

The Sudbury Star

Canadian grad students to fight AIDS with numbers;

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A team of Canadian graduate students and two leading mathematicians is heading to Africa for a unique fight against AIDS and other infectious diseases.

They will travel to Botswana next week for a workshop that aims to teach students how to control the spread of diseases through math equations and formulas.

"What we're trying to do with our team is develop these mathematical models so that when there's a disease outbreak, health officials have some idea how to answer 'what if' questions," said **Arvind Gupta**, scientific director of a federally funded math research network called **MITACS**.

Math models can help health officials map out plans such as where to send supplies and which groups to target with education campaigns.

Using models to help understand AIDS, for instance, includes looking at how people interact with others, and which groups are likely to come in contact, he said.

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