



## LAUNCHING MEDCHAMPS FIRST MEDCHAMPS MEETING, LONDON, UK

The first consortium meeting for launching MedCHAMPS was held in London, UK during 20-22 April 2009. The meeting was attended by the leaders of Work Packages (WP) as well as Project Management Committee (PMC), Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and Project Monitoring and Advisory Committee (ProMAC) members.

During this meeting, an introduction to MedCHAMPS aims and objectives, deliverables and milestones, and expected impact was made. The Consortium Agreement (CA) was discussed, and the development of methodological approaches relevant to several work packages is being facilitated

Prof. Nigel Unwin and Julia Critchley from Newcastle presented an overview of each work package and the proposed management structures of MedCHAMPS

The main organisational body is the Project Management Committee (PMC); consisting of all WP leads, and leads of each partner institution. The role of the (PMC), (ProMac), and (TAG) were discussed. The (PMC) has agreed to meet on a roughly 6 monthly basis.

A date for the next consortium meeting was set for January 2010.

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## WHAT IS MEDCHAMPS?

**MEDiterranean studies of Cardiovascular disease and Hyperglycaemia: Analytical Modelling of Population Socio-economic transitions**

MedCHAMPS is a partnership project among seven international scientific institutes. It aims to make recommendations about policy initiatives, both within and outside the health sector, likely to be the most effective and cost-effective in reducing the burden of CVD and diabetes mortality and morbidity in each of the Mediterranean study countries (Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey).

This project will develop a CVD and diabetes model (IMPACT) in this region using a combination of situation analysis, policy and document review.



**JULIA CRITCHLEY**



*MSc, DPhil,  
Senior Lecturer in Epidemiology*

Professor Critchley has considerable experience in CVD epidemiology and modeling. With Prof Simon Capewell, she developed the original IMPACT model (UK), has since applied it to Finland, and developed a version for use in an urban middle-income setting (Beijing). She also has expertise in research synthesis, and tobacco control.

**NIGEL UNWIN**



*BA (Hons), MSc, DM, MRCP (UK),  
FRCP (Ed), FFPH  
Leads the ARCHEPI programme*

Professor Unwin has extensive experience in epidemiology and public health aspects of diabetes and CVD, and a particular interest in these conditions in low and middle income countries (especially Africa). He has worked in Tanzania, Cameroon and Jamaica, and has been a Medical Officer with the Diabetes Unit at the WHO in Geneva, where he headed a joint WHO-IDF programme of work. He is now joint-head of the Newcastle University WHO Collaborating Centre for Diabetes, and continues to work closely with the Diabetes Unit at WHO, and with the International Diabetes Federation.

## MEDCHAMPS PARTNERS AND KEY RESEARCHERS



**NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY**

**Institute of Health & Society (IHS)**

IHS conducts internationally recognised research on population health, health services and health-related social science. It is one of the largest of its kind in the UK, attracting funding of around £2 million each year. Methodological expertise is broad including demographic methods, modelling disease trends, systematic reviews, social anthropology and social science, genetic epidemiology, spatio-temporal analyses, economic evaluation, and longitudinal and intervention studies. IHS members have a strong interest in obesity-related disorders, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, as well as cancers. One of the work programmes within the Institute (ARCHEPI) concerns populations undergoing rapid changes in their risk of these diseases, such as those in rapidly growing urban areas of low and middle income countries. Building research capacity and informing national and international policy are also important goals. Current research falls under five broad themes: 1) The public health importance of NCDs in developing countries, 2) Exploring theories of the epidemiological and demographic transition, 3) Investigating relationships between infectious and chronic diseases, 4) Aetiology of chronic disease, 5) Prevention and treatment of NCDs.

## SIMON CAPEWELL



*MB,BS, MD, MSc, FFPH, FRCPE,  
Chair in Clinical Epidemiology*

Professor Capewell manages a research program on the clinical epidemiology of CVD. Outputs include a hundred peer-reviewed papers in the last decade plus recent funding of some £4million. Recent work includes a program examining why coronary heart disease (CHD) mortality rates have recently halved in the UK, the USA and elsewhere, and how we might help planners and policy makers develop future strategies. He has examined trends in CHD and stroke incidence, prevalence and survival. He also directs the research strategy for the Heart of Mersey primary prevention program, promoting evidence-based healthy food and smoke-free interventions.

## BELGIN UNAL



*MD, MPH, DPhil,  
Associate Professor in Public Health*

Dr. Unal has experience in cardiovascular disease epidemiology and modelling. She developed the IMPACT model for England together with Prof Simon Capewell (UoL) and Julia Critchley (IHS, Newcastle), and has published widely in this field. She also has expertise in conducting observational and interventional research.



## UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

### School Of Population Community And Behavioural Sciences (Pcbs)

Within the Medical Faculty, PCBS integrates Public Health, Primary Care, Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology and links to the world famous Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. PCBS has a staff exceeding 100, and has very strong health services research groupings covering CVD, inequalities and health technology assessment. The School and the University provide excellent infrastructure by delivering high quality research administration, financial and human resource support. In recognition of the importance and to enhance the collaborative and multidisciplinary nature of our research, the University is investing in a major rebuilding programme for the School of PCBS, valued in excess of £3M. The School is research-led, and contributes strongly to the regional and national economy, including impacting on the health of the population. The University Research Strategy emphasises collaboration, through a series of cross-cutting themes linking investigators across the full range of our activities.



## DOKUZ EYLUL UNIVERSITY

### Department Of Public Health, School Of Medicine

The Department of Public Health was established in 1982 and has gradually grown to its current capacity of 10 faculty members and 25 postgraduate students. The department has a major role in public health education and training at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, and in continuing professional development.

The Department conducts research across a wide spectrum of Public Health issues. Particular areas of research expertise include non-communicable disease epidemiology (coronary heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancer), primary health care service utilisation, maternal and child health and occupational health. Research funding in the department is mainly from national sources including the State Planning Organization and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey.

In 2007, the department signed a protocol to implement a cardiovascular disease prevention programme (Balcova's Heart Health Programme) in collaboration with Balcova Municipality. The programme targets over 45,000 people, includes primary and secondary prevention activities, and will take place over 10 years.

**KATHLEEN BENNETT**



*PhD,  
Senior Lecturer in Pharmacoepidemiology*

Dr. Bennett has considerable experience in biostatistics and cardiovascular disease epidemiology. Together with Prof Simon Capewell, she developed the IMPACT model for Ireland, and has collaborated on IMPACT models in Italy and Sweden. She has expertise in statistics, and is involved in various different research studies, both randomised and observational. She is also leading an EC Marie Curie training project on cardiovascular disease epidemiology and modelling across Europe.

**HABIBA BEN ROMDHANE**

*MD,  
Senior Lecturer in Epidemiology and  
Director of the CAVEPLA*

Professor Ben Romdhane has considerable experience in cardiovascular disease epidemiology and prevention. She coordinated the national surveys on CVD risk factors, the Registry of CHD, the national strategy on CVD prevention and control. She participated, as an expert from a middle income country, to the elaboration of two WHO guidelines, one on Secondary Prevention of Coronary Heart Disease and CerebroVascular Disease, the second on an Integrated Approach to Primary Prevention of Heart Attacks and Strokes. She runs the Community Based Initiative (CBI, EMRO project) and coordinates Ariana Healthy Urbanization Project (WHO).



**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN**  
**Department Of Pharmacology & Therapeutics,**  
**Trinity College Dublin (TCD)**

The Department of Pharmacology at TCD was created in 1960. It is located on two sites, St James's Hospital and the Trinity campus. The National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics and National Medicines Information centre are affiliated with the department. Research areas include prescribing for cardiovascular disease, inequalities in prescribing in relation to age, gender, geographical location and socio-economic status, prescribing in the elderly, quality prescribing indicators in practice, and non adherence to anti-hypertensive therapies. Specific areas of current research include co-prescribing of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs with therapies for peptic ulcer disease, statin prescribing, hormone replacement therapy, prescribing for Helicobacter pylori, quality prescribing in the elderly. Analysis within the group makes use of either prescribing data from the General Medical Service (GMS) scheme or the Drug Payment Scheme (DPS) available from the GMS (Payments) Board or locally derived databases. The group also has links to pharmacy and general practice prescribing. The department was awarded several EU and local research grants.



**NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE, TUNISIA**  
**CVD Epidemiology and Prevention Research Laboratory**

The CVD Epidemiology and Prevention Research Laboratory (CAVEPLA) is a department of the National Public Health Institute (INSP). Its mission is to enhance local capacity for undertaking epidemiological research and developing strategies and interventions in the field of CVD relevant to the national context. During the last decade, the CAVEPLA has focused its interventions on CHD Registry implementation, on management and cost assessment of CVD and on CVD primary as well as secondary prevention interventions. It implemented, with the support of WHO, a community-based intervention project in a pilot region (Ariana, CBI), and recently a Healthy Urbanized Project (Ariana HUP). In these two projects, we aimed to reduce the burden of NCDs through a global approach. In the AHUP, we are focusing on healthy life style promotion in populations undergoing rapid changes in their risk of the NCDs with a special concern on health inequity. As the most important research institution of its kind in Tunisia and in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, CAVEPLA attracts funding from national and international sources. It has also developed collaborative projects with French Research Institutions as the National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM), the Institute of Research for Development (IRD) and Lille Economy and Management (LEM).

**WASIM MAZIAK**



MD, PhD,  
Associate Professor at the University of Memphis and Director of the Syrian Center for Tobacco Studies

Dr. Maziak has a considerable track record in investigating cardiovascular health in developed and developing countries setting, as well as training local researchers in Syria on conducting epidemiological studies of cardiovascular risk factors. He has produced the first reliable population-based estimates on cardiovascular morbidity and mortality, as well as the prevalence of associated risks, in Syria. He has also studied hypertension and smoking in Germany as part of the WHO-MONICA project in Germany.

**ABDULLATIF HUSSEINI**



PhD, MPH, MS,  
Assistant Professor of Public Health (Epidemiology) and Coordinator of the epidemiology unit at ICPH

His research interests include epidemiology of NCDs and smoking. Dr. Abdullatif has taught classical and advanced epidemiology to public health students and has also conducted training courses for health professionals in various epidemiological topics and health program evaluation. He is also a health program/project evaluator.



**SYRIAN CENTER FOR TOBACCO STUDIES (SCTS)**

**Aleppo, Syria**

The Syrian Center for Tobacco Studies was established in 2002 as a collaborative project between the University of Memphis, Virginia Commonwealth University, and several Syrian partners led by the Syrian Society Against Cancer. The SCTS was founded with an ambitious mandate to become a national and regional focal point for the production of standardised data about smoking and major health risks and the training of qualified researchers. During the past few years, the SCTS has demonstrated outstanding research and capacity-building potential. The SCTS has produced more than 40 scientific publications in high standard peer-reviewed journals. Other than tobacco research, SCTS has been collecting and analysing data about environmental health, cardiovascular health and major cardiovascular risk factors, health of disadvantaged communities in urban slums, injuries, and exposure to tobacco smoke. The SCTS was also instrumental in orchestrating the global response to the emerging epidemic of waterpipe use through a variety of high quality research and reviews and the publication of first World Health Organization's Advisory about this tobacco use method.



**BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY**

**The Institute Of Community And Public Health (ICPH)**

**Palestine**

Birzeit University, established in 1924, is located 7km north of Ramallah city in the West Bank, 21km north of Jerusalem. The University's establishment, its academic achievements and community orientation have earned it a well-deserved local and international reputation of academic excellence and societal relevance. The University has approximately 700 faculty and staff members with 6,600 students. Birzeit University has been a member of the International Association of Universities since 1977. The Institute of Community and Public Health (ICPH) was established first as a unit in 1978, becoming an Institute in 1998, and is active in a range of areas, such as health economics, health policy, health system management, environmental health, psycho-social/mental health, child health and protection, emerging chronic diseases, and women's health and health services. Since 1996, ICPH has been involved in teaching a Masters-level programme in Public Health (MPH).

## MEDCHAMPS NEWS AND PROGRESS

### • Qualitative Methods for Health Policy and Practices Workshop

The date for first training workshop “Qualitative Methods for Health Policy and Practices” on WP5 has been set for first week of October’09 in Aleppo, Syria. The course will be coordinated by Dr. Shahaduz Zaman and Prof. Peter Phillimore. This workshop will focus on the following topics:

- Introduction to qualitative and ethnographic research
- Concepts and techniques of in depth interview
- Concepts and techniques of focus groups and other group discussions
- Ethics in Qualitative research
- Observation in qualitative research
- Ethnography
- Qualitative data handling and analysis
- Review of qualitative paper & Document review
- Health Sectors and Health Seeking behaviour
- WP5 Protocols and Planning for WP 5 activities

The participants will have the opportunity to visit health care centers and to do field exercises; observation and in-depth interviews. The respondents will be patients and health care providers

- The Syrian Center for Tobacco Studies (SCTS) team visits Dr. Reda Said the Syrian Minister of Health in his office in Damascus, Syria on June 15, 2009. During this visit, SCTS researchers presented to the Minister a brief on MedCHAMPS project; its main goal and objectives, and explained the phases and the end product that expected to achieve during the next 42 months.
- Working on WP 3 and 4, Martin O’Flaherty, with advice from Nigel Unwin and Simon Capewell, has developed a simple diabetes model. The three researchers are also discussing ideas for a stroke model.
- Belgin Ünal and the DEU Department of public health staff are working on developing the data collection proforma of WP2. She has also finished establishing the official and administrative part of the project in the DEU.
- A teleconference call has been held on August 10, 2009 to review the progress of WP2. The partners agreed to refine the proforma and to prepare data collection plan and time table.
- Second course is planned for early 2010 in Turkey on ‘Research methods, epidemiology, cardiovascular/diabetes epidemiology, data collection methods and an introduction to epidemiological models. This will include hands-on demonstrations and training in the use of the IMPACT model - a validated CHD mortality model.

