work in their off-hours, the companies say. The services carry malpractice insurance, but say overall low overhead keeps prices down.

And thanks to the boom in mobile-medical technology, providers can carry key equipment with them, from portable blood analyzers to hand-held ultrasounds.

The companies are attracting venture-capital investment and partnerships with hospital systems, which increasingly see in-home care as a way to reduce unnecessary ER visits and readmissions.

Health systems "are experimenting with many different options to get patients the right level of care," says Pam Nicholson, senior vice president for strategic initiatives for Centura Health, Colorado's largest hospital chain. Centura is teaming up with True North Health Navigation, a Denver startup that offers on-scene care to 911 callers as an alternative to a costly ambulance ride to the ER. Centura plans to offer True North's home-care services to its own employees and other patients whose costs it is responsible for under insurance contracts.

House calls, which accounted for 40% of all doctor visits in 1930, dwindled to less than 1% by 1980 as physicians found it far more efficient to see 20 or 30 patients a day in an office than just a handful in their homes. But in-home care is starting to be seen as cost-efficient again—particularly for the most expensive patients. A pilot project providing in-home care for 8,400 Medicare patients with multiple chronic-conditions cut costs by more than \$3,000 per patient, the agency reported in June.

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Startups Vie

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Analysts say it's unclear whether many of the new on-demand services will reduce costs for those chronically ill patients—or mainly make it more convenient for the healthy and wealthy to get care they could have gone without.

Pager, which has treated about 5,000 patients in New York's five boroughs since its founding last year, says a typical patient is a young mother with one sick child and others she doesn't want to bring along to the doctor's office too or leave at home. "Health checks," in which a nurse does cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar and other tests for \$75, are also popular—even in office settings.

On one such visit recently, Kunal Merchant, a 34-year old Facebook executive with a new baby on the way, wanted to be sure he was healthy, but didn't want to take hours off work to visit a primary-care physician he barely knew. So he booked an office conference room, and scheduled a Pager visit. Registered nurse Eve Rorison brought all the gear she needed to check his blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol, heart rate and BMI, in her backpack. About 15 minutes and one finger prick later, she declared, "You're very healthy—keep up the good work."

Many of the services bill themselves as an "Uber for health-care"—but to date, they haven't sparked the kind of opposition from traditional doctor practices that the ride-sharing service has from taxi drivers. That's in part because the house-call companies are new and small and in part because they employ licensed medical professionals—generally doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners with experience in primary care or emergency medicine, looking to earn extra money in their spare time. The providers generally take home about half of the house-call fee, and make fewer than 10 calls a day. But many say they enjoy the chance to take their time with patients. "I love my Pager shifts—

The On-Demand Doctor

Several startups are putting a high-tech spin on old-fashioned house calls:

					
SERVICE	For a flat fee of \$99, the service promises to send a doctor in under an hour	Dispatches doctors or nurses via Uber for \$200 per urgent-care visit; \$75-\$100 for a wellness check	Nurse conducts initial visit and can video chat with doctor; \$150 for an urgent-care house call; prices vary	Nurse practitioners consult via video for \$50 or in-person visit for \$200; \$50 per month for unlimited visits	Responds to non-emergency 911 calls; offers on-scene care instead of ER visit; \$200-\$300
CITY/STATE	Los Angeles, San Francisco and Orange County, Calif.	New York City, San Francisco	Atlanta, New York City	Minneapolis, Wisconsin and North Dakota	Denver

Source: the companies

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

it's back to real medicine, just you and the patient," says Kimberly Henderson, an ER physician at Beth Israel Hospital in New York who works for Pager one or two days a week.

Still, Alan Ayers, a spokesman for the Urgent Care Association of America, a trade group, says urgent-care clinics provide all the same services that the house-call companies do, far more efficiently. He also asks, "What quality control is there over the clinical environment in someone's home? Does it have the right light? Is it sanitary?"

What's more, some office-based physicians fear that dialing up doctors like taxi rides will further fragment health-care delivery and interfere with doctor-patient relationships. "Someone who knows you well might say, 'Why would you need to be seen three times in four weeks for a cold? Maybe it's really heart failure'," says Robert Wergin, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians, who practices in rural Milford, Neb.

The on-demand house-call companies counter that they will send reports to patients' regular physicians on request. They also say that most people who try the services become repeat users. "Once you've had pizza delivered, you rarely go pick up pizza again," says Thompson Aderinkomi, a health-care economist who founded RetraceHealth in 2013.

House-call providers also say that even if conditions aren't ideal, they get to know patients far better seeing them at home than they would in a hurried office or ER visit.

Caren Misky, a nurse practitioner with True North Health Navigation in Denver, says she recently responded

to a call where an Alzheimer's patient had fallen and cut his head. She was able to staple his wound at the kitchen table while he had breakfast. "His wife said the last time that happened, they spent eight hours in the ER and had a \$10,000 bill," Ms. Misky says.

True North is one of the few services that is reducing ER use. It was founded in part because local fire chief Rick Lewis wanted to offer 911 callers who had minor, nonemergency health issues an alternative between no care and a costly ambulance ride to the ER.

Now, if the 911 dispatcher determines that the caller has a low acuity case, the True North mobile unit goes to the scene along with the fire department's paramedics. Once the paramedics confirm the situation isn't life-threatening, the caller can choose between being treated by a nurse practitioner on the spot, for \$200 to \$300, (which is covered by most Colorado insurance plans) or going by ambulance to the ER, which typically costs \$3,000 or more.

"You essentially get the same person who would see you in the ER, with a lot of the same equipment, for a lot less money than you'd pay there," says Chief Lewis.

True North, which is changing its name to Dispatch Health, is expanding so that Denver residents can summon at-home visits via phone, app or Web without calling 911.

CEO Mark Parther says his teams have treated about 400 911 callers who would otherwise have gone to the ER since 2013. He adds: "We get a thank-you note every week."

Source: Wall Street Journal, August 11, 2015

APEC creates health toolkit for women economic participation

by Madelaine B. Miraflor



Governments and businesses across Asia Pacific will now find it easier to introduce health policies that will facilitate the participation of women in economies after a toolkit for this was established during Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings that are currently being held here in Manila.

Launched on September 16, 2015, the Healthy Economic Policy Toolkit offers a one-stop menu of policy options that can be used to pilot, implement, and scale up actions appropriate to local economic and social conditions.

The toolkit was unveiled by health, economic development and gender officials from APEC member economies.

It is expected to open doors to potentially significant improvements in social mobility and growth across the region.

“Better health outcomes for women are a prerequisite for increased women’s participation in an economy,” said Janette Loreto-Garin, Philippine Secretary of Health and co-Chair of the Experts Group that oversaw the drafting of the toolkit.

In her welcome remarks during the 2015 APEC Women and the Economy Forum, Garin said the Philippines is committed to putting words into action by piloting the toolkit with the hope that the country’s experience may serve as a guide for greater progress.

“There may be ample public and private sector support for advancing



women’s economic empowerment but a problem can be knowing where to start,” added Nora Terrado, Philippine Undersecretary of Trade and Industry and Chair of this year’s APEC Women and the Economy fora.

International Labor Organization (ILO) cited that around a billion women globally could play a more active role in their economies. This includes women in informal, vulnerable and unregulated employment as well as women with disabilities and migrant women.

ILO said health barriers, in many cases, inhibit them from entering and remaining in the workforce, and achieving career advancement.

Catherine Russell, United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues, said this health toolkit brings together the necessary stakeholders to advance health, labor, economic growth, and gender equality all at once.

“When you consider the research that shows domestic violence costs economies two percent of GDP [gross domestic product], it’s clear that women’s health and safety is a critical issue in economic policy,” Russell pointed out.

The toolkit details issues, actions and implementing elements for improving women’s health in APEC economies across five categories: Workplace health and safety; health access and awareness; work-life balance; sexual and reproductive health; and gender-based violence.

“Fostering policies that empower women to participate in economies and benefit directly from the forces of globalization has become a high priority within APEC,” said APEC Secretariat executive director Alan Bollard.

Merck Healthcare chief executive officer Belén Garijo, who also served as co-Chair of the Experts Group, said there is a real need to narrow gaps in the understanding of the relationship between women’s health, participation in the economy and economic outcomes.

“The new opportunity we have today to define gender balanced health policies and support implementation work bodes well for the building of inclusive economies into the future,” Garijo said.

Source: Manila Bulletin, September 16, 2015



PH targets \$10-B market for healthcare IT services

by Emmie Abadilla

In the next decade, the local healthcare information management services (HIMS) sector targets to quintuple its revenues from US\$1.3 billion last year to US\$9.8 billion in 2020.

“The healthcare industry is undergoing profound transformation with more technological advancement pushing service providers to adapt. We need to step up,” declared Healthcare Information Management Association of the Philippines (HIMAP) President Myla Reyes.

So far, the local sector has targeted “bucket” services for pharmaceuticals, billing, claims management, member and patient management, among others.

However, new and expanded types of services such as mobile healthcare, care coordination, research and analytics, population health management, supply chain distribution, medical writing, and pharmaco vigilance are growing, particularly in the United States, she pointed out.

The HIMS sector is transforming fast due to changes in the healthcare environment where patients now demand for more participation in their care management programs. Hence,

local HIMS should respond to these positive disruptions.

Conservatively, local HIMS providers could haul in US\$5.9 billion in revenues with 300,000 full-time employees (FTE) in the next five years.

However, if they embark on a more aggressive plan, they can rake in US\$9.8 billion in revenues and 545,000 FTEs by the year 2020.

During the recent HIMS Conference, the HIMAP opened dialogues with American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) and American Association of Professional Coders (AAPC), two of the global leaders in professional coding certifications.

The conference coincided with the transition of medical coding standards from the outdated 9th International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-9) to the newer and more detailed ICD-10.

HIMS providers in the Philippines have been using the ICD-9 standard as it is the one still largely being used by the United States, the industry’s largest target market. By October 1, 2015, the US will fully implement the use of ICD-10.

The new standards are a challenge



as innovations will demand re-defined stakeholders’ role in light of the stronger emphasis on home and community care in the healthcare delivery systems, according to Rhenu Bhuller, Senior Vice President for Healthcare of research firm Frost & Sullivan.

This year’s conference also featured electronic health programs by the Information and Communications Technology Office (ICTO), as well as mobile-based healthcare applications. It also presented discussions on technology-based analytics for use in large-scale data management.

Source: Manila Bulletin, September 14, 2015



Breastfeeding leads to higher IQ, earnings later: study

People breastfed as infants have higher intelligence scores in adulthood, and higher earnings, according to a study published on March 18, 2015 that tracked the development of 3,500 newborns over 30 years.

And, critically, the socioeconomic status of mothers appeared to have little impact on breastfeeding results, according to a paper published by The Lancet medical journal.

“The effect of breastfeeding on brain development and child intelligence is well established,” lead author Bernardo Lessa Horta of the Federal University of Pelotas in Brazil said in a statement.

What has been less clear, is whether the effects persist into adulthood, and whether a mother’s socioeconomic status or education level played a bigger role in the outcome of previous studies than her choice to breastfeed or not.

“Our study provides the first evidence that prolonged breastfeeding not only increases intelligence until at least the age of 30 years but also has an impact both at an individual and societal level by improving educational attainment and earning ability,” said Horta.

“What is unique about this study is the fact that, in the population we studied, breastfeeding was not more common among highly educated, high-income women, but was evenly distributed by social class.”

Horta and a team analysed data from another study of children born in Pelotas in 1982.

Information on breastfeeding was compared to IQ test results at the average age of 30 years, as well as the educational achievement and income of 3,493 participants.

“The researchers divided these subjects into five groups based on the length of time they were breastfed as infants, controlling for 10 social and biological variables that might contribute to the IQ increase including



The socioeconomic status of mothers have little impact on breastfeeding results, according to a new study.

family income at birth, parental schooling, genomic ancestry, maternal smoking during pregnancy, maternal age, birthweight, and delivery type,” said the statement.

“While the study showed increased adult intelligence, longer schooling, and higher adult earnings at all duration levels of breastfeeding, the longer a child was breastfed for (up to 12 months), the greater the magnitude of the benefits.”

An individual breastfed for at least a year as a baby gained a full four IQ points, had 0.9 years more schooling, and an income of 341 Brazilian Reals (98 euros, \$104) higher per month at the age of 30, compared to those breastfed for less than one month, the study found.

“The likely mechanism underlying the beneficial effects of breast milk on intelligence is the presence of long-chain saturated fatty acids (DHAs) found in breast milk, which are essential for brain development,” said Horta.

“Our finding that predominant breastfeeding is positively related to

IQ in adulthood also suggests that the amount of milk consumed plays a role.”

In a comment also carried by The Lancet, Erik Mortensen of the University of Copenhagen said the findings had important public health implications.

“However, these findings need to be corroborated by future studies designed to focus on long-term effects and important life outcomes associated with breastfeeding.”

Source: Agence France-Presse (AFP), March 19, 2015 ■



Coffee gains ground with health experts



Ichiro Sekiguchi, 100, enjoys a cup of coffee at his shop, Cafe de L'Ambre in Tokyo's Ginza district in October 2014. | AFP-JIJI

Long viewed as a controversial dark substance, coffee is gaining ground among medical experts who say it can protect against heart disease, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and diabetes, even if it is decaffeinated.

Multiple studies published worldwide in recent years have concluded that coffee can be good for the health.

In February 2015, the U.S. government issued new dietary guidelines, as it does every five years.

But this year's recommendations said for the first time that coffee is not generally harmful, even multiple cups per day.

"We looked at all the science," said Miriam Nelson, a professor in the School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, and a member of the committee that wrote the guidelines.

"We have found no negative, adverse effects on health when you drink up to three to five cups a day.

"In fact, there is a decreased risk of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease and a couple of cancers," including breast and prostate cancer, she said.

She said a "moderate amount" would max out at 500 milligrams of caffeine per day.

Researchers do not yet understand the reason for coffee's health benefits.

That is why Tom Brenna, another member of the advisory group that wrote the new guidelines, urged some caution.

"Implying that coffee is going to cure cancer is not a very good thing to do," said Brenna, a professor of nutrition and chemistry at Cornell University.

But after poring over the research, experts could find no reason for concern.

"There is no evidence whatsoever for negative health consequences in the general population and if anything, the signal was in another direction. It seems to be protective," Brenna added.

"The real takeaway is, have your coffee in the morning with complete confidence that at least, on average, nobody ever found any problem."

Pregnant women should limit themselves to about 200 milligrams of caffeine per day, just as a precaution, even though the panel found no

evidence in reviewing the research that coffee was linked to premature birth, he said.

Nelson would like to see more research on the effects of caffeinated energy drinks that are popular among youths, in order to find out how much caffeine may be toxic.

She also cautioned against the extra calories that come when people add cream and sugar to coffee, which has very few calories on its own.

Both scientists agree that the benefits of coffee, of which each grain contains 1,000 different molecules, goes beyond the caffeine and could be explained by antioxidants like polyphenols, which are also found in red wine and cocoa.

These attributes could also explain the results of a recent study involving 25,000 men and women in South Korea that found those who drank three to five cups of coffee per day had cleaner arteries, with less of the cholesterol buildup that leads to heart disease.

A study involving 2,000 people found coffee may help protect against Parkinson's disease, an incurable neurological disorder.

Other studies have linked coffee consumption to lower incidence of Alzheimer's disease.

Researchers at Harvard University showed in 2011 that women who drank at least four cups of decaffeinated coffee per day had a 20 percent lower risk of depression.

And in 2006, a study involving 90,000 U.S. women showed that drinking two or three cups of coffee — caffeinated or decaffeinated — per day reduced the risk of diabetes.

Coffee may also help extend life, according to a National Institutes of Health study on 400,000 U.S. men and women aged 50 to 71, which found a 10 percent lower risk of dying from any cause — except cancer — among those who drank multiple cups of coffee per day.

Source: Agence France-Presse (AFP), April 2, 2015

Latest developments in health apps can push users to unsafe measures, German experts warn

By David Fischer



It's not so long ago that the personal heart-rate monitor was considered high-tech among joggers. Now we live in the age of wearable tech and health apps that can do more than just measure your pulse while you run around the park.

The latest gadgets can count steps, monitor the heart, analyze sleep patterns and measure metabolism rates. Many of the latest wearable tech tools and apps were on show at the recent Fibo fitness trade fair in Cologne, Germany.

One company showed off a sensor that is placed in the human ear. Jabra developed the device to allow users to make hands-free telephone calls and listen to music while it counts their heartbeats.

The data is transmitted to an app that displays the information in

readable format. The device is aimed at serious amateur runners, triathletes and sports enthusiasts with relatively deep pockets.

According to a study by Germany's IT and telecommunications industry association, Bitkom, in 2014 about 13 percent of Germans used an electronic device to measure steps or calorie usage.

Wearable tech companies such as Polar and Apple offer their customers individual training programs to go along with their devices.

Fitness studios have noticed that competition, and are striking back. The company Technogym has developed software that collects data supplied by treadmills, digital weighing scales and cross-trainers in gyms and stores it in the cloud.

According to the company, this allows users to follow an individual training program without the need for a coach — that is when all the equipment is supplied by one manufacturer.

Another strategy is followed by Myzone, which has developed a modern form of group training aimed at attracting people to gyms, according to company manager Mike Leveque.

Myzone has invented sensors that can collect data from several people at the same time they work out on exercise machines in a group.

That information is collected together and shown in real time on a screen to create a competitive atmosphere: who has the lowest pulse? Who burned the most calories? When a group reaches their goal, they are rewarded with prizes in the form of T-shirts or drinks bottles.

"Figures can act like a kind of currency and help bind customers to the gym," says Leveque.

Some technical motivations can help you get healthier, but there are a few fitness apps that achieve the exact opposite. That's according to a report in Germany's biggest tech magazine, Computer Bild.

The magazine tested several popular apps for smartphones and other wearable devices. It discovered that they often set training levels that are far too high for amateurs and pay too little attention to individual physical characteristics.

Source: Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), April 27, 2015



ROC, US sign MOU to extend partnership in global health, aid

By Christie Chen

Officials from Taiwan and the United States signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on June 1, 2015 to extend the two countries' cooperation in the areas of international public health, humanitarian assistance and other global issues.

The Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF) MOU was signed in Taipei by Chang Hsiao-yueh, chairperson of the Coordination Council for North American Affairs

under Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Christopher Marut, director of the American Institute in Taiwan, which represents U.S. interests in Taiwan in the absence of bilateral diplomatic ties.

The MOU offers a good platform for Taiwan and the United States to work closely in the areas of global health, environmental protection, science and technology, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, Chang

said at the signing ceremony.

The U.S. and Taiwan have cooperated on a range of critical global challenges in the past year alone, including addressing global climate change through the International Environmental Partnership, Marut said.

The two sides have also delivered humanitarian assistance to those affected by conflict in the Middle East, delivered protective equipment, financial support, and medical training to those combatting the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and promoted the expansion of renewable energy in the Asia-Pacific region, he said.

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ROC, US sign MOU

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"The GCTF will build upon these successes and explore new ways to harness U.S. and Taiwan capabilities and expertise for the benefit of regional and global communities," he said.

Charles Rivkin, U.S. assistant secretary of state for economic and business affairs, who also attended the signing ceremony, said the MOU is about "two like-minded partners working to create new opportunities to demonstrate the meaning of global citizenship."

"The Framework is a milestone that will bring into full focus Taiwan's dramatic transformation from an international aid recipient to an aid provider," said Rivkin, who is visiting Taiwan to discuss trade and economic issues.

Source: Central News Agency (CNA), June 2, 2015



Vaccination against measles may have other benefits

By Alicia Chang

A new study suggests the measles shot comes with a bonus: By preventing that disease, the vaccine may also help your body fight off other illnesses for years.

It's long been known that contracting measles weakens the immune system for weeks or months, putting people, especially children, at increased risk for potentially fatal infection by a host of germs.

Now, scientists find that this vulnerable period goes on much longer than thought, up to three years. So the benefit of avoiding measles also extends longer than was appreciated. Researchers also found that measles vaccination campaigns were followed by a drop in deaths for other infectious diseases.

Experts said the work is a wake-up call to parents who don't vaccinate their children out of unfounded fears about a link between vaccines and autism.



"The message is clear," said Dr. Richard Wenzel, an infectious disease specialist at Virginia Commonwealth University who was not involved in the study. Not only is the vaccine safe and effective against measles, he said, but it may also save a child's life by helping to guard against other infections.

Debate about the measles vaccine came into focus this year after a large outbreak tied to Disneyland sickened 147 people in the U.S., including 131 in California. Infections also spread to Mexico and Canada where 159 people fell ill in Quebec. Many stricken with measles were not immunized because of personal reasons or their age.

Measles, marked by fever, cough and a blotchy rash, has been eliminated in the U.S. for more than a decade thanks to an aggressive vaccination effort. Outbreaks still crop up when Americans or foreign visitors become infected overseas and spread the virus among populations that are not vaccinated.

In the latest study, an international team of researchers analyzed measles cases and death rates from other infections before and after widespread measles vaccination campaigns in the U.S., England and Wales, and

Denmark.

After vaccinations, measles cases declined in all the countries. Deaths from non-measles infections also dropped. In the U.S., deaths from infections such as respiratory or diarrheal disease fell from 18 per 100,000 before vaccination to 6 per 100,000 after vaccination. Researchers attribute the drop to fewer measles cases caused by the introduction of the vaccine.

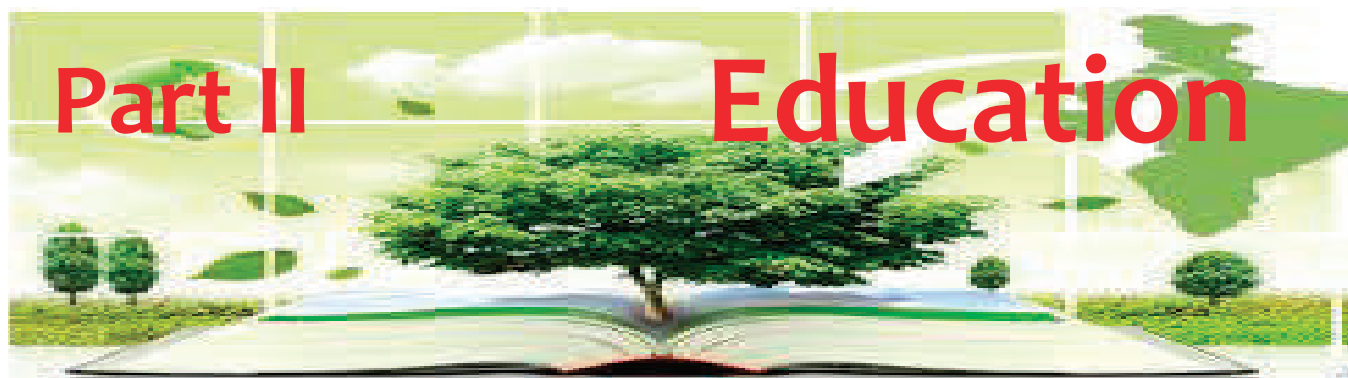
Using mathematical modeling, the team also found it took two to three years after getting measles for the immune system to rebuild itself.

The study, released Thursday by the journal *Science*, was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and federal grants.

By preventing measles, "you preserve your ability to fight off all of these other infections," said Michael Mina, a medical student at Emory University who led the study.

While vaccination played a role, other factors such as better nutrition and smaller family size may also explain the drop in non-measles infections, said Dr. James Cherry, a pediatric infectious disease expert at the University of California, Los Angeles, who had no role in the study.

Source: Associated Press (AP), May 9, 2015



Vietnam to raise education standards through ICT

The Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has been carrying out a number of projects to increase the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in education in order to raise the quality of education.



After cooperating with Viettel in providing internet connection to all schools in the country, the ministry is currently carrying out programmes with the support of South Korea, such as the virtual university project at Hanoi University of Science and Technology, the e-learning project at Hanoi Open University, and a program to equip Vietnamese schools with computers and train teachers in using information technology in teaching.

Talking at the October 29 Forum on ICT in Education, deputy minister Nguyen Vinh Hien emphasized the benefit of the practice.

“The use of ICT in education prompts innovation in teaching and learning, creates excitement for students and teachers, and enables people to learn everywhere, at any time, and facilitates lifelong learning,” said Hien.

On October 30, Deputy Minister of Education Pham Manh Hung, South Korean ambassador to Vietnam Jun Daejoo, the director of the Hanoi Department of Education and Training and a representative from the South Korean Ministry of Education joined the ceremony to open a smart classroom funded by the South Korean

Ministry of Education at Cau Giay Highschool in Hanoi.

Pham Manh Hung expressed his appreciation for the support of the South Korean Ministry of Education. “We believe this model is going to encourage innovative teaching and hope that this model is going to be expanded to other schools in the country,” he said.

The demand for education is high in Vietnam, where one quarter of the population of almost 90 million goes to school each year. The IT facilities at many Vietnamese schools, especially those in rural and mountainous regions, are outdated.

Source: Vietnamnet Bridge, November 16, 2015



Japan Rethinks Higher Education in Skills Push

Liberal arts will be cut back in favor of business programs that emphasize research or vocational training

By Mitsuru Obe



College students attend a job fair in Tokyo in March and search for information about employers. PHOTO: CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY IMAGES

Japan is retooling its public universities, sacrificing liberal-arts programs in collaboration with a business community eager for better-skilled graduates.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's goal is to transform Japan's government-funded universities into either global leaders in scientific research or schools focused on vocational training. He has called on them to "redefine their missions" and restructure their curricula.

All 86 of the country's national-level public universities were required by the education ministry to submit restructuring plans by the end of June, and they were told that government funding, upon which they depend, would be allocated according to their embrace of this new vision.

The drive is part of Mr. Abe's efforts to revitalize Japan, injecting more dynamism and innovation into the economy through a greater

focus on research, and improving the competitiveness of its graduates with precisely tailored course work. Many businesses have cut back their training programs and are looking to universities to fill the gap. As businesses become more global, companies are seeking workers with better social and organizational skills and the ability to work in teams.

Critics, though, say the willingness to sacrifice liberal arts along the way is misguided.

With the overhaul effort, Japan joins a swelling number of advanced economies, including the U.S., where shortages of skilled workers have prompted debates about the value of traditional academic disciplines. For Japan, the argument is also being driven by concerns over the quality of instruction, with large class sizes and few classroom discussions, and a mismatch between student expectations and those of their employers.

Surprisingly in a country where lifetime employment at a single company used to be the norm, more than 30% of college graduates quit their first job within three years, according to labor ministry surveys.

Ehime University, in western Japan, focuses more on job training. It plans to eliminate programs and cut combined enrollment in its humanities and education departments by nearly a third, while creating a new regional-development program that will train students for jobs in local industries such as tourism and fisheries, said Katsushi Nishimura, a law professor who oversaw the planning process.

Courses in the new program will be created by a panel of academics and business leaders, which will also appoint the instructors, a role previously played by the faculty, Mr. Nishimura said.

"Look at the business sector. They are introducing outside directors," he said, referring to Japanese companies adding independent directors to their boards in response to a government push for better corporate governance. "We also need to come out of the ivory tower and listen to the real world."

But there are critics of this shift. Bruce Stronach, dean of Temple University's Japan campus, said productive citizens are those who engage in society and understand the political and social issues of the day. "That's why those traditional fields like arts, literature, history and social sciences are also—and will always be—important," he said.

The changes don't sit well with Miho Matsuda, a 20-year-old social-sciences major at Ehime, who says liberal arts are important for students who don't know what career they want

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Japan Rethinks

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to pursue. "It allows them to find their true interest," she said.

But she agrees with critics of Japan's current higher-education system, who say large classes and a heavy emphasis on lectures leave students bored and poorly skilled after graduation. In 2012, two-thirds of Japanese university students spent two hours or less each week studying outside of class, according to a survey by education company Benesse Corp. Sleeping in class is common, students say.

"I don't study for classes, except when I have assignments due, in which case I work in the library till 9 p.m.," said Keisuke Fujita, an education and human sciences



Companies are getting more of a say in university curricula under the government's higher-education plan to give students better job skills for today's workforce.

PHOTO: CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY IMAGES

Academic Challenge

Japan's leader wants to have 10 universities in the world's top 100, up from two now.

Global rankings

University	2015 rank
California Institute of Technology, U.S.	1
Harvard University, U.S.	2
University of Oxford, U.K.	3
Stanford University, U.S.	4
University of Cambridge, U.K.	5
University of Tokyo	23
Kyoto University	59
Tokyo Institute of Technology	141
Osaka University	157
Tohoku University	165

Source: U.K.'s Times Higher Education
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

major at Yokohama National University, which plans to reduce the size of his department next year.

Business leaders say companies are partly to blame for the skills shortage. "The industries need to explain clearly what skills they are looking for in the students," said Minoru Amoh, a former DuPont executive who serves as chairman of the education-reform panel at the Japan Association of Corporate Executives, a group that has spearheaded the drive for restructuring curricula.

Funding is likely to be a powerful motivator for the universities, which rely on the central

government for 70% of their revenue. Competition for students is expected to become more intense as the youth population shrinks, reducing tuition revenue. The number of 18-year-olds is expected to drop by half by 2050, the finance ministry predicts.

Government officials have urged public universities to diversify their revenue sources by emulating schools like the California Institute of Technology, which the finance ministry says derived 56% of its \$606 million in annual revenue in 2012-2013 fiscal year from research contracts. At the University of Tokyo, Japan's top university, the share is only 22%, while 45% of its revenue comes from the government.

One of Mr. Abe's goals is to eventually have 10 Japanese universities among the world's top 100. Currently only two enjoy that distinction, according to rankings published by the U.K.'s Times Higher Education magazine: Tokyo University at No. 23 and Kyoto University at No. 59.

Source: Wall Street Journal, August 2, 2015

Growth potential for m-learning in Asia Pacific strong–Skillsoft

By Dennis Estopace

A new report on mobile learning (m-learning) released on August 19, 2015 by Skillsoft Corp. reveals there is strong growth potential in m-learning.

“Skillsoft’s report indicates that there is strong growth for m-learning in Asia Pacific, with two-thirds of decision-makers having already adopted or having plans to adopt m-learning,” Skillsoft Asia-Pacific Vice President and General Manager Glenn Nott was quoted in a statement as saying. “With the uptake of bring your own device [Byod] in 72 percent of organizations in the region, there is an enormous opportunity to adapt, shape and align m-learning programs to learners’ needs and organizational goals.”

Nott based his statements on the regional study that collected 545 responses from decision-makers in 16 countries in Asia Pacific including Australia, Japan and the Philippines.

One key finding revealed that learners prefer to be involved in the design of skills development programs created for them, with 63 percent of the respondents who are adopters and users indicating they have been involved in some aspect of m-learning development or planning.

Titled “The State of Mobile Learning in Asia Pacific: How mobile is shaping cloud-based learning,” the study also revealed that respondents

who currently have access to m-learning believe that the benefits outweigh the costs.

According to the study, the top benefit cited by more than three-quarters of both decision-makers and learners was an improvement in efficiency at both the organizational and personal level.

“Investments in m-learning proved to yield tangible returns, with improvement in business results ranked as the second most common organizational benefit after adopting m-learning.”

The study defined decision-makers as individuals who manage a budget within an organization for human resources or learning and development. It defined learners as individuals who do not manage human resources or learning and development budgets and receive training in any form.

“Mobile users want a full, rich learning experience on-the-go, and on devices that are easy to use and empower them to be more productive and efficient,” the company said in a statement.

Its study identified that interactive and visual formats are most effective for m-learning (indicated by 64 percent of the users and potential users) and that 66 percent of such users desired learning and development programs that can be assessed on demand and in



sessions lasting not more than an hour.

Additionally, smartphones were ranked as the most preferred device with “ease of use” being the most common factor for m-learning device selection.

Organizations that have yet to adopt m-learning as part of their learning and development cited additional operating costs (56 percent), security and infrastructure concerns as key inhibitors.

“Organizations must consider the hidden cost of inaction. The cost benefits of making learning and development more accessible to the work force, which drive increased productivity, efficiency and build a competitive edge, outweigh the inhibiting concerns,” Nott said.

The report indicates that out of all the respondents who have access to m-learning, more than half (57 percent) believe that m-learning makes learning resources more accessible, and 46 percent of respondents believe that m-learning is a good mechanism to infuse learning into employees’ daily workflow.

The report findings demonstrate how organizations have the opportunity to transform the way they deliver training and development through content, formats and session lengths that resonates with and engages their learners, resulting in a greater return on investment and proves that organizations that leverage m-learning successfully achieve greater employee and organizational effectiveness and business impact.

Source: *Business Mirror*, August 24, 2015



Digitized education helps rural poor find jobs, Apec forum delegates told

By Marc Jayson Cayabyab



Apec forum delegates learn the value of digitized education during the symposium on the internet economy held in Boracay on May 18, 2015

Digitized education in the Philippines has given the rural poor access to skills training and even granted out of school youth a high school diploma all in a click of a button, a Department of Science and Technology (DoST) official said during an Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum on May 18, 2015.

During the “Symposium on the Internet Economy” held before Apec delegates, DoST Deputy Executive Director Bettina Quimson said this only shows the role of the internet in uplifting the poor through education and employment.

She cited the digital education services of the Department of Education called alternative learning solutions system which educates out of school youth for them to get a high school education.

Quimson said only eight percent of Filipinos from public grade school are able to finish college.

She said in a digitized education system, the out of school youth not only have access to classes online, they can also go back to their previous classes enabling them to better understand their lessons.

“When it’s digitized, they can go

back and review, which is why digital education is essential,” said Quimson, who also functions as deputy executive director for DoST’s Information and Communication Office.

She also cited the government’s e-Tesda (Technical Education, Skills and Development Authority), which teaches the rural

poor technical skills after they get their high school diploma.

“(E-Tesda) is basically skills training. Once they finish high school diplomas, they can take on very specific skills training toward certain jobs,” Quimson said.

She also cited the government’s

job portal where applicants from the rural poor are allowed to be interviewed by companies in the metropolitan over Skype.

“The point of all these education and skills training is basically for employment. What’s interesting about the job portal is the fact that people can’t go to the cities because it costs much money. And if they don’t get employed they become rural poor. That’s why we’re giving them opportunity to take up tests and assessment of companies in centers,” Quimson said.

“We have been more dynamic in our education structure. The best way to do is to do informal ways for digitized education,” Quimson added.

The Philippines is hosting this year’s Apec, a delegation of 21 member economies. The country hosted APEC ahead of this year’s Asean integration.

The symposium on the internet economy is one of Apec meetings to engage Apec senior officials, representatives of Apec committees and sub-fora, and government, business and academic sector representatives on the development of the digital economy.

Source: *INQUIRER.net*, May 18, 2015 ■

Singapore’s market-based education experiment

By Sanford J. Ungar

In the seemingly endless, invariably unfocused dialogue about what is wrong with higher education in the United States, the word “skills” is sure to come up often.

The complaints should be familiar to all by now: Our young people are not getting the skills they need from their high-priced college educations. “Practical” (or “vocational”) skills are neglected in the traditional liberal arts curriculum, so graduates are not finding the jobs they need to pay off loans; hence the popular drumbeat that we must let “industry” tell colleges and universities what they should be teaching.

Rarely, if ever, are these elusive skills defined — except perhaps to say, as some economists do, that to enter the workforce successfully, students will have to learn to become “managers,” “communicators,” “goal-setters,” “marketers” and the like. Better, I suppose, than becoming experts in hole-punching, data entry or widget-making.

Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether a well-rounded, all-American education in the humanities, the natural sciences and the social sciences helps develop those more sophisticated talents — I

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Singapore's

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happen to think it can and often does remarkably well — a new idea has emerged overseas that deserves serious consideration: Let older students and young workers figure out for themselves what they need to know to get ahead in life.

The concept comes from, of all places, Singapore — a country that is, as acting minister of education Ong Ye Kung put it at a conference I recently attended there, “young and small” enough to get away with unusual experiments and innovations.

Under the SkillsFuture program that will take effect next year, the Singapore government will give every citizen over 25 an account containing 500 Singapore dollars (about \$350) to apply to whatever continuing education each person deems relevant and necessary to his or her ambitions, within certain constraints yet to be identified.

Much will depend on the implementation, of course, but the idea is that individuals will vote with their feet on the basis of real-time experience and that providers will succeed or fail as a result of the perceived value of what they offer. In theory, the program would be as useful for those with little previous formal education as for those returning to school for some fine-tuning or upgrading of their knowledge. Many might use it to put a technological gloss on more mundane earlier studies or training.

The implication is that those individuals who use the funds productively and effectively will have their accounts replenished, and their credentials correspondingly enhanced, over time.

Other skills-centered educational programs being put in place in Singapore may reflect a heavier government hand. There is Earn and Learn, for example, whereby educational institutions, including some focused on technical training, will be encouraged to develop programs in conjunction with employers in areas

prioritized by the government, such as cybersecurity. Students will receive up to 5,000 Singapore dollars as an incentive to attend, and the employers will be rewarded financially as well. There will also be SkillsFuture Fellowships, offering 10,000 Singapore dollars for those who master their craft further, as well as government-coordinated internships that can be readily interwoven with more traditional studies.

And all of this is in the context of a national system of career counselors in schools, from the earliest grades, and online “career portals” that people can use to plan their futures — leading to a rapidly rising percentage of Singaporeans participating in some form of education beyond high school.

Whether any of these initiatives can be replicated in other countries is uncertain. Singapore is, after all, as the minister said, very young — only 50 years old — and a tiny city-state with a population of 5.5 million in a quarter the land area of Rhode Island. Part of the legacy of its late charismatic, if somewhat authoritarian, leader Lee Kuan Yew is hectic economic growth and extraordinary prosperity for most people. Taxes are ultra-high, and statistics are relatively easy to track. But public protests are, for the most

part, banned, and entry documents for foreign visitors unequivocally warn that drug traffickers face the death penalty under Singapore law.

Yet it is just this sort of educational experiment that deserves the attention of the United States, which has one of the lowest higher-education completion rates of any country in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development. One could imagine state, county or municipal efforts, for example, to introduce SkillsFuture-type programs that help get Americans back to work.

This just might be more effective than having the federal departments of Education, Labor, Defense and Veterans Affairs, among others, spend billions of dollars on helter-skelter job training and retraining programs, with unclear results. And it might help deflect the blame that’s being placed on colleges and universities for failing to accomplish things they were never really intended to do.

About the writer:

Mr. Sanford J. Ungar is president emeritus of Goucher College, teaches at Harvard and Georgetown and is a fellow at the Lumina Foundation.

Source: *The Washington Post*, December 3, 2015



Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and schoolchildren look at Singapore's National Gallery on Nov. 23, 2015. (Mohd Fyrol/Agence France-Presse via Getty Images)



ABOUT CACCI

The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) is a regional grouping of apex national chambers of commerce and industry, business associations and business enterprises in Asia and the Western Pacific.

It is a non-governmental organization serving as a forum for promoting the vital role of businessmen in the region, increasing regional business interaction, and enhancing regional economic growth. Since its establishment in 1966, CACCI has grown into a network of national chambers of commerce with a total now of 29 Primary Members from 27 Asian countries. It cuts across national boundaries to link businessmen and promote economic growth throughout the Asia-Pacific

region. CACCI is a non-governmental organization (NGO) granted consultative status, Roster category, under the United Nations. It is a member of the Conference on NGOs (CoNGO), an association of NGOs with UN consultative status.

Among the benefits of membership in CACCI are the following:

1. Policy Advocacy - CACCI aims to play a strong policy advocacy role in order to establish a business environment conducive to creating better opportunities for CACCI members.

2. Wide scope for networking - Participation in the various projects of CACCI will provide members the opportunity to expand their reach in Asia-Pacific by establishing contacts with the business communities of the region.

3. Participation in CACCI Annual Conferences and Training Programs - Members are invited to participate in the annual Conferences and various training programs which CACCI regularly conducts either on its own or in cooperation with other

international organizations and member chambers.

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5. Access to CACCI publications – CACCI publishes the CACCI Profile, its monthly newsletter, and the CACCI Journal of Commerce and Industry, a bi-annual publication which features papers, speeches, and other articles pertaining to issues affecting the regional economy.

For more information, please visit www.cacci.biz



*Published by the Secretariat, Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry
Victor C. Y. Tseng - Director General*

*Amador R. Honrado, Jr. – Editor; Wendy Yang / Jacqueline Uy – Contributing Editors; Julia Hsu – Assistant Editor
14/F, No. 11, Songgao Road, Taipei 11073, Taiwan*

*Tel: (886 2) 2725-5663/4; Fax: (886 2) 2725-5665; Email: cacci@cacci.biz / cacci@cacci.org.tw
Website: www.cacci.biz*