

AN APPROACH TO MENTORING NEW BIOSAFETY OFFICERS ON WRITING A GOOD BIOSAFETY MANUAL



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INTRODUCTION

As we all know, having an Institutional Biosafety Manual is the foundational requirement for any Biosafety and Biosecurity (BS&S) program. A good Biosafety Manual officially establishes policies, procedures, and practices for the lab and provides sound guidance for personnel as they encounter, identify, and control for biorisks in the workplace. The challenge the Battelle Biosafety & Biosecurity (BS&S) team faced in Georgia was to help the two main public health institutes (human and animal) write and implement a BSL-2 Biosafety Manual that was easy to follow and sustainable.

MATERIALS

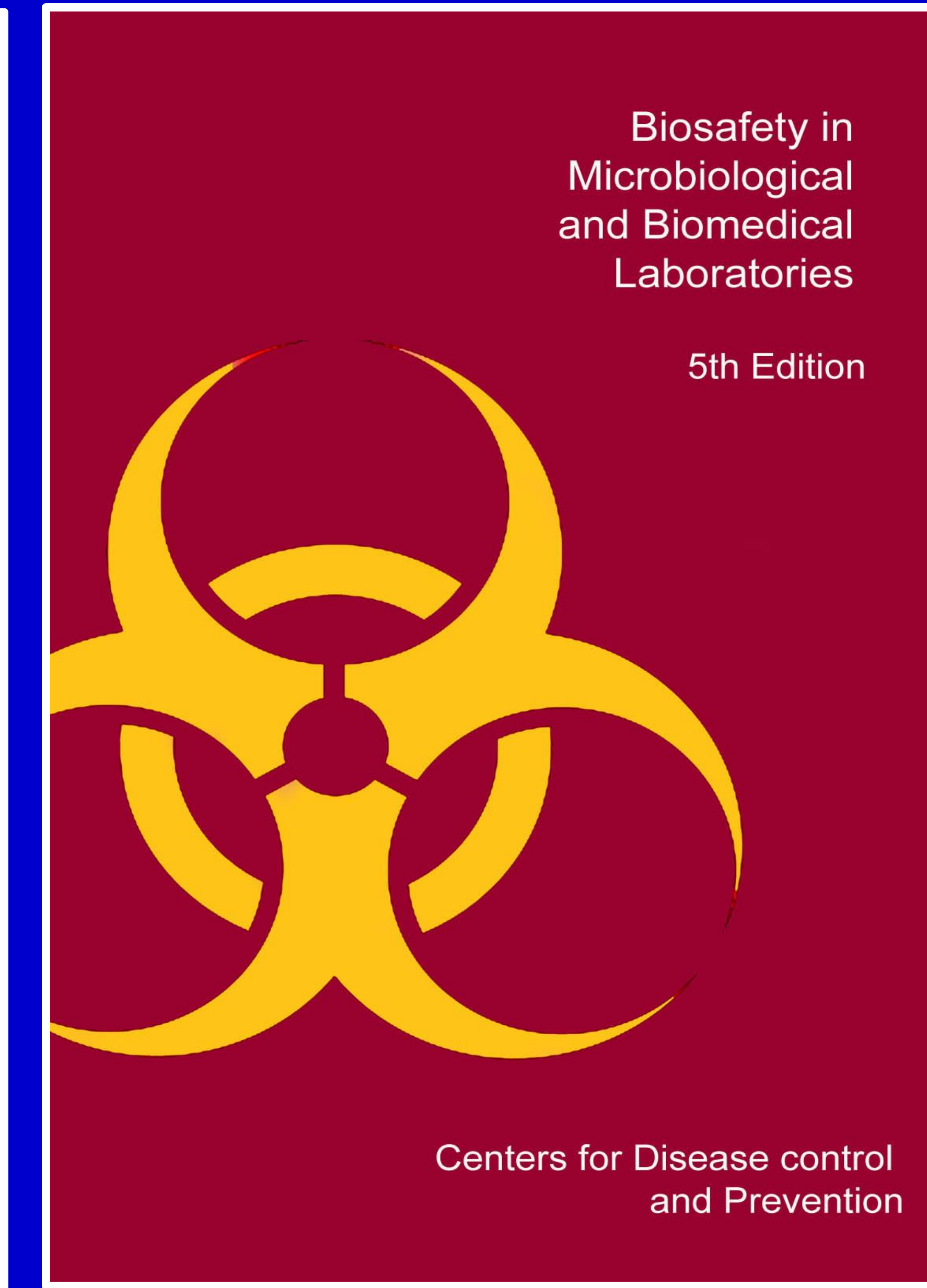
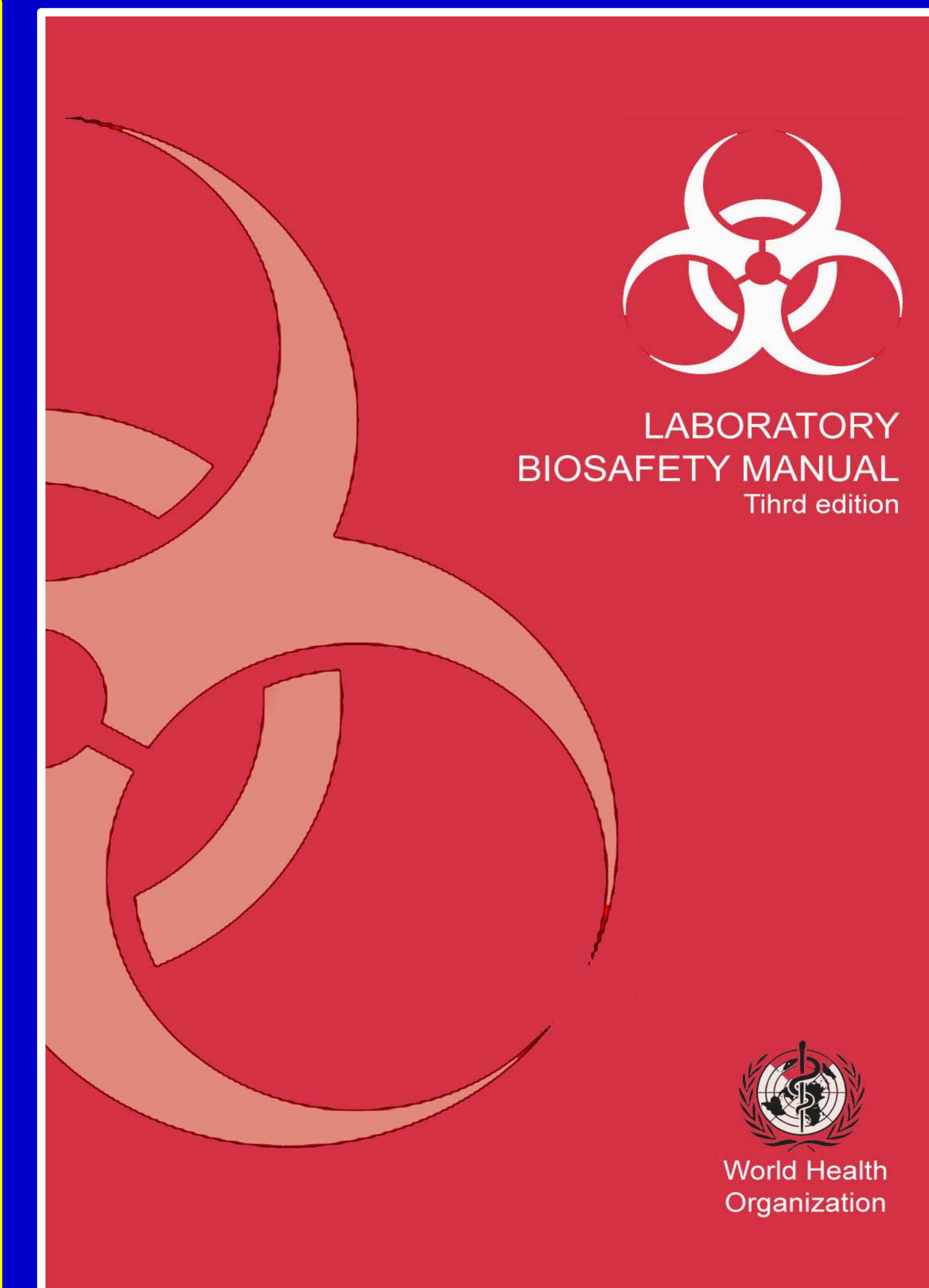
The two research and public health institutes in Georgia, the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Laboratory of Ministry of Agriculture (LMA), had documents referred to as Biosafety Manuals but were inadequate in regards to providing any meaningful guidance to the employees working with extremely dangerous pathogens (EDPs). So we devised an approach that would allow their Biosafety Officers (BSOs) to write the Biosafety Manual in a form consistent with international standards while providing simple and easy-to-follow guidance for BS&S in the various laboratories. We decided to use the WHO Biosafety Manual as a template for the Biosafety Manuals. It had previously been translated into the Georgian language and issued to the BSOs. The table of contents of the WHO Manual was easy to replicate as an outline to be followed by the Georgian institutes. The Battelle BS&S Team assisted the authors in determining what elements and components needed to be included in their Biosafety Manual and helped them to fit and tailor the contents to work actually done in their respective laboratories. Because of the complexity of the NCDC and LMA laboratory networks, the most important parts of the Biosafety Manuals were the roles and responsibilities and administrative controls to be used. Much effort and consideration was put in building the structure for these chapters.

METHODS

This was accomplished through the different stages of mentoring and instruction: 1) study of existing Biosafety manuals or similar documents, examining and modifying SOPs, and providing *facility and operational descriptions for their facilities*; 2) *creating the template to be used for the Biosafety Manuals*; 3) *conducting a writing workshop that included considering, discussing, interpreting and designing of each chapter of the document*; 4) personal instruction to the BSOs as they wrote each section; and 5) correction and improvement of newly written Biosafety Manuals, section by section.

CONCLUSIONS

The consensus-building and mentoring approach was used to empower the BSOs to take responsibility for writing and owning the Biosafety Manual. This approach also allowed the different positions from management to employees to recognize their roles in executing the operations of the laboratory in a safe and professional manner.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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