



the EURO-URHIS project

EURO-URHIS NEWSLETTER 1 – JUNE 2007

Development of European system of urban health indicators

More than half of the world's population now lives in cities. The health needs of urban dwellers, and the ability to monitor urban health will become a high priority. The EU Public Health Programme work plan 2005 identified the development of an urban health indicator system as an essential part of a comprehensive and integrated EU health information and knowledge system. Based on this, and all the previous work funded by the EU, such as ECHI, ISARE, ECHIM and others, a group led by the University of Manchester, UK, has started work on the development of a system of urban health indicators.

- To review and appraise the published literature on the health of urban populations and related indicators and identify relevant data sources
- To summarize individual member states' current use of measures of urban health, in order to compile a cross-EU inventory, which will allow transnational comparisons and benchmarking
- To improve presentation to policymakers of urban health data, in order to enable and facilitate policymaking and increase their impact on public health policy
- To disseminate the project results

An initial meeting of the project steering group was held from August 12-14, 2006. It was decided that the project would take the ECHI short list of health indicators, and assess the applicability of the components of this list for urban health. Further progress will be posted on our website www.urhis.eu. All those who have an interest in this topic, are invited to contact the study coordinator, Professor Dick Heller.

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Work Package 1

Coordination of the project

This work package consists of the management and coordination of the project and is lead by the University of Manchester, UK. We are very pleased to announce that the project is running to the scheduled work plan and budget. All partners are working together effectively and efficiently to produce

high quality work for EURO-URHIS under the excellent leadership of Professor Dick Heller and management of Lesley Patterson.

Our roles include operational management e.g. reporting to the EU Commission, co-ordinate the interim and final reports; technical

management e.g. monitoring the research and scientific progress of the project through organising meetings, defining a quality assurance plan for deliverables, updating of the detailed work plan, communicating and tracking deadlines to all partners; financial and legal management.

We have organised two constructive Steering Group meetings in Manchester, UK and Athens, Greece. The latter was followed by a very successful All

Partners meeting. We are currently co-ordinating the production interim report on the progress of EURO-URHIS. We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have about the project.

Contact details:

For more information on work package 1 please see www.urhis.eu or contact lesley.patterson@manchester.ac.uk.

Work Package 2

Dissemination of results

Ensuring the high visibility of the project at all levels (local, national, European) and involving interested European partners is essential in order for EURO-URHIS to be a successful European project. Work package 2 (WP2) aims to disseminate the EURO-URHIS project results and is lead by the

North West of England Health Brussels Office working with EuroHealthNet. The work package aims to achieve successful communication through research into and preparation of reports and newsletters, development and maintenance of a website and the organisation of a large scale, high

profile Peers and Policymakers conference. Wide dissemination of the project results and reports will potentially stimulate further contacts and development of the Urban Health information system.

To date WP2 has been establishing contact with interested European organisations and actors, building up a large contacts database in the process. Contacts ranging from scientific researchers to Members of the European Parliament have been identified following extensive research into European networks, target groups, contacts and partnerships. A 'user-friendly'

template for newsletters and reports has been designed and will be used for publications throughout the duration of the EURO-URHIS project.

Contact details:

For more information on work package 2 please see www.urhis.eu or contact c.white@nwhbo.org.

Work Package 3

Evaluation of the project

The evaluation work package is instrumental for successful project implementation. This work package aims to select the proper evaluation methodology based on established models and to monitor intermediate project milestones and deliverables. In doing this,

WP3 will provide feedback to the project management on progress to date, evaluate the degree to which project aim and objectives have been successfully reached, and ensure that objectives are met in a quantifiable, cost effective and verifiable manner.

So far, the evaluation criteria from WP3 have been communicated to other WP leaders in the EURO-URHIS project and their feedback was received. Key questions

regarding the scope and content of the forthcoming EURO-URHIS work has also been discussed between WP leaders and the Evaluation WP. Response from the perspective of evaluation is expected from WP3 in the coming months.

For more information on work package 3 please see www.urhis.eu.

Work Package 4

Literature Review and Appraisal

Work package 4 forms the basis of the whole EURO-URHIS project. Its goals being the provision of an overview of urban health themes and existing European collaborative actions, and the choice for an urban health model with a preliminary urban health indicator list.

To achieve this, an extensive

literature review was conducted of scientific journals reports, relevant websites, projects and contacts in the field. Projects such as WHO Healthy Cities and Urban Audit have been contacted in this regard and their experiences will be used to ensure integration and avoid duplication with EURO-URHIS. The literature identifies appropriate data

sources, helps define urban areas and populations, and identifies the appropriate level to collect data for the development of a system of urban health indicators. As such, Work package 4 forms the basis of the whole EURO-URHIS project. It will also support the selection of areas of relevance for urban health from the European Community Health Indicators (ECHI) list and explore need for new indicators.

For more information on work package 4 please see www.urhis.eu

Work Package 5

Definition of Urban Areas and Populations

This work package aims to develop a definition of urban areas and populations and to identify the most appropriate administrative level for the purpose of health information exchange between urban areas.

As a result of the work carried out in this work package, it has become clear that there is no clear definition of what is urban that can be applied to every country. Most definitions are related to size (population, surface area, or cropped area).

From an administrative perspective, there is no consistent European or worldwide definition of urban or city. In order to select urban areas for use in the EURO-URHIS project, WP5 recommends that the selection is made by the person who represents the country in EURO-URHIS, based on relative size of urban area in the country, existence of “urban health problems”, and the availability of a person in each urban area who can be approached

Related documents:

<http://www.urhis.eu/documents.html>

- WP5 17th April

<http://www.urhis.eu/minutes.html>

Work Package 6

Questionnaire Development

This work package aims to use information from previous work packages 4 and 5 to develop an instrument to collect information on member state's current use of measures of urban health. It is lead by the University of Liverpool (UK).

From November 2006 to March 2007 the data collection instrument

was developed by Jude Robinson (UK), Roger Harrison (UK), Eric van Ameijden (The Netherlands) and Kaspar Bams (The Netherlands). Expert advice was also sought from Pieter Kramers (the Netherlands). In March 2007 a pilot was undertaken with partners in four EU countries: Greece, UK, the Netherlands and Germany to see whether the

instrument was 'fit for purpose'. Responses were received from all four countries, and further comments were sought in April during a series of workshops at the All Partner's meeting in Athens, and electronically via a request to all partners on the Euro-Urhis project listserve. All comments are now being considered with final revisions of the instrument to be completed during the first weeks of June 2007

Contact details:

For more information on work package 6 please see www.urhis.eu or contact J.E.Robinson@liverpool.ac.uk.

Work Package 7

Data Collection

This work package is one of the larger work packages in the EURO-URHIS project, concentrating on use of the questionnaire developed in WP6. It aims to collect information on the availability of the data required to complete the identified urban health dataset in each of the conurbations studied. This will contribute to

the establishment of a cross-EU inventory of data availability, which will allow transnational comparisons and benchmarking.

The work package is now establishing contacts in countries where EURO-URHIS currently lacks project partners. We can now welcome to the project: Patrik

Bostrom of Finland, Ene Palo of Estonia, Selma Sogoric of Croatia, Eleonore Bachinger of Austria, Niels Kr.Rasmussen of Denmark and Fimka Tazija of Macedonia; Manuel Pais Clemente of Portugal has also confirmed involvement. We hope to confirm shortly the involvement of partners in Spain, Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden, Iceland, Switzerland and Bulgaria.

Our established EURO-URHIS partners are now selecting conurbations/metropolitan areas for investigation where possible.

We hope to utilise Urban Audit (<http://www.urbandaudit.org>) in forming a formal definition of these conurbations. Following the successful retrieval of this information and the completion of Work Package 6 we will be aiming to send out the final questionnaire to all partners later in June.

information

For more information on work package 7 please see www.urhis.eu or contact christopher.birt@heartofmersey.org.uk

Work Package 8

Country Summary Reports

The aim of Work Package 8, being carried out in Oslo, Norway is to use the data received from WP7 in the form of a completed questionnaire from each participating country. WP8 will compile the data from the questionnaires and produce a colour-coded spreadsheet on

data availability in each country - whether data on each specific point is easily available, whether the local or national definition used is in concordance with the definition on the questionnaire, or whether similar data may be available. Country summary reports, describing the

current use of measures of the urban health for participating member states will be compiled and will constitute one of the major outputs of EURO-URHIS.

information

For more information on work package 8 please see www.urhis.eu or contact Heidi.Lyshol@fhi.no

Work Package 9

Development of policy impact indicators

This work package has the following objectives:

- To develop an innovative approach for developing policy-making friendly indicators to improve the presentation to policymakers of urban health information.
- To prepare summaries of how population impact measures can be presented for health indicators, to emphasize public health impact of disease risk factors.
- To develop the best way of presenting data on urban health indicators, so that they can be understood and lead to policy implications.

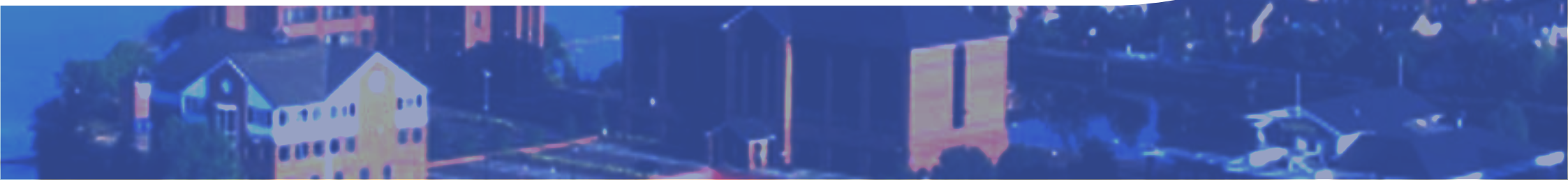
To date, we have reviewed the published experience regarding Population Impact Measures, a new way of presenting the risks of a disease occurring following exposure to a risk factor, and the benefits of introducing interventions. They allow policymakers to see the actual numbers of events in the whole population that are a likely consequence of their policy decisions, and are being applied to an increasing number of conditions.

We have prepared examples of Population Impact Measures for two conditions likely to feature among the final list of urban health indicators. These were presented to EURO-URHIS investigators

and we obtained feedback on their potential value. Participants felt that the measures could be of value to policy-makers, provided appropriate data were available. It would be very helpful to develop decision support tools to help turn data into Population Impact Measures. A recommendation was made to examine the draft list of EURO-URHIS indicators for those for which data are likely to be available.

A further set of examples will be explored with participants. A list of the draft EURO-URHIS indicators for which data are available to allow Population Impact Measures to be derived will be produced. In four of the participating countries, data will

be collected to allow the measures to be calculated. The results will be presented to participants at the final general meeting of the project in a workshop format to see how they rate the information in comparison with alternative methods.



Work Package 10

Description of urban health indicator system

This work package aims to describe the methodology to implement a self-sustainable urban health database model. This work package is closely linked to all other work packages and relies on expert opinion & information collected throughout the project. The information collected will be analysed and comparisons made between member states

and candidate countries to identify gaps. We will describe the data required, the methods /instruments to be used, the gaps in data that require more work, how best to collect information routinely (e.g. using health examination/ interview survey modules), and how to become self-sustained. We will assess the feasibility of data

collection through existing routinely available data sources/surveys & describe a minimum dataset that could be collected across all member states. The development of a comprehensive and sustainable urban health information and knowledge system, involving a wide range of member states, will enable the assessment of the effects of actions funded by national and EU funding. It will contribute to the implementation of the ECHI list and provide timely information for the publication of urban health status reports in areas of interest,

allowing transnational comparisons & time trend analysis to support health policy and planning. It will also support the development of advocacy, communication and education strategies.

Contact details:

For more information on work package 10 please see www.urhis.eu or contact isbocsan@umfcluj.ro.

Minutes and links

For the EURO-URHIS Project website please see: <http://www.urhis.eu/>
For the minutes of the All partners meeting in Athens (April 2007) and other EURO-URHIS Meetings please see: <http://www.urhis.eu/minutes.html>

Dates of next EURO-URHIS Meetings

28 September 2007 – Helsinki – Project Steering Group Meeting
1 October 2007 – Helsinki – Work Package 7 Meeting

Contact Details

More information on the project, its objectives and progress to date will be posted on our website <http://www.urhis.eu/>. All those who have an interest in this topic, are invited to contact the study coordinator, Professor Dick Heller.
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