



RESCAP-MED THIRD NEWSLETTER



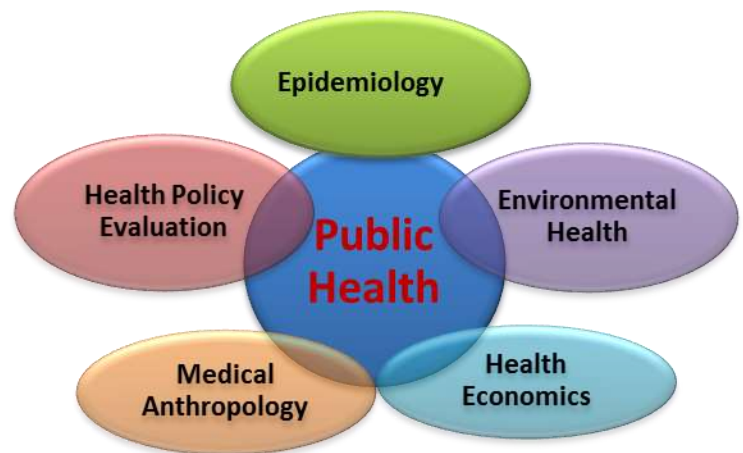
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What is RESCAP-MED?

RESCAP-MED aims to build research capacity for public health in countries around the eastern and southern Mediterranean. Its purpose is to develop research skills for the challenge of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and their social determinants: specifically the skills to address the burden of cardiovascular diseases (CVD), diabetes, and cancer.

RESCAP-MED links 11 partners. Six of these are academic institutions around the Mediterranean: Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. Four are academic institutions within the EU (in the UK and Ireland) and one is an international organization: the WHO East Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO). RESCAP-MED is funded by the European Commission for three years (2012-2014).

RESCAP-MED aims to create a Mediterranean regional network for NCD researchers, in five key public health disciplines: epidemiology, health economics, environmental health, medical anthropology, and health policy evaluation.



RESCAP-MED Website

<http://research.ncl.ac.uk/rescap-med/>

The 1st RESCAP-MED International Symposium



The symposium was organized by the team from Dokuz Eylul University, Turkey under the leadership of Prof Belgin Unal

The 1st RESCAP-MED International Symposium on Social determinants of non-communicable diseases in Mediterranean countries
Istanbul, Turkey 6-7 May 2013

The 1st RESCAP-MED International Symposium on Social determinants of non-communicable diseases in Mediterranean countries was held in Istanbul, Turkey 6-7 May 2013. A total of 96 researchers attended the symposium. The symposium aimed to share knowledge on the global status of inequalities in health and how inequalities affect different population groups; how to measure those differences, and how this knowledge may help to identify and promote effective policies and institutional changes to reduce health inequalities derived from these social factors.



Participants of the first RESCAP-MED international symposium Istanbul, Turkey 6-7 May 2013

The oral and poster paper sessions provided up-to date research agenda in the field. Four keynote lectures on fundamental concepts on social determinants of health were given by four distinguished speakers

Keynote Lecture	Speaker
Health inequities: a global hidden epidemic	Joan Benach – University of Pompeu Fabra, Spain
Social determinants of non-communicable diseases: Reflections & Research questions	Gauden Galea – WHO-Europe, Denmark
A social scientist's view of the challenges of NCDs in low and middle income countries	Peter Phillimore – Newcastle University, UK
Inequalities in CVD risk factors	Simon Capewell – University of Liverpool, UK

Inequalities in NCDs and gender disparities were discussed in-depth in two special sessions.

Special Session 1

- Inequalities in NCDs and Government policies
- Policies to reduce inequalities in NCDs in the Arab World
- Economics of NCDs and Implications in Health Care

Special Session 2

- Gender disparities and NCDs
- Inequalities in NCDs and NGO perspective

Submitted papers on NCDs and their determinants were presented in two sessions in the two days of the symposium. The titles of these papers included:

- ✚ Researching gender and health inequalities between formal & informal neighbourhoods in Aleppo, Syria: A Mixed Method Study
- ✚ Assessment of the change in obesity prevalence of women and men living in the Balcova District of Izmir according to the social determinants of health
- ✚ Socioeconomic inequalities in current daily smoking in 5 Turkish regions
- ✚ The prevalence of obesity in the adolescent age group in the province of Eskisehir and the cardiovascular risks according to the rural vs. urban life

- ✚ Obesity gender inequalities are high but vary with environment & socio-economics in Tunisia: Implications for prevention
- ✚ Do the effects of disadvantage reduce or deepen over lifetime? Inequalities in self rated health and disability in the Turkish population.
- ✚ Role of law in addressing determinants of NCDs in Mediterranean countries.
- ✚ Drug utilisation in Turkey: First results by SGK – Medulla database
- ✚ Risk factors for cigarette smoking initiation among Jordanian adolescents: A longitudinal analysis, 2008-2011 - Theory and preliminary findings
- ✚ Are death statistics in Turkey accurate: A study on ill-defined causes of death in Izmir
- ✚ An assessment of socio-demographic characteristics in relation to NCDs in the occupied Palestinian territory
- ✚ Nutritional habits in diabetes mellitus and coronary heart disease patients in the community
- ✚ Primary care based intervention improves glycated haemoglobin level in type 2 diabetes patients
- ✚ Diabetes self management and patients' characteristics: Evidence from the Ramallah Governate Clinics, occupied Palestine



A small group of participants at the first RESCAP-MED international symposium in Istanbul enjoying the Bosphorus

The country reports on social determinants of health in the partner countries were presented and discussed.



All presentations of the symposium are available on the symposium website:

<http://research.ncl.ac.uk/rescap-med/activities/symposia/>



Two days post-symposium course entitled “Social Determinants of Health”

The two day post-symposium course “Social Determinants of Health” had been organized by Dokuz Eylul University in collaboration with the Research Group on Inequalities in Health in Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain (GREDS). Prof Joan Benach was the principal lecturer.

Eighteen participants from five countries with a wide range of backgrounds were enrolled on the course.



Participants of the two day post-symposium course Istanbul, Turkey 8-9 May 2013

During the first day, introductory lectures on social determinants and inequalities were discussed extensively. Prof Benach highlighted the importance of “critical thinking” on main stream epidemiological studies and evidences provided by the epidemiological research.

In the second day, discussions were mainly focused on measurement issues on key social mechanisms such as social class, gender, ethnicity-race, and territory. In the second part of the day, policies and good examples from different countries had been discussed.

The course finished with the final discussion forum on several questions such as “What is the role of the scientists as experts and citizens to tackle the problems? “What policies do we need to improve public health and reduce health inequalities?”

The course provided the fundamental concepts and some intermediate level information as well as the participants have benefited from the establishment of social network between the participants.



RESCAP-MED Capacity Development Workshop



“Health Policy Evaluation” workshop was coordinated by Dr Shahaduz Zaman, Newcastle University, UK.

Health Policy Evaluation Workshop

Amman, Jordan

3-6 June 2013

The Health Policy Evaluation Workshop was held in Amman/Jordan in 3-6 June 2013 to introduce participants to the issues of policy evaluation in public health and in healthcare.

The workshop focused on the developing countries in general and Eastern Mediterranean countries in particular and covered the theory and practice of policy development, implementation and evaluation. It explored the theoretical approaches to policy making, the contextual factors (i.e. political, socioeconomic, ideology, culture, and history) and how do they influence the structure of and changes to a nation’s health system. The workshop examined

health policy making in the globalizing world and the role of national and international players in the process.

During the workshop, trainers discussed the national health policy analysis framework and presented country specific cases of health policy situation from selected Eastern Mediterranean countries. National health administrators shared their experience of implementing public health and healthcare policies.



**Health Policy Evaluation Workshop
Amman, Jordan 3-6 June 2013**

The workshop comprised of interactive lectures, group works and reading exercises. A total 21 participants attended the workshop: 3 from Palestine, 2 from Lebanon, 2 from Tunisia, 2 from Syria, 5 from Turkey, and 7 from Jordan. Eight experts with a wide experience in health policy and evaluation facilitated the workshop.

Upcoming events

Topic	Date	Venue
1st Writing Workshop	September 2013	Dublin
Medical Anthropology workshop	December 2013	Beirut
Environmental Health workshop	April 2014	Jordan
3 rd PMC	April 2014	Jordan
Beirut Symposium	October 2014	Beirut

A key purpose of RESCAP-MED is to strengthen regional South-South cooperation in building research capacity on the selected NCDs

RESCAP-MED Writing Workshop

**Venue: O'Callaghan Davenport Hotel,
Dublin, Ireland**

16-18th September 2013

A RESCAP-MED Writing Workshop will be held in Dublin, Ireland, in September 2013. The course will focus on scientific writing for publication and grant proposals, covering the following topics:

- Preparing to write
- Researching your topic
- Adhering to academic conventions
- Editing

The workshop will include lectures and extensive practice, and will be facilitated by academics with extensive publication and grant-writing experience, led by Dr Kath Bennett. .

Researchers from RESCAP-MED participant countries (Turkey, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Palestine) may register for the workshop.

Funding is available for travel, accommodation and subsistence for the duration of the course. All applications must be approved by the Lead for the participating countries.

For further information please contact:

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RESCAP-MED Fellowship Programme

The RESCAP-MED Fellowship Programme exists to enable new skills and knowledge to be acquired by researchers (early in their research career or at a mid-career stage) within the Mediterranean partner institutions, over a longer period than is possible through workshops.

The RESCAP-MED fellowship programme is now underway. The first fellowship has been completed: Eren Korkmaz, a doctoral candidate from the Institute of Health Sciences at Dokuz Eylul University in Turkey, spent three weeks at Newcastle University in March. Under the supervision of Dr Shahaduz Zaman of the Institute of Health and Society, Eren undertook training and mentorship in global health, qualitative research methods and medical anthropology and worked on the design of the qualitative section of his PhD research on barriers to self-care behaviour.

Fellowships planned for September and October 2013 involve a number of researchers – Niveen Abu-Rmeileh from Palestine, Olfa Saidi and Dyugu Islek from Turkey – visiting Liverpool University to work with Prof Simon Capewell and Dr Martin O'Flaherty on various epidemiological models, in particular the development of the stroke model. A further fellowship planned for later this year will enable Jordanian researcher Nihaya Al Sheyab to travel to St. George's University of London to work with Prof David Strachan on trends in respiratory disease.

Web-based learning (NETPH)

The NETPH website (<http://www.netph.sgul.ac.uk/>) was designed initially by Polly Basak with help from Julia Critchley, Balsam Ahmad and the NETPH steering group. Its final launch has been slightly delayed due to Polly's maternity leave (she had a baby boy, Ruben Jesse Norris born on 31st May weighing 8lbs; mum and baby are both doing well).



The aims of the network are to:

- **Encourage interaction between public health specialists in North Africa, Eastern Mediterranean & Turkey**
- **Provide training materials for public health professionals**
- **Provide a detailed literature library of relevant material that focuses primarily on non-communicable diseases**
- **Provide recent report and features relating to public health in the NETPH region**

The website includes details (tabs) about the RESCAP-MED project, links to NETPH twitter and Eastern Mediterranean Network for NCD Facebook sites, as well as information on News, Events, Research Projects and Publications.

Its main function is to serve as a repository for training materials developed as part of the RESCAP-MED project. To understand the backgrounds of “users” of these materials, and facilitate potential later evaluation, we are designing a login page so that anyone who wants to download and user materials has to complete a short login questionnaire.

The website design and content is being managed by a steering committee, which includes representation from each country involved in the RESCAP-Med project. The steering committee is also responsible for producing brief summaries / updates of research and news relevant to the project and the region on a bi-monthly basis. Membership of the committee and contribution to the NETPH website is open to all members of RESCAP-MED PMC and TAG. The committee also meets by Skype to discuss progress roughly every 6-8 weeks.

Key future developments of the site include the design of potential new material (such as writing guides to be delivered as part of the writing workshop in Dublin) and the evaluation of such material and the website itself.