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NEWSLETTER 03



## First training/exchange workshop: CHD, diabetes & stroke models

The training workshop on CHD, diabetes & stroke models was held in Tunis, Tunisia, 18th-22nd July 2010. There were fourteen participants from Turkey, Syria, Tunisia and OPTs and tutors from Newcastle University and Liverpool University, UK, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland and University of Utrecht, Netherlands.

Each country presented in the first day a review of the current status of data collection (WP2). During the second day the participants learnt more about the CHD IMPACT model and practical demonstrations provided hands-on training in how to implement the model in their own countries.

Introduction to the diabetes model and practical demonstrations on how to populate the model with individual country data were also included as a main topic of the workshop.

Some discussion followed around the different types of ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke and how the ratio of these differs between countries.

The workshop provided further opportunities to work on the CHD and diabetes models, and to formulate the next steps for data collection and developing the models further.

Participants agreed on continuing communication by telephone conferences, email and Skype among themselves and with their assigned tutor over the next 2-3 months.

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### What is Dropbox?

'Dropbox' is a secure software that syncs files on-line and across computers and lets one share files with family and colleagues easily". This means for MedCHAMPS that one can set up folders for information for the lead personnel, or files for a specific Work Package group of researchers, without the need to send documents and files as attachments to e-mail messages. And it means that one can keep the latest version of a document available for partner researchers to consult.

The MedCHAMPS Dropbox facility is accessed from MedCHAMPS website at 'Partners Area' page on this link

<http://research.ncl.ac.uk/medchamps/html/partners.html> .



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## M. SAMER RASTAM



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He is teaching pathology, biostatistics and epidemiology for medical students and post-graduate doctors. Since April 2009 Dr. Rastam is a member of the Higher Commission for Scientific Research in Syria. He is also Clinical Lab Manager, Data Manager and Statistician in the Syrian Center for Tobacco Studies. Dr. Rastam received his medical degree in 1985 from University of Aleppo and his PhD in pathology from Russia Medical University in 1994. He had training courses in public health from Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia in 2001-2002

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## MEDCHAMPS TRAINING ON HEALTH ECONOMICS AND THE ECONOMICS EVALUATION OF HEALTH PROGRAMS, 24TH-26TH JULY 2010 – TUNIS, TUNISIA

The training on Health Economics and Economic Evaluation of Health Program was prepared to equip MedCHAMPS' researchers involved in WP6 with the necessary tools and expertise to follow up with the economic evaluation of a pre-identified list of policy interventions. Researchers from all of the MEDCHAMPS participating countries were presented at this workshop.

The objectives of this training are:

1. To familiarize participants with key principles of economic evaluation
2. To explore the use of economic evaluation in previous IMPACT models
3. To identify the appropriate approaches of economic evaluation specific to WP6
4. To acquire basic skills for conducting MedCHAMPS economic analysis in the partner countries
5. To build professional and support networks
6. To consolidate plans for next steps in economic work

The interventions to be evaluated by the various country teams were also discussed and agreed upon. The participants agreed on one cross-cutting intervention "**Reducing salt concentration in processed foods**" to be evaluated in the context of the four partners' countries.

Each country was also assigned an intervention to follow up and develop further. The selected interventions are as follows:

- OPTs: "Healthy lifestyle promotion"
- Syria: "CVD primary prevention targeted to absolute risk levels"
- Turkey: "Increase the provision of CVD secondary prevention treatments for people with established CHD or Stroke"
- Tunisia: "Increase the provision of acute care for acute MI"



At the end of the training programme all agreed on consider using an NHS trainee in the UK to support: i) reviewing the cost-effectiveness literature on cardiovascular disease and diabetes prevention, and ii) carrying out some cross-cutting economic evaluation (salt reduction in processed foods), which would be led by Palestine. An update on WP6 training will be added to the next annual meeting scheduled for Tunis early next year (2011).

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## MELIH KAAN SÖZMEN



MD, MSC  
Health Economics, Policy & Law

Dr. Melih Kaan Sözmen graduated from Dokuz Eylul University Faculty of Medicine in 2003. He worked as a research assistant at the same university at Department of Public Health since 2005. Dr. Sözmen obtained his MSC in Health Economics, Policy, and Law from Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands in August 2010. He conducted research on "Cost-effectiveness of cardiovascular disease prevention strategies in Izmir, Turkey" for his thesis, and also worked as a researcher in WP6 in MedCHAMPS project. Dr. Sözmen is interested in cardiovascular disease epidemiology and health economics, and he would like to develop his carrier in economical evaluations of preventive interventions in health care in the future.

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## QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS WORKSHOP FOR WP5

A Qualitative Data Analysis Workshop for WP5 was held in Istanbul, 14-17 September 2010. The workshop was facilitated by Prof. Peter Phillimore and Dr. Shahaduz Zaman from Newcastle University and organized by the Turkish team. Staffs from the four MEDCHAMPS participating countries –Syria, Tunisia, OPTs and Turkey – were present at the workshop. The primary aims of the workshop were:

- To train the participants in purpose and scope of qualitative analysis
- To gain practice in doing analysis and reflecting/justifying choices
- To identifying the initial patterns of the findings and make a preliminary comparison
- To discuss the data integration and policy implications.

The sequence of sessions was as follows:

1. Feedback and initial sharing of ideas
2. Teaching the principles of qualitative data analysis; initial practice
3. Intensive practice, and meetings with individual teams
4. Reviewing progress; comparative analysis; integration with WP2-4 & 6; from analysis to writing

Each country made a presentation for about 15 minutes which included experiences of data collection process, critical judgment on data quality of different parts and major broad themes emerging from the data.

The most important task of this workshop was to give researchers the confidence to analyse qualitative research data, a new skill for most participants, so that all teams had intensive practice learning how to undertake analysis using their own data; this was spread over four sessions.



On the final day Prof. Peter Phillimore discussed about the probable layouts for report writing as well as the timetable, and all collectively agreed to follow it.



## MEDCHAMPS: THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

There are five different parts of the management structure in MedCHAMPS ;( Project Co-ordinator and Project Management Office at Newcastle, Project Management Committee, Technical Advisory Group, Project Monitoring and Advisory Committee, and Work Package leaders).

- Project Management Committee (PMC) is the highest decision-making body in the project. It comprises the Project Coordinator and all WP leaders, as well as the lead of each partner organisation. They meet twice a year to review and discuss the progress of the project and forthcoming activities.
- Project Technical Advisory Group (TAG) consists of the lead partners and key researchers from each organisation. The role of the TAG differs from the PMC in that TAG will specifically advise scientific matters relating to research methodology, rather than project management. The TAG members meet alongside the PMC and as required over the course of the project.
- Project Monitoring and Advisory Committee (ProMAC) comprises professionals from international organizations, Universities in Europe, Turkey, and the ICPC partner countries, and senior policy-makers from the governments of Syria, Tunisia, OPTs, and Turkey. (ProMAC) meets every year (to coincide with PMC meetings). It is serviced by the Project Management Office. Its main functions include a) reviewing and commenting on draft annual work plans and progress reports, b) ensuring that the project adheres to highest ethical standards, including in its employment of project staff, c) advising on policy and scientific aspects of the project, d) ensuring the quality of research activities undertaken by the partners of the project, e) advising and assisting with plans for dissemination, evaluation and implementation.
- The Project Consortium; the partners of the project consortium complement each other in the required expertise on the intended research theme. Each partner will be in charge and responsible for the tasks to be carried out on national level and will be responsible for preparing for consortium meetings, expert workshops, seminars and other activities during the interim periods. Regular consortium meetings serve to monitor the collaboration, the progress of the research, and the project process. Besides continuous tasks of monitoring the project process, each meeting will be given its own focus of work, e.g. model development or policy analysis. Regular updates on progress in terms of achievement of objectives and resource usage will be monitored by quarterly reports delivered to the Project Manager by all consortium partners.
- Work Package leaders are responsible for setting up a working group involving representatives of key partners participating in each WP. The main functions of the working group for each WP are to develop detailed activity plans according to the objectives and to ensure the completion of these activities in a timely and effective manner. The leaders of each WP submit a progress report describing progress over the past six months and planning for the next six months. This will be sent to and reviewed by the Co-ordinator and these reports will form an important part of progress reports to the EC. Work package leaders will also report to the Project Manager more informally by e-mail on a frequent basis (e.g. once a month) whilst their work package is in progress.



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## MEDCHAMPS NEWS AND PROGRESS

### Conference on NCDs in Palestine

On August 5th and 6th, 2010, a conference on NCDs in Palestine was organized by the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) in Ramallah under the slogan: "Reducing the Burden of NCDs in Palestine". This conference was lead by the Director General of PMRS, Haidar Abu Ghosh who is a PROMAC member of the MedCHAMPS project. The MedCHAMPS team from ICPH presented 3 lectures discussing: diabetes and hypertension mortality (Dr. Niveen Abu-rmeileh), overview of NCDs in Palestine (Dr. Nahed Mikki), and an introduction to the MedCHAMPS project (Ms. Azza Shoaibi). The session was moderated by Dr. Abdullatif Husseini, the leader of the Palestinian MedCHAMPS team. More than 160 health professionals attended this conference representing all health care providers in Palestine, in addition to international NGOs, and donors. The participants included the Minister of Health, the director of health services at UNRWA, the head of PMRS board of trustees, the head of the Palestinian Medical Society, and the director of the Institute of Community and Public health – our MedCHAMPS team member Dr. Rana Khatib.



### Exchange visit to Birzeit and Izmir

Because WP5 involved a great deal of data collection at a local level, with observations and interviews in four clinics in each country, Prof. Peter Phillimore and Dr. Shahaduz Zaman had decided to visit each team during the data collection process. Prof. Peter Phillimore visited Ramallah and Izmir in June, for discussions which also included site visits to selected clinics to make it easier to visualize the contexts in which fieldwork was taking place. Discussion in Birzeit came towards the end of data collection, after fieldwork in three clinics had been completed. It was on the experience in the three clinics, the coding process, and how to extract potential themes from the data. Discussions in Izmir came at a slightly earlier stage in their data collection, with in-depth interviews with patients just beginning. As in Palestine, discussion focused on the experience of working across several clinics. Prof. Phillimore also visited one of Palestinian clinics, a refugee camp and a rural clinic in Turkey.

### The first draft of WP5 report

Madonna Elias from Syria and Faten Tili from Tunisia have spent four weeks in Newcastle in October-November 2010. The aim of their visit is to analyse and start writing up their first draft of WP5 report, with the guidance from Prof. Peter Phillimore and Dr. Shahaduz Zaman. Dr. Fouad M. Fouad from Syria also has spent a week in Newcastle in October as part of the same process. From the Turkish side Dr. Bulent Kilic and Dr. Sibel Kalaca will visit Newcastle in December to write up their part of the report.

## MEDCHAMPS NEWS AND PROGRESS

### Exchange visit to Tunis and Aleppo

Dr. Shahaduz Zaman visited Tunis during 9-12 May 2010 and Aleppo during 20-24 June 2010 to review the WP5 data collection situation and provide on the spot support. He met the team members in both the places and appraised the first and second level data collections which include document analysis and key informant interviews. Based on the discussion some amendments were made in the data collection plan. It was decided to increase the list of key informants to include few more relevant people in each country as well as to look for more appropriate documents. Dr. Zaman also visited health centers in both the places to observe and give feedback on third level data collection which include patient, provider interviews and clinic observation. During his stay in Aleppo and Tunis he provided practical support to the team members regarding the use of Atlas Ti software.



### MedCHAMPS at the French Alliance for Clinical Trials

Prof. Habiba Ben Romdhane presented on MedCHAMPS project at the French Alliance for Clinical Trials with The South, an European Program « EDCTP », (European Developing Countries Clinical Trials Program), organized in Tunisia by the French Institute for the Research and Development and Pasteur Institute of Tunisia, on 13th march, 2010

### Workshop for WP2 data collection in Izmir

A workshop was organised for WP2 data collection in Izmir on February 13th 2010 but. It was also used for dissemination purposes. Interviews with the key informants (mostly consultants) working in the 2nd and 3rd level hospitals in different settings of the health system including universities, public and private hospitals were conducted to collect data on treatment uptake levels for CVDs. In total, 6 cardiologists (3 from public hospitals, 1 from municipality hospital, 1 from University and 1 from a private hospital) were invited to participate in the meeting. Two cardiac surgeons, two family physicians and an emergency physician also participated in the workshop

### Media; two TV interviews in Syria

In Syria, two interviews were organized in the local and national TV to discuss the aim and the main objectives of MedCHAMPS project. In the first interview which was held on February 8th 2010, Dr. Fouad Fouad talked about the international and regional collaboration, and the importance of having policies for non-communicable diseases. Questions were raised about CVD risk factors and the Syrian law for banning smoking in public places. The second interview on August 17th 2010, Dr. Fouad Fouad, Mrs. Madonna Elias gave an idea about the progress of the MedCHAMPS project and the preliminary results that obtained from the WPs.