

## NCBI Scientist Serves On World Trade Center Victim Identification Team

*Dr. Stephen Sherry Collaborates on DNA Standards*

*On the morning of September 11, 2001, a horrific and coordinated series of terrorist attacks obliterated the twin towers of New York City's World Trade Center (WTC). The collapse of the buildings entombed thousands of victims and blanketed lower Manhattan with a thick film of debris. It is now the summer of 2002, and New York City's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is still dealing with the difficult and time-consuming task of identifying the remains of the attack victims—the largest mass disaster identification effort ever undertaken.*

Dr. Stephen Sherry, a staff scientist at the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), a division of NLM, is working with the victim identification team to develop standards for accurate DNA typing and kinship matching.

"I was chosen by [Dr.] David Lipman, Director of the NCBI, to serve as a representative to the National Institute of

Justice kinship and data analysis advisory panel—also known as KADAP—based on my training in population genetics and kinship analysis and my experience in complex data management gained from NCBI's role in the human genome project," Dr. Sherry explains. "As the KADAP plays crucial advisory and collaborative roles in identifying disaster victims and bringing much needed closure to their families and friends, I feel privileged to serve in this capacity."

Sherry joined NCBI as a staff scientist in 1998 and serves as the curator of NCBI's Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (dbSNP) database. A native of the Gulf Coast, he obtained his BA in anthropology from the University of South Alabama and subsequently his MA and PhD in anthropology from Pennsylvania State University. In recent years, Dr. Sherry's research interests have focused on associating genomic sequence

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Workers remove twisted steel and other debris from the World Trade Center site. (Photo by Shawn Moore, Occupational Safety & Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor.)

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# Need Help Cracking the Genetic Code?

*New NCBI Web Feature Explains Molecular Biology Basics, Resources*

Do you have trouble distinguishing a base pair from a Bosc pear? A gene map from a road map?

If so, like many people, you're a candidate to visit the new, user-friendly "About NCBI" section of the National Center for Biotechnology Information's website. NCBI is a part of the National Library of Medicine. "About NCBI" is at [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/About/index.html](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/About/index.html).

Experienced students of genetics will find many helpful features, too. "About NCBI" introduces researchers, educators, students, and the public to NCBI's role in organizing, analyzing, and disseminating information in the rapidly growing fields of molecular biology and genetics. Along the way, the website provides helpful lessons about the science underlying NCBI's many resources.

"Users can go as far as their interest and expertise take them," said NCBI Director David Lipman, M.D. "There is a wealth of information there about NCBI's mission and organizational structure, research programs and activities, and online resources."

One popular section is "A Science Primer," which provides introductory material on various science topics and technologies employed in the development of NCBI resources. Subjects covered include bioinformatics, genome mapping, molecular modeling, SNPs, ESTs, microarray technologies, and molecular genetics. (If you're still concerned about the difference between a gene map and a road map, the "Genome Mapping" section makes that distinction with an interesting analogy.) Each primer is written in plain language and includes easy-to-read design features intended to support and extend the main text.

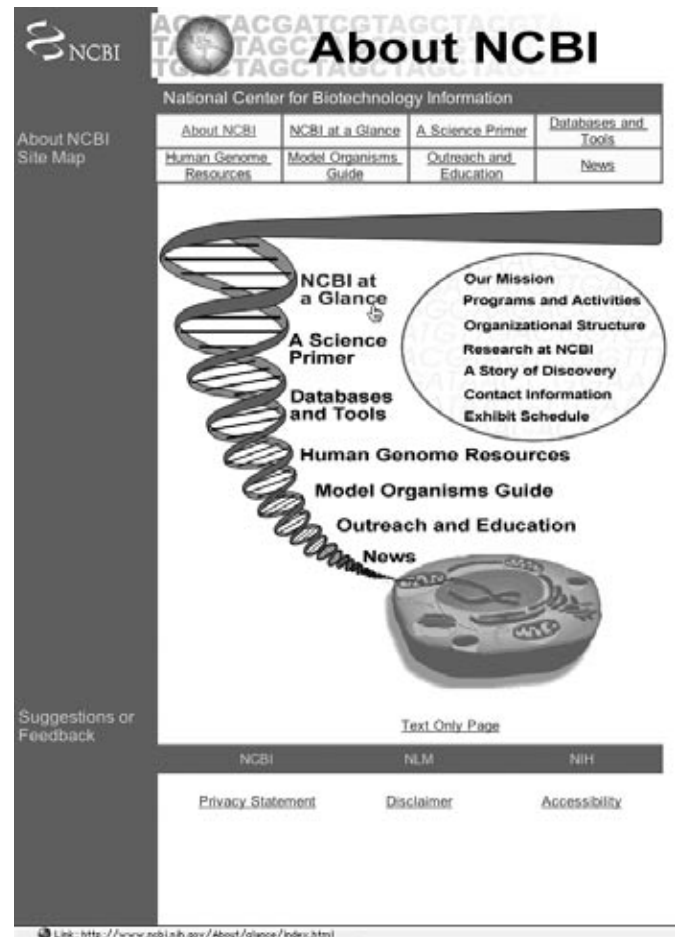
For example, highlight boxes summarize key issues, provide pointers to NCBI-related resources, and illustrate how recent scientific findings can impact human health and disease. Clear, simple figures are used throughout the section to explain complex scientific concepts and help summarize lengthy sections.

The "Model Organism Guide" explains key NCBI model organism resources, mammalian and non-mammalian, and provides access to information and activities designed to facilitate biomedical research.

"Outreach and Education" provides quick access to a complete listing of NCBI courses and tutorials, links to various glossaries defining the concepts and terms used in genomics and bioinformatics research, and recommended links to additional Web resources.

"Databases and Tools" offers a catalog of all publicly available NCBI resources. What makes this access point different from existing resource pages is that the user will find a brief description of what the database or data mining tool does, along with an example of how it may be used. "Databases and Tools" also provides a way of quickly accessing all NCBI FTP download sites as well as useful facts and figures depicting the growth and development of NCBI resources.

"News" provides short descriptions of recently released resources as well as enhancements to existing ones, press releases, and a listing of available NCBI print material.



# NLM's "Virtual" Asthma Exhibit

## *Travels to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for World Asthma Day Celebration*

May 7, 2002 was the fourth annual World Asthma Day. Recognizing that asthma remains a prevalent disease and a major public health problem in the United States and throughout the world, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention marked the day by debuting and demonstrating NLM's novel virtual DVD exhibit on asthma, "Breath of Life."

Faced with widespread public interest in its 6,000 square foot exhibition on asthma that closed recently on the National Institutes of Health campus, the National Library of Medicine (NLM) decided to take the exhibit on the road—with a high-tech twist. The complete exhibit was put on a DVD disk, using the latest technology pioneered by the NLM. Anyone with a DVD player and a computer equipped with a DVD-ROM drive can now view the exhibit. The disc contains more than two hours of full-screen, full-motion video, graphics, audio, and animations, as well as open captioning for the hearing impaired. Now everyone can "tour" the Breath of Life exhibit.

The contents of the Breath of Life DVD are lively and varied. We hear three-time Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey describe her experiences with asthma. We delve into the history of asthma, learning how therapies

have evolved through the years. (Incredibly, tobacco, cocaine and opium were once popular asthma treatments.) We watch what happens to the lungs during an asthma attack and learn how to use an inhaler correctly. We follow the experiences of a young girl with asthma, and see its effects on her and her family. We learn about asthma research trends.

"Asthma can be managed properly only when the patient and his family understand the nature of this disease," notes Donald A.B. Lindberg, M.D., director of the National Library of Medicine. "Now everyone, including asthma patients, parents, health professionals, and teachers, can learn more about asthma in an entertaining and informal way, in the comfort of their own home, office or school."

The DVD exhibition made its debut at the CDC Museum Auditorium, Roybal Campus, in Atlanta, Georgia. Martha Katz, CDC's Deputy Director for Policy, and Richard J. Jackson, MD, Director of CDC's National Center for Environmental Health, demonstrated this unique technology at CDC's World Asthma Day ceremonies.



**Dr. Richard Jackson, Director, National Center for Environmental Health, Centers for Disease Control, opens "World Asthma Day 2002" with a preview of NLM's "Breath of Life" DVD exhibit.**





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## Rapp Named Associate Fellowship Program Coordinator

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Echoing today's increased emphasis on recruitment for medical librarianship, an important goal is to broaden recruitment efforts into the Associate Fellows program, with a continued emphasis on diversity, leadership potential, and commitment to health sciences librarianship. NLM also aims to increase awareness of the program as a way of heightening interest medical librarianship as a career path.

The NLM would like to thank the health science libraries for their continuing support of the Fellowship program, as guest speakers as well as hosts for site visits or second-year Fellows. Your involvement in the program is an important way of helping the Fellows understand the relationship between NLM's programs and the libraries that make up the National Network of Libraries of Medicine.

For more information on any aspect of the program, see the web page ([www.nlm.nih.gov/about/training/associate](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/about/training/associate)).

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## NLM Explores Advanced Health Networks

*\$40 Million to Be Spent in Next Three Years*

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In keeping with its rich tradition of pushing the technology envelope, the NLM in March issued a request for proposals to build advanced networks that would enable physicians to access a patient's medical history—a capability that would allow health care professionals to treat victims of a disaster or other emergencies.

More specifically, NLM seeks to demonstrate the application of scalable, network-aware, wireless, GIS and identification technologies to a networked health related environment. Project proposals will focus on situations that will require or greatly benefit from the application of these technologies in health care, medical decision making, pub-

lic health, large-scale health emergencies, health education, and biomedical, clinical and health services research.

Although the proposal is not specifically a part of the homeland security initiative, officials say scalable networks could be used to deliver medical care in the wake of a terrorist attack, natural disaster or other crisis, when conventional communications are disabled.

For more information:

[www.eps.gov/spg/HHS/NIH/OAM/MAA-RFP-MLM-02-103-VMS/SynopsisP.html](http://www.eps.gov/spg/HHS/NIH/OAM/MAA-RFP-MLM-02-103-VMS/SynopsisP.html)

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## 2002-2003 Associate Fellows Selected

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Six new NLM Associates will begin their service at the National Library of Medicine in September. They are:

- Evangeline K. Alexander  
MLIS, May 2002, University of Hawaii at Manoa
- Marcus Andrew Banks  
MLIS, May 2002, Dominican University
- Molynda Ann Cahall  
MSLS, May 2002, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
- Shannon D. Jones  
MLS, May 2002, North Carolina Central University

- Natalie Joy Kamper  
MLIS, June 2002, University of California, Los Angeles
- Michelle Hudson Ochillo  
MLIS, December 2001, Louisiana State University

Once again, the Fellows were selected from an impressive pool of applicants. NLM would like to thank the library schools and medical libraries for their continued support of the program and encouragement of outstanding candidates to apply. Information on the Associate Fellows Program is available on NLM's website, at [www.nlm.nih.gov/about/training/associate/](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/about/training/associate/).































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