



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

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ISUH Connections

The Newsletter of the International
Society for Urban Health

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The 7th International Conference on Urban Health

An Update on ICUH 2008



The 7th International Conference on Urban Health will take place from October 28-31, 2008, at the Westin Bayshore Resort and Marina in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia. The theme of this year's conference is "Knowledge Integration: Successful Interventions in Urban Health." While it is important to document urban health issues, this year's conference goes one step further by focusing on how these issues can be successfully addressed.

The organizing committee has identified 13 sub-themes, including: adolescent and child health; aging and health in urban settings; neighborhood level influences on health; diversity and urban health; drug use, mental health, and urban environments; migration; urban social environment and health; urban physical environment and health; urban health from a global perspective; environmental health and justice; enforcement and security and urban health; best practices in meeting urban health challenges; and community approaches to urban health.

The conference will feature 7 world-class plenary speakers, each of whom will

bring an exciting and unique perspective to the program: Jo Ivey Boufford, Trudy Harpham, Jacob Kumaresan, Roderick Lawrence, Julio Montaner, Anthony Zwi, and Alex Ezah.

Pre-conference workshops have been scheduled to enhance the conference experience. Scheduled workshops include: promoting healthy urban environments through environmental justice; urban health and sustainable cities—the nexus; EURO-URHIS: The use and abuse of urban health indicators; city-to-city learning: Strategies for intersectoral partnership building that encourage crossing boundaries; and media literacy and media advocacy. In addition to the pre-conference workshops, 5 pre-conference tours have also been scheduled.

The organizing committee has received more than 550 abstract submissions and 150 scholarship applications. The program will include 168 oral abstract presentations and 4 poster sessions. Early bird registration ends July 28, 2008. For more information or to register, visit <http://www.icuh2008.com>

ISUH Member-at-Large Profiles

In 2008, the ISUH elected a new Executive Board. In this article, we introduce you to the 2 new Members at Large. The Members-at-Large represent the interest of the general membership of the ISUH on the executive board.



As a public health physician with expertise in environmental health and infectious diseases, Dr. Anthony Capon's research is concerned with sustainability and population health. He has written extensively on this topic, and has worked with industry, governments, and international organizations to develop approaches to building healthy and sustainable cities.

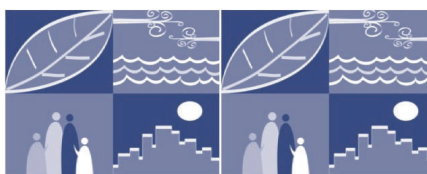
Dr. Capon is a Professor with the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University. He completed his medical degree at the University of Queensland. His Ph.D. at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research was followed by post-doctoral work at the Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin. From 1991-2006, he served as Director of Public Health with Western Sydney Area Health Services, and in 2006 he co-convoked the Australian Academy of Science's Fenner Conference on Urbanism, Environment, and

Health. He has held prestigious National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia) and WHO Fellowships.

Currently, Dr. Capon is leading the Oxford Health Alliance's (OxHA) international healthy environments initiative. OxHA brings together experts and advocates from various disciplines to facilitate action and encourage research on chronic disease prevention and health promotion at local, national, and international levels. He is also involved in the Copenhagen Agenda for Sustainable Cities, and is a member of the planning group for the International Council for Science's program on systems approaches to health in changing urban environments. He is a life member of Nature and Society Forum, a community organization with the theme of healthy people on a health planet.

Dr. Capon is New Zealand Maori (Ngai Tahu tribe) and lives in Sydney, Australia. He is married to Dr. Wendy Relf, molecular microbiologist and science communicator, and has two sons. For recreation, they enjoy bushwalking, swimming, sailing, and skiing.

Dr. Capon has two ambitions for his term as Member-at-Large; firstly, to attract ISUH members to the potential of collaboration with colleagues interested in sustainable cities, and secondly, to strengthen ISUH participation in the Asia-Pacific region.



Dr. Danielle C. Ompad is Associate Director of the Center for Urban Epidemiologic Studies (CUES) at the New York Academy of Medicine, and Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition, Food Science, and Public Health at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. She completed a B.S. at Bowie State University, one of the ten oldest historically Black Colleges/Universities in the U.S., in 1996. She then completed a M.H.S. (1998) and Ph.D. (2002) in infectious disease epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health.

Dr. Ompad has extensive experience in design, conduct, and analysis of community-based studies focusing on illicit substance use, risky sexual behavior, and access to vaccines in urban populations. She has several studies related to urban health that are funded by the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse. She is currently supervising the IMPACT Studies which are investigating the relationship between substance use, mental health, and the neighborhood physical and social environments in 37 economically disadvantaged neighbor-

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Helping Communities Live Tobacco Free

In June 2005, members of the Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI) published a major paper in the American Journal of Public Health. The paper revealed dramatically high smoking rates in some Chicago community areas. The highest smoking rate, 39% of adults age 18-75, was found in North Lawndale, a very poor African American community of 40,000 people located on the city's west side. This rate is well above the smoking rate for the United States (21%), Chicago (24%), and Illinois (23%). The lung cancer mortality rate in North Lawndale of 90 per 100,000 population is also above rates for the United States (54), Chicago (55), and African Americans (62).

Breathing Freedom is a multi-faceted community-based intervention that features direct community outreach, clinical intervention, smoking cessation workshops, promotion of the Illi-

nois Tobacco Quitline, and a media campaign. All of these efforts are aimed at changing the community's social norms related to smoking behavior.

Breathing Freedom features a physician who provides education and nicotine replacement therapy for individuals. There is also a faith-based component that provides churches with free smoking cessation materials, training, and other resources to support church members who wish to quit smoking.

In addition to the general community, the key target populations for the project include pregnant women and post-partum mothers in North Lawndale. An initial analysis of data drawn from the Women, Infant, and Child (WIC) alcohol and tobacco assessment revealed that more than one-third of pregnant women in North Lawndale smoked during pregnancy. Smoking cessation efforts have therefore

been integrated into WIC services, and an evaluation of changes in smoking status based on the alcohol and tobacco assessment have been used to measure program effectiveness.

Another key target population for the program is persons that are HIV-positive. Smoking prevalence among persons with HIV/AIDS ranges from 50%-75%. Smoking increases the risk for HIV-associated pulmonary infections and oropharyngeal lesions, and is a well known risk factor for atherosclerosis. It has also been associated with coronary events in patients receiving protease inhibitor therapy. Breathing Freedom has been successful in providing workshops and nicotine replacement therapy for HIV-positive persons to help them quit smoking.

For more information, contact Dr. Joseph West at wesjos@sinai.org or 773.257.2727.

"Breathing Freedom is aimed at changing the community's social norms related to smoking behavior."

ISUH Member-at-Large Profiles

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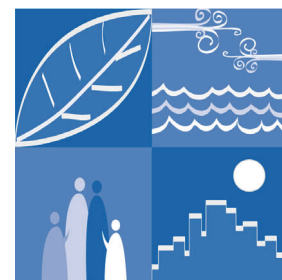
hoods in New York. She has another study aimed at developing a scale to measure the urban physical environments in urban neighborhoods.

Dr. Ompad is a consultant to the WHO and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on urban health

issues and has recently been involved in the Healthy Urbanization Project being directed by the WHO's Center for Health Development in Kobe, Japan. Working with faculty at Soochow University (China) and colleagues at the WHO, she has developed a short course on

engaging communities to improve urban health.

As Member-at-Large, Dr. Ompad will continue the Society's efforts to ensure a diverse membership with respect to field/discipline, geography, nationality, race/ethnicity, gender, experience, and sector.



Promoting Clean Air and Health Among the Urban Poor

An evolving U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Urban Health Portfolio is attempting to address concerns for the health of poor urban residents endangered by inadequate sanitation, access to clean water, sources of energy, or health services. With support from USAID/Washington, several country missions have developed initiative programs that: (1) identify urban residents at particular health risk; (2) overcome barriers to improved healthcare among vulnerable populations by engaging multiple stakeholders; and (3) address priority environmental health concerns. USAID/Bangladesh is making particularly interesting contributions to this portfolio.

The leading killer of children worldwide is acute respiratory infections (ARI). In 2004, it accounted for 22% of all communicable child deaths. Studies identify indoor air pollution as a key culprit, with powerful associations found between exposure to indoor air pollution and symptoms of acute respiratory infections.

The burning of biomass fuels such as dung, brush, and wood for cooking is often the main contributor to indoor air pollution. Women who cook and their children are particularly affected. Despite associated health hazards, over 75% of South Asians continue to rely on biomass fuels as their pri-

mary energy source for cooking. Where cleaner fuels are either unavailable or unaffordable, improving ventilation and the efficiency of biomass burning stoves are the only means to improve indoor air quality.

In 2005-7, with USAID Energy Team and Global Health support, Winrock International collaborated with Concern Worldwide Bangladesh and Village Education Resource Center (VERC) to address these challenges in a comprehensive manner. Their pilot project had a strong focus on



sustainability by: (1) integrating the development of locally accepted improved stove models; (2) establishing a commercial mechanism for disseminating improved stoves; and (3) working with local government and health networks to promote the new stoves and behaviors to reduce indoor air pollution.

Combining Bangladeshi and Indian technical expertise, four improved stove models were developed with community input. Slum residents were recruited and trained to be stove "entrepreneurs" -

sole proprietors who install stoves for a small fee. Small business operators were recruited to mass-produce the metal grates and clay chimney pipes used in stove construction. Stove entrepreneurs and parts producers were given access to micro-credit to grow their businesses.

To promote the stoves and behaviors that reduce exposure to indoor air pollution, the project tapped an existing urban health network developed under the USAID-sponsored Municipal Health Partnership Program (MHPP) run by Concern in the same two cities targeted by the stove project. MHPP has created a network of community-based health volunteers and ward committees to support health promotion among pregnant women and mothers. The stove project used these links to recruit entrepreneurs and promote the stoves. Building off MHPP's relationship with local government also helped ensure their support for the stove project.

By the end of the project, over 580 stoves had been sold in just a few months, and there is strong potential for replication. These efforts provide an important model for other USAID missions in addressing urban environment and health challenges in a comprehensive and complementary manner. For more information, contact Dr. Anthony Kolb at akolb@usaid.gov.

"In 2004, acute respiratory infections accounted for 22% of all communicable child deaths worldwide."

2008 ISUH Board Elections

The ISUH nominations committee, chaired by Dr. Patricia O'Campo, is calling for candidates for President-elect, Treasurer, and two Member-at-Large positions on the Executive Board.

The President-elect is responsible to the current President and will carry out the duties assigned by the President. If the President is unable to carry out his or her duties because of illness or any other reason, the President-elect will assume the duties and responsibilities of the President. The President-elect serves for one year, and then one year as President, and then a final year as Past President.

The Treasurer is responsible

to the President for keeping accurate records of all ISUH's financial activities. These records will be kept and available to the members upon request. The Treasurer serves for two years.

A Member-at-Large is responsible to the President and will carry out the responsibilities assigned by the President. Members-at-Large represent the interests of the ISUH membership on the executive board. A Member-at-Large serves for two years.

All board members are expected to attend scheduled board meetings and represent the interests of the ISUH membership.

If you are interested in nominating someone or yourself, please send an email to aquinn@nyam.org with "ISUH Nominations" as the subject; include the name of the person you are nominating and for which position in the body of the email.

Interested candidates must submit a statement outlining their interest in and qualifications for the position to the ISUH coordinator by July 31, 2008, to be considered for the ballot.

Elections will be held prior to the 7th International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH 2008), and results will be announced at the annual meeting.

Highlights from the Journal of Urban Health



The May/June 2008 issue of the Journal features a special section on injection drug use.

Three original research articles and one editorial discover new results on health issues faced by this population. One study found that there is a greater risk for HIV, HBC, and HCV infection among injection drug users in a city where syringe exchange and pharmacy syringe distribution are illegal, as compared to the same population in

In a city where those practices are legal. Another study revealed the attitudes of Australian heroin users to peer distribution of naloxone, a common strategy used to prevent heroin overdose. Nearly all respondents thought naloxone distribution was a "good idea" and a similar majority would participate in a related training program. Another study estimated the population of injection drug users throughout the United States.

In the March/April 2008 issue of the Journal, new original research articles focused on a number of different urban health issues. One study examined the association between

Environmental characteristics and physical activity. The authors found that environmental characteristics and walking were related but dependent on reason, intensity, and function of physical activity. Another study examined the association between alcohol availability and neighborhood characteristics in Los Angeles and southern Louisiana. The authors tested the relationship between alcohol outlets per roadway mile, shelf space, and least price by beverage type and socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. The authors found that alcohol availability, but not least price, were associated with some community characteristics.

New Web-Based Resource for Homelessness Research is Launched

This spring, a new and exciting resource for those engaged in homelessness research, policy, and program delivery was launched. The Homeless Hub is a comprehensive web-based research library and information center. It represents an innovative step forward in the use of technology to enhance knowledge mobilization and networking. With expert librarian support and an effective web site, the Homeless Hub provides a foundation for future research and action on homelessness in Canada. This will build capacity and show that research can and should inform decisions, and thus will ultimately contribute to solutions to homelessness.

It has long been acknowledged in government, the non-profit sector and business circles that the most effective decisions and solutions are built upon a foundation of sound information and knowledge. As the homelessness crisis in Canada continues, the need for effective solutions based on a solid understanding of the conditions that create homelessness, as well as 'what works' to address homelessness, becomes imperative. We can no longer rely on limited information and 'ad hoc' solutions.

Yet, in order to be effective, it has to be easily accessible. The Homeless Hub

was launched to address this challenge. Building directly on the success of the Canadian Conference on Homelessness held in 2005 in Toronto, Canada, and the consultation that followed, the Homeless Hub has emerged as a place where community service providers, researchers, government representatives, and the general public can access and share research, stories, and best practices.

This project was begun with an understanding that various stakeholders are likely to think about and utilize research in unique ways. As such, the website was built with different stakeholders in mind. Anyone can access and share the latest research, policy, and best practices associated with alleviating homelessness and housing instability.

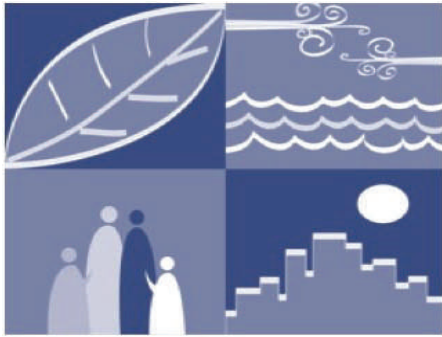
The launching of the Homeless Hub is considered an important first step in mobilizing research to have an impact on homelessness in Canada. However, for the Homeless Hub to be truly effective in the long run, the library must continue to expand. Several new enhanced features will soon be added, including a more robust networking section that builds on the latest technology and practices. Importantly, a section on education and training will also be

added in the near future. Other features will include a range of curriculum materials relating to homelessness to be used in schools across Canada, and opportunities to support workforce training for those who work in the homelessness sector.

Research can and should play a vital role in discussions about solutions to homelessness in Canada by helping to educate the public and inform policy and practice at all levels of government and in the social and health care sectors. The Homeless Hub will raise the profile of Canadian research on homelessness so it can be mobilized to have an impact on decision-making in government, the community, and the service sector. Access to good research means that responses to homelessness are more cost effective, better designed, and have a greater impact on moving people out of homelessness.

Funding for the Homeless Hub has been provided by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Secretariat (HPS) and York University. To share your knowledge with the Homeless Hub, visit <http://www.homelesshub.ca>. For more information, contact Stephen Gaetz at SGaetz@edu.yorku.ca or 416.736.2100, Ext. 20286.

"The Homeless Hub provides a foundation for future research and action on homelessness in Canada."



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To become a member of the ISUH or renew your membership, visit <http://www.isuh.org> and click on Membership.

ISUH Communications Committee

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ISUH Connections

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

ISUH Connections welcomes submissions of brief articles relevant to the field of urban health (maximum 500 words) for consideration. Notices of events, funding opportunities, positions available or sought and other announcements are also welcome. While ISUH Connections appreciates all submissions, we reserve the right to edit content for accuracy, grammar and space. Please submit materials to Andrew Quinn at aquinn@nyam.org or Evie Gogosis at gogosise@smh.toronto.on.ca.

Notices and Events

6th Annual Qualitative Research Summer Intensive, Long Island, New York, August 9-14, 2008

This event features 6 days of qualitative research professional development courses taught by leaders in the field of qualitative research. Instructors include Kathy Charmaz, John Creswell, Leslie Curry, Carolyn Ellis, Paul Mihas, Patricia Pugliani, and Debra Skinner. Course topics include autoethnography, coding, qualitative software, grounded theory, mixed methods, and narrative analysis. For more information or to register, visit http://www.researchtalk.com/summer_08.html

Making Healthy Communities Count, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, October 26-29, 2008

Organized by the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA), Ontario Public Health Association, and Niagara Region Public Health, this summit will provide a forum for profiling the leading developments and topical issues facing public and community health across Ontario and beyond. Conference sub-themes include environment and climate change, poverty and health inequalities, and community capacity. For more information, visit <http://www.ophaconference.ca/files/about.html>

Call for Papers: Social Determinants of Health, November 2008

In November, The Lancet will publish a theme issue devoted to the social determinants of health. The Lancet invites submission of research papers, reviews, and viewpoints with an emphasis on action—what the doctor, public health worker, and politician can do to reduce health inequities. This theme issue will be produced in parallel with a conference in London on November 6-7, 2008, called "Closing the Gap: Health Equity Through Social Action on the Social Determinants of Health". For more information, visit <http://www.thelancet.com>.