



ISUH Connections

The Newsletter of the
International Society for Urban Health
Number 6 • March 2006

The goal of the ISUH is to encourage research, interventions, policies, and program evaluations that lead to healthier and sustainable cities and reduced health disparities for urban populations in the twenty-first century.

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An Update on the 5th International Conference on Urban Health
Amsterdam, The Netherlands, October 25-28, 2006

Population Mobility and its Effects on Urban Health

Arnoud Verboeff



Amsterdam is often referred to as one of the most colorful cities in the world.

The overall theme of this year's conference is "Population Mobility and its Effect on Urban Health," with a special interest in the consequences of migration on health and health care in urban settings.

The main questions to be addressed during the conference are: (1) What is the current health status of multicultural urban populations? (2) What kind of health care is provided, needed or developed in view of the specific needs and demands of multicultural urban populations? (3) What kinds of health promotion programs are available, needed or developed to promote the health of multicultural urban populations? (4) In what ways can the urban physical

environment contribute to improving the health of multicultural urban populations? and (5) How can local, regional and/or national policies contribute to improving the health of multicultural urban populations?

These questions lead to the following sub-themes and topics: (I) **Health and its Determinants of Multicultural Urban Populations:** changing patterns of the health of newborns, youth, major population diseases, new and emerging infectious diseases, STI's and HIV/AIDS, mental health, mortality, and marginalized populations; (II) **Health care, Demand and Needs of Multicultural Populations:** how to

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The International Society for Urban Health

Communications Committee

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ISUH Connections

ISUH Connections is a forum for information exchange among ISUH members and others interested in the health of urban populations. Articles do not represent official positions or endorsement by ISUH.

ISUH Connections is distributed by email. To request that your name be added to or removed from our mailing list, please contact Sara Putnam at sputnam@nyam.org

ISUH Connections welcomes submissions of brief articles relevant to the field of urban health (maximum 500 words) for consideration. Notices of conferences, events, research funding opportunities, positions available or sought, and other announcements are also welcome. Please submit materials to Stephen Hwang at hwangs@smh.toronto.on.ca or Evie Gogosis at gogosis@smh.toronto.on.ca.

AN UPDATE ON THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN HEALTH

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match demand, need and supply and access to quality health care; (III) **Improving the Health of Multicultural Urban Populations:** health promotion in the city: science, politics and health promotion and the community; (IV) **Urban Environment and Health:** the urban physical environment and health, the urban social environment and health and urban disasters; and (V) **Urban Politics and Health.**

The Conference schedule will include: a keynote lecture during the opening session, seven plenary lectures, one plenary debate, twenty breakout sessions with workshops and oral presentation sessions, five breakout sessions giving opportunity for workshops and oral presentation sessions, two poster sessions and a reporting summary session.

Plenary session topics will focus on the following areas: Health and determinants of newborns in multicultural urban populations; Health and determinants of adults in multicultural urban populations, presented by Roel Coutinho from the Centre for Infectious Disease Control, RIVM, Bilthoven, The Netherlands; Health and determinants of elderly in multicultural urban populations, presented by Lloyd Sederer from the City of New York, U.S.A.; Health care: Demands and needs; Improving health, presented by David Vlahov from the New York Academy of Medicine, New York, U.S.A.; Urban environment and health, presented by John Spengler from the Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, U.S.A.; Urban politics and health; and a debate on Urban politics and health with debate convener Niek Klazinga from the Academic Medical Center, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The members of the Local Scientific Committee are: Eric J.C. van Ameijden, Utrecht; Wim van den Brink, Amsterdam; Georg Bröring, Woerden; Marc Bruinzeels, Voorburg; Roel A. Coutinho, Bilthoven; Niek Klazinga,

Amsterdam; Frank van Lenthe, Rotterdam; Barend Middelkoop, Den Haag; Mireille van Poppel, Amsterdam; Karien Stronks, Amsterdam; Arnoud Verhoeff, Amsterdam; Robert Verheij, Utrecht; Harry Verkleij, Bilthoven; and Eric-Jan de Wilde, Rotterdam.

The members of the International Scientific Committee are: Sue Atkinson, London, U.K., Gene Feder, London, U.K., Gene Gibbons, Baltimore, U.S.A., Trudy Harpham, London, U.K., Stephen W. Hwang, Toronto, Canada, Niek Klazinga, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Roderick J. Lawrence, Geneva, Switzerland, Martin McKee, London, U.K., Andrea Möllmann, Berlin, Germany, Patricia O'Campo, Toronto, Canada, Jurgen Pelikan, Vienna, Stefan Priebe, London, U.K., Arnoud Verhoeff, Amsterdam, The Netherlands and David Vlahov, New York, U.S.A.

Online abstract submissions for the 5th International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH) opened on March 1, 2006 at www.icuh2006.com.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Amsterdam in October, at the 5th International Conference on Urban Health! For more information on the conference, please visit our website at www.icuh2006.com. ■



Student Research Award Winners

Do Food Deserts Exist in More Disadvantaged Communities?

Julie Beaulac, PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa

The 4th ICUH held in Toronto, Canada, was a wonderful opportunity to meet individuals doing research and community work related to food deserts and food insecurity.

My oral presentation outlined the methodology and results of a review that explored the question of whether food deserts, spatial areas characterized by relatively poorer access to food, are more prominent in socio-economically disadvantaged communities than in advantaged communities. A response to this research question is timely, particularly given the increasing international attention on the causes and potential solutions of obesity, diabetes and other nutrition related concerns.

Twenty-eight published and unpublished studies were included in this review. The majority of the literature noted that systematic spatial inequalities in access to food exist, disfavoring more socio-economically disadvantaged geographic areas. Support for the review's hypothesis appeared to vary by country, with the strongest support for the hypothesis found in US studies. More research is needed to confirm that the same socio-economically patterned disparity exist in Canada, the UK, Australia and other higher income countries other than the US.

This literature review will be submitted for publication in the future. Furthermore, my PhD thesis supervisor, Dr. Betsy Kristjansson, has recently received a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) grant to explore GIS and psychometric methods to develop indicators and tools that can be used for summarizing and mapping physical and social resources in Ottawa, Canada. A further proposal is being planned to study food deserts in Ottawa. For more information, please contact me at jbeau080@uottawa.ca ■

Urban Health Issues in Kathmandu, Nepal: A Brief Perspective

Poonam Kandel, Medical Student, Kathmandu Medical College

Nepal is a developing country, with more than 23 million inhabitants and a population growth rate of 6% per year. According to the 2001 Census, more than 50% of the population lives in poverty, and 14.25% live in urban areas. Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal, is the administrative, economic and cultural center of the country.

Although a number of hospitals, private health care institutions and teaching hospitals are located in Kathmandu city, the urban poor population continually experience barriers in trying to access health care services. In 1994, Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) realized that providing primary and basic health care services to the urban poor population was a major issue and therefore created the Community Urban Basic Health Service Program. Presently, there are 21 community urban health clinics in operation in different wards at 7 community clinics.

The main objective of the Community Urban Basic Health Service Program is to improve the health status of low-income and disadvantaged populations through community participation, intersectoral co-ordination and collaboration among primary health care providers. My conference poster outlined the initiatives created to address the issues in the slum areas of Kathmandu where a majority of the urban poor populations live.

The conference provided me with numerous opportunities to learn, share and exchange knowledge, information and best practices on matters related to different facets of urban health. As a medical student, the conference enhanced my capabilities and broadened my horizons so that I could deal with urban health issues in my country more effectively. For more information, please contact me at

poonam.zoya@yahoo.com. ■

Making Things Work: On Being an Academic Researcher Working With a Community Partner

Nina Boulus, PhD Candidate, Simon Fraser University

My oral presentation reflects upon my role as a research assistant with ACTION for Health, a project examining the introduction of information communication technologies in the health care sector. The project is led by Dr. Ellen Balka and is funded through a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) under their Initiative for the New Economy: Collaborative Research Initiative. My main role is to work in collaboration with one of our local community-based partners, Mid Main Community Health Center, a non-profit primary health care clinic located in East Vancouver, Canada.

The research project focuses on the implementation of an electronic medical record system (EMR) in the primary health care sector and examines patients' views on the transition to a 'paperless realm.' Through our partnership with Mid-Main, we have created 4 interrelated projects exploring the theoretical and practical challenges that are faced by the health care sector throughout this transition process.

I completed my MSc in Informatics from the University of Oslo in Norway. As part of my research activities, I had the opportunity to conduct an ethnographic research study examining the implementation of electronic patient records at the National Hospital in Norway.

Currently, I am a PhD student in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada. I find participating in interventionist research is a very challenging and fascinating experience of translating scientific knowledge to the field of practice. For more information, please contact me at nboulus@sfu.ca. ■

Robb Travers

Dr. Robb Travers is a Scientist and Director of Community-Based Research (CBR) at the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) based in Toronto, Canada. His passion for community-based urban health research dates back more than 15 years and is rooted in his experience in community development.

Dr. Travers completed a Masters degree in Community Psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, and received his PhD in Public Health Sciences from the University of Toronto.

In recent years, Dr. Travers has been a consistent contributor to the field of CBR through workshops, conference presentations, and journal articles. Dr. Travers developed and taught Canada's first undergraduate course in CBR in the Health Studies Program at the University of Toronto, and he is actively engaged in CBR through his own research program addressing issues related to HIV vulnerability among gay men and youth, and the health of people living with HIV.

From 2002-2004, Dr. Travers was Director of Research at Toronto-based Wellesley Central Health Corporation (WCHC) where he was instrumental in developing numerous community and research-related initiatives including the Resource Centre for Community-Based Research and the Wellesley Urban Health CBR Certificate Program.

In 2005, he was appointed Scientist and Director of Community-Based Research at the OHTN, a not-for-profit agency funded by the AIDS Bureau, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, whose mission is to optimize the quality of life of people living with HIV in Ontario and to promote excellence and innovation in treatment, research, education and prevention.

At the OHTN, Dr. Travers is responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive program of CBR initiatives, as well as facilitating capacity-building for community-academic-policy partnerships in HIV research.

Dr. Travers had a major role in the organization of the 4th International



Conference on Urban Health (ICUH) held in Toronto, Canada in October, 2005.

As Co-Chair of the Community Engagement Subcommittee and member of the Conference Planning Committee, Dr. Travers played a pivotal role in developing and implementing a 'community engagement strategy.' This strategy included initiatives designed to encourage and promote community involvement and the inclusion of a Community-Based Research (CBR) conference stream highlighting oral and poster presentations that were relevant to urban residents, service providers and policy-makers (see related article in this issue of ISUH Connections). ■

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF URBAN HEALTH



As of January 2006, the *Journal of Urban Health* (JUH), the official journal of ISUH, is now published bi-monthly by Springer. The new website for the *Journal* is www.springeronline.com/journal/11524. With Springer, ISUH now offers current members not only a print subscription to the *Journal of Urban*

Health, but also free online access to current and archived issues of the *Journal of Urban Health*, *Journal of Community Health*, and *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*. ISUH will be in contact with members with details on how to access these services.

The first issue of JUH with Springer features a special section on HIV Perspectives after 25 Years. Scientists from 21 HIV research centers in the New York region came together in 2002 as the New York Area Research Centers Consortium to develop research partnerships among regional HIV/AIDS scientists.

The six papers in the special section are the collaborative product of the members of the Consortium and reflect upon how far we have come

since the first HIV cases were diagnosed in 1981 and outline future steps we need to take for more effective HIV prevention and treatment. Each article in the special section presents a particular research area that is critical to understanding the effects of HIV/AIDS in today's world and makes recommendations for future research directions.

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in the U.S., and in the March issue JUH features two timely articles as well as an editorial on colon cancer screening.

Other articles in the March issue are on various topics of interest, including intimate partner violence, physical location of health services, breast cancer, and prison health, to name a few. ■

Connotea and Resource Guide for Public Health Preparedness

Sara Putnam and Lily Pregill

Connotea

Connotea is a free online social bookmarking service offered by *Nature* at <http://www.connotea.org/>. Social bookmarking is a relatively new way for individuals to organize useful web references into a personal “library” of links that can then be easily accessed again later.

A general social bookmarking service was first developed by <http://del.icio.us>, although Connotea’s site has been designed especially for scientists and researchers. When bookmarking a web page with Connotea, the individual is able to assign one or more “tags”, which act like content keywords, making it easier to later locate the link within the personal library.

The links in the personal library can either be kept private or shared publicly. Connotea also enables global searches of its entire user-shared social bookmarks for links to pages relating to a topic of interest.

For a working example of this online resource that might have particular relevance to those interested in urban health, Declan Butler, a

senior reporter at *Nature*, has a social bookmark on avian flu that is updated daily

(<http://www.connotea.org/user/Declan/tag/AvianFlu>). No login is necessary to access Butler’s page, and navigating it can be a useful introduction to what social bookmarking has to offer.

Resource Guide for Public Health Preparedness

In 2002, the National Library of Medicine contracted the New York Academy of Medicine, which currently houses the International Society for Urban Health, to create a web-based Resource Guide for Public Health Preparedness that can be accessed at <http://www.phpreparedness.info/>.

The website was launched in 2003 and currently provides access to over 1500 electronic publications relating to preparedness.

The Resource Guide is aimed at addressing the need for a single point of access to essential information resources in public health and disaster preparedness. Selected and cataloged by information specialists, the Resource Guide database links to a variety of freely available documents

such as abstracts, articles, assessment tools, bibliographies, books, dissertations, fact sheets, guidelines, reports and testimony in the field of preparedness.

The database may be searched using keywords or may be browsed via subject headings, audience, or CDC focus area. An advanced search option is also available to further refine searching. New resources are added to the database as found. A date stamp is provided on the bottom of each page indicating when the database was last updated.

In addition to bibliographic information, the full display of database records also includes an annotation, subject headings, event type, resource type, and access notes. A monthly email update service is available to improve awareness of recent publications in public health preparedness. To join the mailing list and receive future updates go to <http://www.phpreparedness.info/contact.php>.

If you have any questions regarding the Resource Guide, please contact Lily Pregill, Special Projects Manager at lpregill@nyam.org. ■

International Society for Urban Health

Get More Involved with ISUH!

Sara Putnam

If you are interested in any of the opportunities below, please contact ISUH Coordinator, Sara Putnam, at sputnam@nyam.org or 212-419-3549. Volunteers for any of these opportunities should be current ISUH members; applications for ISUH membership are available for download in PDF format at http://www.isuh.org/membership/membership_home.html.

ISUH Annual Elections – Nominating Committee

Elections for open seats on the ISUH board will be held prior to the Fifth Annual Conference on Urban Health, and results will be announced

at that meeting. The open seats this year are President-Elect, Treasurer, two Member-at-Large two year terms, and one Member-at-Large one year term. ISUH is looking for individuals interested in volunteering on the nominating committee, chaired by ISUH President Dr. Patricia O’Campo, to prepare a slate of candidates for these positions. Time commitment will be light, and discussion will take place via phone or email. Participating on the committee does not preclude running as a candidate for any of the positions. Interested parties must contact the ISUH coordinator by

April 7, 2006 to volunteer on this committee.

Membership Committee

Drs. Chris Gibbons (ISUH President-Elect) and Mary Leach (ISUH Secretary) are chairing a new committee to promote awareness of ISUH activities and recruit new membership. Time commitment will be light, and discussion will take place via phone or email. Contact the ISUH Coordinator if interested in participating.

Media Contacts

Periodically ISUH receives media requests for information/expert

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THE ALLIANCE FOR HEALTHY CITIES

Keiko Nakamura, Secretariat of the Alliance for Healthy Cities

The Alliance for Healthy Cities is an international organization aimed at protecting and enhancing the health and quality of life of city dwellers through the Healthy Cities approach. The Healthy Cities approach was initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the late 1980's.

The Alliance was founded in October 2003 and has a close relationship with the WHO, however, it is an autonomous organization operated by its members. Membership includes city mayors, governors, national agencies, international agencies, NGOs, universities and other academic institutions working on urban health issues.

According to the WHO, Healthy Cities are cities that are continually creating and improving the physical and social environments and community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all functions of life and in developing their maximum potential.

This approach is based on the concept that social, economic and physical environments are vital to the health of city dwellers. The growing complexity of urban health issues requires cooperation between the conventional health sector and non-health sectors. An application of this concept to actual communities of different entities, for example cities,

governing units of cities, municipalities, megacities and communities are Healthy Cities. The members of the Alliance commit themselves to achieving the individual goals of their local communities for their Healthy Cities, developing action plans, and leading actual operations in the communities.



Participatory-style action research has been carried out to conduct community needs assessment, develop effective action plans and to carry out evaluations of the programs. Collaboration between cities and academic institutions is encouraging these research and evaluation activities.

While characteristics of individual Healthy Cities presents a diversity of urban health issues, common features of Healthy Cities include the creation of positive values; organizational structure; a secretariat; leadership of mayors and political commitment; analysis of city health

profiles; indicators; research, monitoring and evaluation; strategic planning for innovative local action plans; maximum use of existing resources; intersectoral coordination; community participation; capacity building; information dissemination and sharing; and local, national and international networking.

As of February 2006, the Alliance will be operational in 50 cities worldwide including Australia, Cambodia, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines and Vietnam. The Alliance for Healthy Cities will hold its Second General Assembly and Conference this Fall in Suzhou, China. The theme for this year's event is "Healthy Cities in the Globalizing World." Forward-looking participants meet together and share their commitment towards healthier cities, to learn from each other's creative experiences in various settings of Healthy Cities and evidence of progress in Healthy Cities.

The conference expects intersectoral participation from city mayors, governors, health professionals, urban planning professionals, NGOs, national and international agencies, as well as individuals from universities and other academic institutions.

For further information please contact the Alliance Secretariat at alliance.ith@tmd.ac.jp or for more information visit <http://www.alliance-healthycities.com>. ■

International Society for Urban Health Get More Involved with ISUH!

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opinions on various topics related to urban health. If you are interested in being added to the ISUH media contact database, contact the ISUH Coordinator, who will provide you with a survey to designate your areas of expertise. Media contacts will not be asked to speak on behalf of ISUH, but journalists will be referred by ISUH to members who may be

appropriate sources of information on specific topics on inquiry.

Future Conference Locations

The ISUH Executive Board is interested in hearing suggestions from membership on future locations and host institutions for the annual International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH). Contact the ISUH Coordinator with your suggestions.



Highlights from the 4th International Conference on Urban Health Community Engagement at the 4th ICUH

Robb Travers, Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN)

One of the hallmarks of Toronto's 4th International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH) was an outstanding turnout by community representatives eager to partner with researchers and use research findings in advocacy and programming initiatives. This success was largely the result of efforts by the Community Engagement Subcommittee, which provided strategic advice to the Conference Planning Committee to increase community accessibility.

The Subcommittee, co-chaired by Robb Travers and Aileen Meagher, began with the assumption that urban health problems are complex and can only be solved if community partners

are at the table at every stage of the endeavor.

Community engagement was accomplished through multiple strategies, including advocating for the development of a very generous community scholarships program, and extending invitations to community organizations to host site visits for conference attendees.

Perhaps most importantly, the subcommittee helped to shape the conference program to ensure that it addressed the interests and needs of community registrants. For the first time, the conference featured a community stream, and almost half of the conference's oral abstract

sessions focused on community-based research. As a result of these efforts, more than one-third of conference registrants were from the community.

An evaluation of the community engagement strategy is underway. One interesting finding is that many academics appear to have been drawn to the conference because of the presence of the community stream and the inclusion of community partners.

This experience suggests that the International Conference on Urban Health can play a major role in leading a community-academic partnership approach to urban health and urban health research. ■

International Society for Urban Health

NOTICES AND EVENTS

2006 CityMatCH Urban Maternal and Child Health Leadership Conference, "Where Obstacles Become Opportunities"

August 19-22, 2006, Providence, Rhode Island, USA

CityMatCH is a freestanding national membership organization of city and county health departments' maternal and child health (MCH) programs and leaders representing urban communities in the United States. The mission of CityMatCH is to *improve the health and well-being of urban women, children and families by strengthening the public health organizations and leaders in their communities*. The goals of the 16th Annual CityMatCH is to disseminate science and information for improving urban MCH; gain knowledge, skills and tools to address MCH issues; network and exchange promising practices with other MCH professionals; and explore public health values and affirm a shared vision for urban MCH leaders. For more information on the conference and the CITYMatCH organization, visit <http://www.citymatch.org>. ■

Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute Starts New CBPR Journal

The Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute recently announced the launch of a national peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the work of community health partnerships. Called *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education and Action*, the new journal will identify and publicize model programs that use community partnerships to improve public health, and stimulate action that will improve the health of people in communities. The journal will provide a valuable ongoing examination of the principles, methods, processes and outcomes of community-based participatory research partnerships. Please send all submissions to Mark Newgent, Managing Editor, at mnewgent@jhmi.edu or visit <http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/pchp/>. To subscribe to the journal, call the Johns Hopkins University Press toll-free at 1-800-548-1784 or visit their website at <http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/>

2006 US Public Health Service Professional Conference

May 1-4, 2006, Denver, Colorado, USA

The recent events in the Gulf Coast and concern about a potential influenza pandemic underscore the need to foster cross-governmental leadership, creative thinking and innovative approaches to address both the short-term and long-term public health challenges facing our world. A keynote panel will explore the 2005 hurricanes and the implications for responses to future emergencies. Mini-sessions will focus on obesity, public health issue related to homelessness, dealing with environmental disasters, protecting the food supply, and evacuee health. The conference offers a number of chances for attendees to network with their colleagues in the public health community. A limited number of Junior Officer and student scholarships are available for qualified individuals. For more information, visit <http://coausphsconference.org/registration.cfm> ■



The International Society for Urban Health

New York Academy of Medicine

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New Individual Membership Application Form*

*these rates are good for members applying in April 2006

LAST NAME FIRST NAME M.I. DEGREE

POSITION/TITLE

ORGANIZATION DEPT.

STREET ADDRESS (please specify: ____ home ____ work)

CITY STATE ZIP CODE COUNTRY

EMAIL PHONE (please specify: ____ home ____ work ____ cell)

Our membership cycle is based on the calendar year. All rates are in USD.

Amount enclosed:

Type of Membership	Dues (through 12/06)
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$125
Retired	<input type="checkbox"/> \$85
NYAM Fellow	<input type="checkbox"/> \$85
Full-time Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40
Employee of Community-Based Org	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40
Resident of Developing Country	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12.50

Payment type:

- Check (Please make checks payable to New York Academy of Medicine and enclose check with this form)
- Credit Card:
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How did you learn about ISUH?

- Colleague
- International Conference on Urban Health
- Journal of Urban Health
- Other (please specify: _____)

Please complete and return this form with your payment to:
Sara Putnam, ISUH Coordinator, New York Academy of Medicine, 1216 5th Ave., New York NY 10029