

EUPHA section on public health epidemiology  
Working Group on Guidelines of Public Health practice

Work proposal for 2006

**Introduction**

The fraction of mortality attributable to preventable factors is still high in Europe, and the gap between more developed countries and the others is wide (Strong K, Lancet, 2005). Moreover there is a huge variability within developed countries in the interventions carried out by Health Authorities aimed at prevention: major risk factors are often neglected (smoking, traffic, violence), others are sometimes overestimated (bird flu), most are not based on scientific evidence.

Public Health (PH) practice shows a relevant delay compared to clinic in the development of tools for the scientific transfer to practice. During the last decade, a bulk of evidence of effectiveness of medical practices has been developed, methodologically sound summary instruments are available (see Cochrane Library) and effective instruments for the transfer of evidence to practice, the Guidelines (GL), are covering more and more fields of intervention (see SIGN, NICE).

The PH domain is witnessing the development of global strategies to tackle global problems (see for example the WHO *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control* and the WHO *Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*), whereas the intermediate tools for transfer into practice, the GL, are receiving less attention.

The theoretical advantage of the GL in the PH field is to guide public health professional, but also all the other actors of a PH process, in taking evidence-based decisions

To follow the virtuous example of the Clinical Medicine, PH have to develop sound GL:

- incorporating evidence from experimental and observational studies
- grading the evidence and the strength of recommendations with explicit rules (see Grade working group, BMJ 2004)
- giving specific recommendations to all the different subjects involved in the PH processes
- developing specific processes to promote the implementation of the Guidelines

**Possible objective for the Working Group on Guidelines of Public Health practice**

1. systematic collection of Guidelines of Public Health practice (GL of PHp) already available
2. list of the institution engaged in production of GL of PHp and identification of main involved persons
3. definition of a set of quality criteria for guidelines, starting from those developed by the AGREE collaboration ([www.agreecollaboration.org](http://www.agreecollaboration.org))
4. evaluation of the quality of GL of PHp collected
5. publication of the GL of PHp in the EUPHA web site (or ev. Section web site)

6. raising funds
7. analysis of the gap in covering the most relevant PH practices
8. analysis of the main characteristics of GL of PHp compared to those on medical practice
9. Joint paper of the working group to be published
10. Project for further steps
  - a. EUPHA project to close the gap: elaboration of Guidelines for a major uncovered field uncovered, ev with the collaboration of the APHA
  - b. fund raising

### **Group members' tasks**

- Fund raising at a local level to cover the participant's expenses to participate to the group
- Participation to at least one international meeting/year
- Collaboration in gathering Guidelines meeting the criteria
- Quality appraisal of a limited number of GL (each GL should be evaluated independently by at least 2 members, specifically trained)
- Coordination of the updating the web site (at least one member) in accordance to the administrators of the EUPHA Website

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