



RESEARCH FOR HEALTH NEWSLETTER, JULY 2012

A periodic, informative bulletin reporting on the activities of research for health. The purpose of this publication is to inform countries, partners, and PAHO managers and staff on the advances in the execution of PAHO's Policy on Research for Health. Please send questions and comments to villanue@paho.org.

Recent Events

PAHO contributes to skills development of 60 researchers from Central America and the Andean Sub-region



[Grant Application writing Workshop](#). Bogota, Colombia, June 27-29. Sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Colombia and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the participation of the CDC and USAID, this workshop on how to prepare a grant application was offered with the main objective to increase participants' understanding of how to submit a competitive grant application. A total of 60 participants (out of approximately 400 entries) were selected through a competitive process that gave preference to young and established researchers as well as science administrators at universities or institutional research centers. Thirty places were offered to Colombian researchers and 30 from Central America and the Andean Sub-region (The Colombian government sponsored the workshop).



“**[EVIPNET](#)** applied to Water and Sanitation Evidence ” was the conference that Evelina Chapman offered under the framework of the PAHO/WHO Regional Symposium "Water and Sanitation: Essential Human Rights" held in Salvador de Bahía on June 1-3. The Symposium was coordinated by the Sustainable Development and Environment team (Paulo Texeira); the EVIPNet conference focused on the methodologies used to develop the [policy briefs](#) on water policies and programs ([also available in Spanish](#)) that is being used as a basis for technical support for countries that need to develop and/or reformulate policies, plans, or courses of action which are informed by evidence on the subject. The Regional Symposium focused on the construction of a coordinating framework that articulates and promotes the effort that institutions and agencies, private and public, develop to ensure universal access to water and sanitation. See more about the symposium in Spanish, [here](#).



The “European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Health State of Play” Workshop was the first gathering of health experts working in [EU-LAC Health](#). Hosted by Oswaldo Cruz (FIOCRUZ) on March 19th and 20th in Rio de Janeiro it provided a space where scientists, policy-makers and stakeholders met to discuss efficient coordination of health research policies and funding between the EU and LAC. The workshop also discussed how to establish a consensus for a roadmap for cooperative health research for future collaboration. Luis Gabriel Cuervo, who was invited to join the EU-LAC Health’s high-level Advisory Board, participated in the Rio workshop along with the eight project partners as well as several external experts from the EU and LAC. The next meeting will be hosted by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation in Buenos Aires, Argentina in October 2012. The project homepage can be found [here](#) and the press release [here](#).

Central America



Luis Gabriel Cuervo, on behalf of the research team, participated in the Council of Ministers of Health of Central America and Dominican Republic (COMISCA) meeting on June 11th and 12th. It was a workshop to establish the Regional Health Research Commission of the Executive Secretariat of COMISCA. The purpose was to launch the Commission on Research and develop the conceptual and methodological framework for the work on research and direction of research for both the Regional Health Plan (available in Spanish [here](#)) and the Health Agenda of Central America and the Dominican Republic (also available in Spanish [here](#)). This plan is expected to contribute to improving the health of populations and strengthening the health systems in the Sub-region. The meeting was opened by COMISCA's Executive Secretary, Dr. Rolando Hernandez; the PAHO Representative in El Salvador, Dr. José Ruales; and the Minister of Health of El Salvador, Dr. Maria Isabel Rodriguez. Recognizing one of PAHO's accomplishments in research governance, the group decided to implement the [PAHO Research for Health Policy](#) approved by member countries, including those of Central America and the Dominican Republic in 2009, instead of launching a new research policy for the sub-region.

Jamaica

National Essential Health Research Committee and National Health Research Conference.

PAHO has provided support for the development of an INCLEN affiliated clinical epidemiology unit, and a branch of the Cochrane Collaboration, geared towards the development of relevant systematic reviews to public health and health systems, and a research management training center for the Caribbean. Furthermore, PAHO is providing technical cooperation on research management and governance to Jamaica, the country office is in turn collaborating with the Ministry of Health in the development of the Essential National Health Research (ENHR) Committee that will serve as the governing body for the coordination of health research in Jamaica providing leadership, expertise, direction and guidance in this area. It is planned to be launched in 2012. Of related interest, the ministry of health has issued a Call for Abstracts for the 3rd National Health Research Conference, *Health Systems Strengthening and HIV/AIDS* to be held on November 22, 2012. Abstract presentation deadline: 24 August.

PERU

At the request of the Peruvian Ministry of Health, the Second Information Session for Peruvian ministry of health officials took place via video conference between the PAHO office in Washington and the Ministry of Health. Evelina Chapman presented on behalf of the research promotion and development unit emphasizing the ongoing technical cooperation being provided to the Ministry on research topics.

Research for Health Policy Implementation

Clinical Trial Registration

As of 26 March 2012, the European Union Clinical Trials Register (EU-CTR) is officially a data provider to WHO's International Clinical Trials Registry Platform ([ICTRP](#)). This addition offers wider access to the information contained in the ICTRP and contributes to the dissemination of information and transparency of clinical trials. This database kicks in with around 38,000 new trial records bringing the ICTRP database to approximate 197,000 records plus monthly updates. You can access most of these new records in the EU-CTR [here](#). See also the [profile](#) of the new register and the press release [here](#).

Research Ethics



The School of Health and Bioethics at the Pontifical Catholic University of the state of Paraná (PUCPR) Brazil, and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) signed a mutual cooperation agreement on June 13th. The agreement includes among others specifics, the collaboration in developing an online system to submit research projects that require ethical review. The system will also be prepared to manage the ethics committees in the Americas. Ludovic Reveiz, Research Advisor, is participating in the development of the system with the intention that in due course the system will link with the regional register of clinical trials. See more in Spanish [here](#).

EVIPNet Americas



EVIPNet Brazil

In the framework of the XXVIII Congresso de Secretarias Municipais de Saúde (CONASEMS), Maceio, Brazil, during June 11th and 12th, a workshop to raise awareness of the EVIPNet methodology used to produce policy briefs and deliberative dialogues and a panel where the use of scientific evidence for decision-making at the municipal health systems was introduced were organized.

The workshop gathered about 90 people among decision makers, researchers and other stakeholders interested in formulating health policies informed by evidence such as the Latin American Observatory of Health Systems and Policies. The panel "Advancing the use of scientific evidence to improve local health systems" discussed options, barriers and benefits of using scientific evidence in decision-making in the municipal management of the SUS. Both activities were undertaken by Evelina Chapman who traveled with Ulysses Panisset of the Global EVIPNet. More information on the panel is available in Portuguese [here](#). There were also several EVIPNet meetings conducted with DECIT's Director, Dr. Jailson de Barros Correia; the Secretary of Municipal Health of Piripiri, Piaui and Secretary of Science and Technology of the Special National Council of Secretaries Municipal Health (CONASEMS), Jorge Barreto; the Director of evaluation of health technologies, Clarice Abreu; the ministry's responsible for EVIPNet, Ricardo Gamarski.

EVIPNet Chile



From May 7th to 10th, a workshop for EVIPNet facilitators took place in the premises of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. The facilitators are key to the support that the EVIPNet initiative requires accompanying countries' teams from the first workshop, to raise awareness of what EVIPNet is, to implementation of deliberative dialogues, and going through the development and publication of policy briefs. The workshop was sponsored by the Alliance for Research Policy and Systems Health and was coordinated by Tomás Pantoja and Evelina Chapman. Chile's team recently published the policy brief "Financing options for the Treatment of rare diseases." [Read it here..](#)

EVIPNet Colombia



From June 25th to 29th two workshops took place, one on the development of policy briefs for two cohorts of experts, addressing two themes proposed by the Ministry of Health: adherence to the rules against propaganda snuff and safe reduction of salt intake. The second workshop was on conducting deliberative dialogues and was offered to three EVIPNet teams dealing with snuff, salt, and promotion of healthy drinks. To carry out these workshops successfully the collaboration of the focal points on chronic diseases and the leadership of Dr. Fernando Ramirez, Ministry of Health, were key. The work is being fulfilled as per the proposed plan coordinated by Evelina Chapman with Luis Gabriel Cuervo, Tomás Pantoja, and Mauricio Soto as co-facilitators.

Guidelines

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will issue new or substantially revised recommendations for vaccination using the "Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE)" framework. GRADE is an evidence-based framework that will allow to systematically assess the type or quality of evidence about a vaccine's expected health impacts while balancing health benefits and risks with the values and preferences of the persons affected. Published in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report ([MMWR](#)) in May 2012.

Strategic Partners

Red Cochrane Iberoamericana



The Cochrane Collaboration, the Ibero-American Cochrane Center and the Cochrane Collaborating Center in Peru put together the "XI Meeting of the Ibero-American Cochrane Network, XIII LatinCLEN Congress and 1st Work Day of Clinical Epidemiology of the Peruvian University Cayetano Heredia which took place on 23rd – 25th of May 2012 in Lima. The XI Annual Meeting of the Ibero-American Cochrane Network gathered professionals from Europe, USA and Latin America. For three days these professionals offered and participated in numerous conferences and workshops on many issues arising from evidence-based medicine and health economics. The meeting was an opportunity for participants to exchange experiences of new methodologies to generate high quality evidence and ways to apply it in situations of health care but also in the administration of programs and health policies. See more in Spanish, [here](#).

During the meeting the PAHO Award-Cochrane "Agenda de Salud para las Américas 2008 — 2017" was launched. The prize is delivered to the best protocol and the best systematic review that is useful and of relevance for the Americas and it fulfills methodological quality criteria. The theme for 2013 is "Prevention of non communicable chronic diseases through healthy life styles" The deadline for submitting works is on 30 April 2013. See the [previous winners](#) or request more information to RP@paho.org.

Cochrane Canada



The Cochrane "Agenda and Priority Setting Methods Group (CAPSMG)" held an international workshop presenting different priority setting methods. In addition to this international event the Group organized, in collaboration with Cochrane Canada and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), a series of four webinars which include an introduction on the priority setting methods group, examples of research priority setting exercises, priority setting updating of Cochrane reviews, and an equity lens to guide research priority setting. For more click [here](#).

Red Equator



The Equator Network has organized a Scientific Symposium in Freiburg, Germany, on October 11th and 12th 2012. The theme of the Symposium is ACT now: more Accuracy, Completeness, and Transparency in health research reporting. More information on the symposium can be found [here](#). The Equator Network publishes numerous research reporting guidelines in its website that are available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

COHRED



The final report of the Second Conference on Research and Innovation for Health held in Panama in November 2011 was published. The [report](#) (in Spanish) highlights some of the activities done in cooperation with PAHO to strengthen governance and knowledge of health research systems, the availability of essential data on the subject, and the closer ties of the health and science and technology sectors achieved through the three conferences of Research and Innovation for Health in Rio de Janeiro 2008, Havana 2009 and Panama 2011. You can view all three reports [here](#).

Resources, Documents, and Publications

A new study “Characteristics of litigation to enforce the right to health in Latin America and the Caribbean: a systematic review” Health rights cases have significantly increased in the last decade in a number of Latin American and Caribbean countries and while countries and courts have stood firm behind the issue, there is debate on the role of judicial intervention on health policy. To address the issue, Ludovic Reveiz and Evelina Chapman, worked in a systematic review to uncover scientific evidence on which the governments may act. In a meeting at the World Bank, Dr. Reveiz presented the findings of the study which among others indicate that most requests were covered by the plan of benefits which might contribute to the first instance approval of most cases and that claimants are more likely female. Conclusions determined by the study included the reinforcement of the PAHO/WHO Primary Health Care Strategy to develop robust health systems and the promotion of advances in equity and sustainability in health.

The working background paper on [Conceptual Issues Related to Health Systems Research to Inform a WHO Global Strategy on Health Systems Research](#) [Conceptos y asuntos relacionados a la investigación en sistema de Salud para informar la Estrategia de investigación en sistemas de salud de la OMS]. Reviews existing definitions, terms, conceptual models, taxonomies, standards, methods and research designs which describe the scope of health systems research as well as the barriers and opportunities that flow from them. Feedback is greatly appreciated. Email them to: S. Hoffman hoffmans@mcmaster.ca

[PRISMA checklist](#). PRISMA, Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, issued a checklist to help authors report on a wide array of systematic reviews to assess the benefits and harms of a health care intervention. PRISMA is one of numerous guidelines that can be consulted in the Equator website [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Using established guidelines for writing and publishing research helps transparency and increases the likelihood that the studies are published in scientific journals, many of which promote these guidelines.