

EUPHA SECTION ON PUBLIC HEALTH EPIDEMIOLOGY

Notes of the meeting of the Section, held on 17th November 2006 (supplemented with further information from the workshop of the Section and the Executive Council meeting held on 18th November 2006)

Present:

Deborak J Baker (UK), Kim Bloomfield (Denmark), Stefania Boccia (Italy), Silvia Brizzone (Italy), Simone Chiadò Piat (Italy), Antoon De Schryver (Belgium), Diana Delnoij (The Netherlands), Carolyn Davies (UK), Denise Felber Dietrich (Switzerland), Fabrizio Faggiano (Italy), Johan Fritzell (Sweden), Lindsay Gray (UK), Annemien Haveman (The Netherlands), Goran Henriksson (Sweden), Verica Ilic (Serbia), Christoph Junker (Switzerland), Giuseppe La Torre (Italy), Liljana Lazarevska (Macedonia), Alastair Leyland (UK), Julian Mamo (Malta), Lamberto Manzoli (Italy), Richard Marquet (The Netherlands), Kontic Moussa (Sweden), Mariller Marjionic (Switzerland), Oyvind Naess (Norway), Per-Olof Ostergren (Sweden), Monica Pace (Italy), Francesca Perlman (UK), Hynek Pikhart (UK), Colin Pritchard (UK), Neil Riley (UK), Kveta Rimarova (Slovakia), Marc Roelands (Belgium), Roberta Siliquini (Italy), Sandra Sipetic (Serbia), Maria K Starne (Sweden), Coen Van Gool (The Netherlands), Federica Vigna-Taglianti (Italy), Paolo Villari (Italy), Agnes Zwimpfer (Switzerland) and about 10 participants who's name was not on the participant list and who left the room before the end of the meeting.

Background information:

The EUPHA Section on Public Health Epidemiology has a coordinating group constituted by three members (Paolo Villari – University La Sapienza of Rome, Alastair Leyland – University of Glasgow, and Giuseppe La Torre - Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Rome). Since EUPHA Sections rules requires one president and two vice-presidents, Paolo Villari has hold the presidency until the present EUPHA Conference in Montreaux, Alastair Leyland will held the presidency until the 2007 Conference, followed by Giuseppe La Torre until the 2008 Conference.

Current workshop in Montreux:

The title of the “official” workshop of the Section at the Montreux Conference, “Contextual and compositional determinants of inequalities”, was decided during the Annual Meeting in Graz. Alastair Leyland took up the organization of the workshop. The workshop, hold on Saturday 18 November from 10:00 to 11:30, explored the issues underlying contextual and compositional determinants of inequalities through three presentations. Frank van Lenthe (The Netherlands) questioned whether environmental characteristics may help to explain socioeconomic variation in health related behaviours, with a particular emphasis on poor diet and physical inactivity, using data of the GLOBE study. Øyvind Næss (Norway) considered the relationship between neighbourhood indicators of social deprivation and air pollution, and the extent to which the effect of air pollution on mortality could be explained by neighbourhood deprivation, using data from the Oslo Mortality Study. Johan Hallqvist (Sweden) used the SHEEP study – a case control study of myocardial infarction (MI)

incidence in Stockholm, Sweden – to investigate the role played by neighbourhood socioeconomic context.

A more general discussion focussed on a number of issues raised during the workshop, including the definition of the appropriate contexts, the consideration of exposure misclassification and measurement error, and the extent to which context may constrain compositional factors and opportunities. The workshop attracted about 80 participants.

Workshop for the EUPHA Conference in Montreaux:

According to the EUPHA Sections rules, all EUPHA Sections must organize an official workshop during the EUPHA Conferences. Giuseppe La Torre proposed to explore roles and functions of epidemiology in the Health Technology Assessment through a workshop whose provisional title could be “Epidemiology and Health Technology Assessment”. After some discussion, the meeting decided that this workshop should be the “official” workshop of the Section at the next Helsinki Conference. Giuseppe La Torre will take up the organization of the workshop.

Other workshop proposals are strongly welcomed. As a matter of fact, it is possible to organize more than one workshop. Paolo Villari will explore the possibility to organize a workshop on “Developing priorities for vaccines and vaccinations” jointly with the EUPHA Section on Infectious Diseases, and Alastair Leyland will consider the opportunity to plan a workshop with the collaboration of the new EUPHA Sections, such as the Section on Chronic Diseases or the Section on Environment Related Diseases.

Working groups:

Working groups are the main tool of the Section. There are five working groups:

1. Guidelines of public health practice (Contact person: Fabrizio Faggiano, fabrizio.faggiano@med.unipmn.it);
2. Training and education for public health epidemiology in Europe (Contact person: Giuseppe La Torre, giuseppe.latorre@rm.unicatt.it);
3. Contextual and compositional determinants of inequalities (Contact person: Alastair Leyland, a.leyland@msoc.mrc.gla.ac.uk);
4. Systematic reviews and meta-analysis in public health (Contact person: Paolo Villari, paolo.villari@uniroma1.it);
5. Health Observatories (Contact person: John Wilkinson (john.wilkinson@nepho.ork.uk))

Fabrizio Faggiano, Giuseppe La Torre, Alastair Leyland, Paolo Villari and Neil Riley (on behalf of John Wilkinson) detailed past and future activities of the working groups. The proposal of writing a book on Applied Epidemiology and Biostatistics, raised by Giuseppe La Torre, stimulated a great debate. The main idea is to describe not only theory, but particularly how to use readily available softwares for epidemiologic and statistical data analysis. Preliminary contacts with Oxford University Press has found them to be interested in exploring ways of writing such a book. It was decided to write a preliminary list of contents and to send an e-mail to all the members of the Section, seeking expressions of interest from potential authors for each chapter.

Other topics:

Paolo Villari and Alastair Leyland met Prof. John-Paul Vader (EUPHA President) and the Executive Council with other Section Presidents on Saturday, following the end of the Conference. It was decided to publish a proceeding report of the Montreux Conference and Paolo Villari and Alastair Leyland will write an article about Public Health Epidemiology. John Paul-Vader asked the Section Presidents to disseminate among members the proposal of a new structure for EUPHA to stimulate debate and discussion.

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