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Für die Europäische Kommission, GD Forschung, im Bereich Gesundheitsforschung tätig, Mitarbeit in der Forschungsgruppe für Medizin und Gesundheitswesen zur Bearbeitung des Aufgabenfeldes „Optimierung der Gesundheitsfürsorge für die europäischen Bürger“ gemäß dem 7. Rahmenprogramm für Forschung (2008-2013)

EUROPEAN PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH IN ACTION:

OPTIMISING THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE TO EUROPEAN CITIZENS

Abstract:

Die europäische Forschung im Bereich der öffentlichen Gesundheit verfolgt das Ziel die nötigen Grundlagen sowohl für fundierte Entscheidungen über Gesundheitssysteme, als auch für effektivere Strategien der Gesundheitsförderung und der Prävention, Diagnose und Therapie von Krankheiten zu schaffen. Diese Aktivitäten fügen sich in den Themenbereich Gesundheit aus dem spezifischen Programm „Zusammenarbeit“ des 7. Forschungsrahmenprogramms der EU (2007-2013) ein. Neue Forschungsmethoden sind zu entwickeln und die erforderlichen wissenschaftlichen Grundlagen müssen aufgebaut werden. Dadurch können fundierte Entscheidungen über Gesundheitssysteme und auf Fakten gestützte, wirkungsvollere und effizientere Strategien der Gesundheitsförderung und Prävention untermauert werden. Anerkanntermaßen leisten die Gesundheitssysteme in der EU einen wesentlichen Beitrag zum hohen Niveau des Sozialschutzes in Europa und fördern auch den gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt, die soziale Gerechtigkeit und die nachhaltige Entwicklung. Diese Gesundheitssysteme spiegeln die übergeordneten Ziele des allgemeinen Zugangs zu einer hochwertigen Gesundheitsversorgung, Gerechtigkeit und Solidarität wider und streben die Erbringung von Leistungen an, bei denen die Patienten im Mittelpunkt stehen und auf ihre individuellen Bedürfnisse eingegangen wird.

Introduction

The Treaty of Rome in 1957 establishing the European Economic Community did not provide a legal basis for research activities in medicine and public health. Initially, scientific and technical activities of the European Economic Community were carried out on a sector-by-sector basis such as nuclear energy, biology and health protection under the European Atomic Energy Community, and agricultural research under the European Economic Community. It was not until 1967 that the Scientific and Technical Research Committee, known as CREST - still active today – was set up to act as an advisor to the European Commission and the Council. One CREST sub-committee: *Committee on Medical and Public Health Research* launched a series of exploratory and preparatory activities based on the understanding that the European Economic Community should support medical research projects aimed at prevention of illness and disability, early detection of disease, and rehabilitation. Emphasis was placed on actions undertaken in association with research organisations of the

Member States, European added value and coordination of national policies to encourage national organisations to operate more coherently. It was not until 1978 that the Council of Ministers adopted the first Medical and Public Health Research programme authorising the European Community to promote coordination of research projects in the Member States in very limited and strictly defined areas of common interest. To date there have been 6 Framework Programmes. Framework Programmes 5 and 6 are briefly described below.

Framework Programmes 5 and 6

Public health research in Framework Programme 5 (1998 to 2002), was supported as part of the "Quality of Life" programme. A key action of the "ageing population" issue, dealt, amongst others with health and social care services for older people. Additionally, in one sub-area, "generic RTD activities" addressed research aimed at improving the health of European citizens by supporting the Community's health strategy and its activities in the field of public health, health services research, and health and safety at work. Another sub-area dealt with socio-economic evaluation of health care and life sciences technologies.

Under Framework Programme 6, public health research was addressed exclusively at the level of policy-oriented research as scientific support to the formulation and implementation of EC policies. The objective of policy-orientated research under FP6 was to help to create, over time, a more efficient environment for policy research in the EU, providing policy actors throughout the EU with a facility to access relevant Community research, reinforcing the link between research and policy, making it more responsive and more coherent than before.

Priority areas covered "health determinants and the provision of high quality and sustainable health care services and pension systems (in particular in the context of ageing and demographic change)"; "public health issues, including epidemiology contributing to disease prevention and responses to emerging rare and communicable diseases, allergies, procedures for secure blood and organ donations, non-animal test methods"; and "quality of life issues relating to handicapped/disabled people (including equal access facilities)". Research priorities responding to health policy requirements were set within the context of the new EC Public Health Programme and the European Social Agenda. A whole range of projects have been financed to feed into the policy process and more information can be found below at the web page *FP6 Scientific Support to Policies*.

7th Framework Programme (2007-2013)

The approach of policy-oriented research for public health under FP6 has been mainstreamed under the 7th Framework Programme (FP7). The intention is that European public health research will aim to provide the necessary basis both for informed policy decisions on health systems and for more effective strategies in the areas of health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis and therapy. These activities will be carried out under the umbrella of "Health Theme" that is part of the specific "Co-operation" Programme of the EC's 7th Framework Programme for Research. New research methods need to be developed and the necessary scientific basis generated in order to underpin informed policy decisions on health

systems and more effective and efficient evidence-based strategies of health promotion and disease prevention.

It is recognised that the health systems of the EU are a central part of Europe's high levels of social protection and contribute to social cohesion and social justice as well as to sustainable development. The health systems of the EU reflect the overarching values of universality, access to good health care, equity and solidarity, aiming to make provision that is patient-centred and responsive to individual need.

Under the 7th Framework Programme for Europe, proposals for the Health Theme include a focus on research on "**Optimising the delivery of health care to European citizens**" that include areas on:

Enhanced health promotion and disease prevention. Here research will look into developing evidence for effective public health interventions addressing wider determinants of health (such as stress, diet or environmental factors) at both the individual and community level. *Translating clinical research into clinical practice.* The main objective is to better understand clinical decision-making, making appropriate use of behavioural and organisation interventions and health therapies and technologies. Special attention will be given to patient safety including pharmacovigilance and investigating outcomes of different interventions including medicines. *Quality, efficiency and solidarity of health systems.* Here the aim is to translate effective interventions into policy decisions, taking into account the importance of national contexts and population characteristics (e.g. ageing, mobility, changing workplace.). In particular effectiveness, efficiency and equity of health systems as well as investment issues and human resources will be covered.

The European Commission publishes annual calls for proposals which are based on so-called Work Programmes that set out research topics across the health theme. Each proposal needs to address one of these specific research topics. The first work programme of FP7 is special in so far as it includes the topics for two calls for proposals. The Call for Proposals sets out the legal framework for the application and evaluation process and includes the deadlines for submission of documents, the legal requirements, and the final budget. The deadline for the *second call* is 18th September 2007, and the public health and indicative topics can be found below (see also the health theme web page below).

Indicative Topics for 3rd Pillar in the 2nd Health Call

ENHANCED HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

The objective of this activity is to provide evidence for the best public health measures in terms of life styles and interventions at different levels and in different contexts. Focus will be on the wider determinants of health and how they interact at both the individual and community level.

- Incentive schemes for promotion of healthy behaviour in children and adolescents
- Effect of public health interventions on different population segments of the population; policy options to address health inequalities
- Effectiveness of strategies addressing alcohol use to guide integrated policy making
- Suicide prevention strategies across and within European countries
- Improving the coverage of recommended vaccinations in the target population

TRANSLATING CLINICAL RESEARCH INTO CLINICAL PRACTICE

Special attention will be given to patient safety: to identify the best clinical practice; to understand decision making in clinical settings in primary and specialised care; and to foster applications of evidence-based medicine and patient empowerment. Focus will be on the benchmarking of strategies; investigating outcomes of different interventions including medicines, taking into consideration pharmacovigilance evidence, specificities of the patient (e.g. genetic susceptibility, age, gender and adherence) and cost benefits.

- Implementation of clinical guidelines in different health care settings
- Impact of self-medication on patient safety in the primary care setting
- Patient Safety Research Network
- Variations in health care resulting from the clinical decision making process
- Factors influencing prescription of medicines and compliance of their use
- Clinical care at the primary care/hospital interface and its effect on quality
- Sustainable impact of tools and education for self-management of chronic diseases

QUALITY, SOLIDARITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF HEALTH SYSTEMS

The objective is to provide a basis for countries to adapt their health systems in the light of experience of others, taking into account the importance of national contexts and population characteristics (ageing, mobility, migration, education, socioeconomic status and the changing world of work etc). Focus will be on organisational, financial and regulatory aspects of health systems, their implementation and their outcomes in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and equity. Special attention will be paid to investment issues and human resources.

- Effect of population-based disease management programmes on cost, quality, outcomes
- Long-term care provision across European health systems
- Mobility of health professionals to, from, and within the European Union
- Health care human resource planning for nursing
- Effect of clinician working time on health outcomes and patient safety
- Health outcome measures, ICF and population ageing for cross-population comparative analysis
- Patterns of population health in relation to demographic and socio-economic trends
- European system of Diagnosis-Related Groups to allow comparison of in-patient services

Scoping studies include topics on disease networks of centres of excellence, effectiveness of health investments, patient mobility and access to information, brokering research into policy, and a road map for ageing research. Conferences will be supported in the areas of health services research, mental health research and public health intervention research.

SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIONS FOR HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH

The objective is to support research in order to provide a scientific base for International Cooperation Partner Countries to improve their health service delivery, including aspects of accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency and quality of care and user-friendliness. It also covers public health concepts and interventions beyond health services through cross-sectorial and multi-disciplinary research approaches. Global initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should be taken into account.

- Epidemiological investigations into long-term trends of population health as a consequence of socio-economic transitions, including lifestyle induced problems -

Target Regions: Mediterranean Partner Countries, Russia, Eastern Europe & Central Asia

- Universal and equitable access to health care and health financing - Target Regions: Asia & Latin America, African, Caribbean & Pacific countries (ACP)
- Health care intervention research – optimising hospital care - Target Region: Western Balkans
- Health care intervention research – improving pre-natal & maternal care - Target Regions: ACP & Mediterranean Partner Countries

A Public Health Research Information Day was organised in Brussels on 25th April entitled "*European Public Health Research In Action*". PowerPoint presentations and useful links including videos of the conference sessions can be found at the following web page address:

http://teamwork.intbase.com/0703_02/index.php

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Additional information:

Health Theme web page FP7: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/cooperation/health_en.html

FP6 Scientific Support to Policies: www.cordis.europa.eu/lifescihealth/ssp.htm

EU Public Health Portal: www.ec.europa.eu/health-eu/

Application as independent expert: www.cordis.europa.eu/experts/

National Contact Points: www.cordis.europa.eu/fp6/ncp.htm

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