

Global Prevention News Update

Prevention and Control's "Global Prevention News Update" compiles recent news from around the world about advances in knowledge and practice to prevent cardiovascular disease.

The Global Prevention News Update is produced by ProCOR, an electronic forum for knowledge sharing to promote cardiovascular health through preventive, low-cost strategies. ProCOR uses email and the Internet to enhance the exchange of information and ideas among a diverse global community in medicine, public health, policy, and research - many of whom otherwise would lack access to timely, relevant information and connection to colleagues who share their commitment to prevention.

Information sources for the "Global Prevention News Update" range from international journals to local newspapers, from peer-reviewed articles to informal, anecdotal sharing. Some activities described here are too localized or too recent to attract the attention of mass media or mainstream communication channels, but they offer powerful examples that can inspire action and be creatively adapted for a range of settings. The Global Prevention News Update also includes a calendar of upcoming events and information about new resources. We welcome your comments and contributions to future articles.

To receive daily CVD news and discussion focused on promoting cardiovascular health in low-resource settings, with a focus on developing countries, send a message to procor-join@healthnet.org or subscribe at no charge at www.procor.org.

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Cameroon: Burden of diabetes project takes step-wise approach to surveillance

The Cameroon Burden of Diabetes Project, which began in 2003 and concludes its first phase in 2006, is utilizing WHO's Step-wise approach to create a surveillance, control and prevention system in Cameroon. The project's first national survey for diabetes and major risk factor prevalence interviewed more than 11,000 people in 8000+ households in Bamenda, Yaoundé, Douala, and Garoua. More than 100 physicians and nurses have been trained in diabetes surveillance and management with supplemental training in management of the diabetic foot in order to reduce the number of amputations. Diabetes clinics have been established at the four sites, and thousands of people have attended diabetes awareness events. The project is expected to result in the development of a national diabetes program for Cameroon and to provide a model for other chronic disease prevention programs.

World Diabetes Foundation www.worlddiabetes-foundation.org

WHO STEPwise approach to Surveillance (STEPS) of risk factors
<http://www.who.int/chp/steps/en/>

Columbia: Urban planning in Bogotá promotes physical activity

A few years ago, Bogotá's city government and other institutions began working together to address urgent issues of automobile congestion in city streets, environmental degradation, and accidents. Rather than construct double-decker highways to accommodate the increasing number of cars in the city, they promoted alternative forms of transportation such as cycling and walking. One of the results is the "Cicloruta" (cycle route), a 300-km network of bike paths, one of the most extensive in the world. Since the creation of the Cicloruta and improvements in public transportation, the number of people traveling by automobile has dropped from 17% to 12% at peak times while travel

on bicycles, on public transportation or on foot has increased. Bogotá's success has encouraged a network in Latin America, which is exploring how the model can be adapted to other cities.

Cycling Network of the Americas www.ciudadhumana.org/cicloviasunidas

Ghana: Addressing patient knowledge and beliefs to control hypertension

A cross-sectional survey of 1135 patients at a health mission in Sekondi, Ghana between 2002 and 2003 determined that 30% were hypertensive (62% of these had Stage II hypertension) and 39% were pre-hypertensive. Despite a high level of hypertension awareness (73%) and treatment (59%) in the group, only 5% had adequate blood pressure control (140/90 mm Hg). To identify reasons for the low rate of control, qualitative interviews were conducted among a subgroup of 100 patients. Patients were questioned about what high blood pressure meant to them, what they thought caused their high blood pressure, how it affected their bodies, what they feared most about it, and the consequences of high blood pressure. Several misconceptions about hypertension were identified. Participants frequently described high blood pressure as "having too much blood in the body." More than half the group reported that hypertension was curable rather than a chronic condition requiring lifelong treatment. Only 39% knew that physical activity helped control blood pressure, and only half the group was aware of the role of obesity in hypertension. The study's findings will guide the Ghana Ministry of Health in developing an educational intervention addressing misconceptions about hypertension and emphasizing the role of lifestyle in BP management.

"Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs, and Blood Pressure Control in a Community-Based Sample in Ghana"

Ethn Dis; 15(4):748–52 <http://www.ishib.org/>

Iran: Multi-faceted community approaches to prevention

The Isfahan Healthy Heart Program (IHHP) is a comprehensive 6-year action-oriented integrated community-based intervention program for non-communicable disease prevention and health promotion. The program was launched in late 1999 in two communities - Isfahan and Najafabad in central Iran (with a population of 1,900,000). The provincial city of Arak with a population of 700,000 has

been selected as the reference community. As a result of the Isfahan Healthy Heart Program's work to promote healthy lifestyles, approximately forty Isfahan restaurants now offer low-fat, low-calorie meal options, including more vegetables, low-fat dressings, and less mayonnaise. Salt shakers have been removed from their tables and Healthy Heart stickers in restaurant windows promote awareness of the program. Pre-marriage classes help women learn how to cook low-fat meals and local workplaces and factories are offering healthier lunches and regular medical checkups. Studies have shown that 85% of people in Isfahan engage in insufficient physical exercise. In response, physical activity programs have been designed for housewives who cannot exercise outdoors and "automobile-free" days encourage walking and bicycling. A petting zoo on Sofe Mountain, near Isfahan, attracts more than a half-million children and their parents every Friday morning. The zoo is located 0.5 km up the mountain and at 1 km beautiful waterfalls attract hikers up the steep slope.

Isfahan Health Heart Program www.crc.mui.ac.ir; www.ihhp.mui.ac.ir

Namibia: Deputy minister encourages healthy lifestyles

In her New Year's address to Namibia's citizens, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services Petrina Haingura urged the general public to take responsibility for their own health through exercise and healthy eating. "The New Year is a time to look forward to building a better Namibia of growth and opportunity for all," she said. Acknowledging that the country's health system faces many challenges such as an aging population, increasing demand for more costly services as well as chronic medical workforce shortages, she called public attention to the importance of people protecting their own health. "That should be the starting point to avert unnecessary health problems as a preventative step. Government has a responsibility to attend to the sick, but let us first try to avoid health complications because by so doing the process will definitely realize a number of benefits."

Global Action on Aging <http://globalag.igc.org/health/world/2006/namibia.htm>

Netherlands: Community intervention effective in addressing CVD risk factors

A 5-year community-based intervention project in the Netherlands has successfully encouraged

residents to become more active, reduce their fat intake, and stop smoking. The Hartslag Limburg project integrates a population-wide strategy with a focus on low socioeconomic status groups and a subgroup strategy for individuals diagnosed with CVD or multiple physical risk factors for CVD. From 1999 to 2003, the project offered a wide variety of innovative health promotion activities, including computer-tailored nutrition education, healthy food tours in supermarkets, public-private collaboration with the retail sector, television programs, food labeling, walking and bicycling clubs, and a stop-smoking campaign, in addition to commercials on local television and radio, newspaper articles, and pamphlet distribution. During the 5-year follow-up, risk factors changed unfavorably in the reference group while the program succeeded in reducing - and in some cases, preventing - age- and time-related increase in BMI, waist circumference, blood pressure, and, in women, nonfasting glucose concentration in the Limburg population.

“Effect of 5-Year Community Intervention Hartslag Limburg on Cardiovascular Risk Factors”

Am J Prev Med 2006;30(3):237-42 www.elsevier.com/

New Zealand: “Walking School Bus” promotes activity among children

Recent surveys indicate one third of New Zealand children between the ages of five and 14 are either overweight or obese. Walking School Bus programs -supervised walking groups that offer a fun and safe alternative to riding a bus to school - are proving to be a successful intervention in Auckland, where 79 schools offer 169 Walking School Buses in the Auckland region, with more than 3000 children and 1500 volunteer adults participating. Research conducted for the Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand found that those who utilize Walking School Buses view physical activity as an important and enjoyable part of life. In addition to providing the safety of a supervised group, the Walking School Bus actively promotes road safety in an ongoing way. Older children can be motivated to be involved by giving them responsibilities, for example, teaching younger children how to cross the road.

New Zealand Government www.beehive.govt.nz/

Road Safe Auckland www.roadsafeauckland.org.nz

Nigeria: Education key to seeking treatment for stroke

Authors of a Nigerian study recommend the development of simple, understandable educational materials about stroke symptoms for at-risk groups and the general population in order to decrease delays in seeking medical care. The study indicates that most stroke patients delay seeking medical care for more than 48 h even when they recognize at least one stroke symptom. The study examined 68 patients at the Federal Medical Center, Ido, Nigeria. Reasons for delays in seeking care included lack of transportation, financial constraints, and lack of awareness. The study’s authors urge health education efforts to increase awareness of stroke symptoms.

“Perception of stroke among patients with stroke”

Nigerian Med Pract 2005;48(2):56-8 www.ajol.info

Pakistan: Public-private partnership implements National Action Plan for NCD Prevention

The National Action Plan for Non-Communicable Disease Prevention, Control, and Health Promotion in Pakistan, a public-private partnership model of the Ministry of Health, WHO, and Heartfile, an NGO, has been operational for three years. Heartfile has played a lead role in developing and implementing the plan, which encompasses cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, mental illnesses, chronic chest diseases, and injuries. Pakistan’s Action Plan takes a population and community-centered risk-factor approach toward preventing and controlling chronic diseases through an Integrated Framework for Action, addressing a multidisciplinary range of issues with prevention, control and health promotion across the broad range of noncommunicable diseases. Work is currently underway to implement the first phase of NAP-NCD and monthly updates about the status of implementation are posted at www.Heartfile.org.

Russia: Physicians join tobacco-control effort

Russia has one of the highest smoking rates in the world: 63% of men and 12% of women currently smoke. Smoking prevalence among Russian health professionals equals that of the general population. The Russian Cancer Research Center in partnership

with CECHE and the Moscow Health Education Center, and the Russian Public Health Association is implementing an 18-month program to train Russian physicians in smoking cessation assistance and increase the number of tobacco-control clinicians in the country. Program components include a cross-sectional survey of 1000 physicians in 15 Moscow clinics; 3-hour seminars in smoking cessation counseling and intensive 3-day courses on tobacco-related health problems and tobacco-control measures; and a physician manual of strategies and science-based methods for treating patients who smoke. More than 1000 health professionals have already participated in educational sessions at 23 outpatient clinics and seven hospitals in and around Moscow. In the coming months the program will expand across Russia and free nicotine-replacement therapy (NRT) will be provided for health professionals.

Center for Communications, Health, and the Environment (CECHE) www.ceche.org/communications/russian-cancer-cen.html

Scotland: Dance program launched in 800 schools

The Dance in Schools Initiative is a £1.2 million program funded by the Scottish Executive Health Department and led by Ydance, the national youth dance agency. The initiative has been launched to encourage 144,000 children in 800 schools to take up dancing - particularly those who would normally opt out of more traditional forms of exercise, such as teenage girls. The dance in schools initiative provides physical activity and cultural expression to children of all ages and abilities. Over the next 3 years, the program will use popular music and enthusiastic young male and female tutors to engage young people in street dance, creative dance, and contemporary dance. Teachers receive in-service training and receive the program's CD ROMs so they can continue activities after the initial 5 weeks of training and workshops. The first round of the project has successfully taken place in Edinburgh, Inverclyde, Midlothian, and South Lanarkshire and is currently being implemented in Glasgow & Dumfries & Galloway.

Government of Scotland www.Scotland.gov.uk
YDance www.ydance.org

Senegal: Empowering grandmothers as part of a healthy nutrition strategy

A community study in Senegal showed that grandmothers and other older women have considerable

influence on maternal and child health at the household level in Senegal and play leading roles in household decisions and activities. Based on these findings, an innovative, participatory nutrition education strategy was developed which focused on grandmothers. A follow-up evaluation revealed positive changes in grandmothers' knowledge and advice to younger women, and in the younger women's nutritional practices. The strategy also contributed to grandmothers' sense of empowerment and strengthened their networks of friendship and solidarity with other grandmothers.

The Communication Initiative www.commit.com

Singapore: Supermarkets and free phone lines promote health

The Singapore Health Promotion Board and local supermarkets are encouraging consumers to buy products bearing a "Healthier Choice" symbol. In a special month-long campaign, people who purchased two fresh fruits or vegetables and two Healthier Choice products received an "Eat Right" calendar. Singapore's Health Promotion Board offers telephone-based health information - Singaporeans can call a free telephone number to obtain pre-recorded health information on health topics such as "How to prepare a healthy reunion meal" and "Healthy eating for mothers-to-be."

Health Promotion Board www.hpb.gov.sg

United States: Statewide school program pilots "exer-games"

Video games are often blamed for the increased inactivity of young people but they can also be used to help youth keep physically fit. West Virginia, which has one of the highest obesity rates in the United States, is integrating the popular dance video game "Dance Dance Revolution" (known as "Dancing Stage" in Europe) into physical education classes and after-school programs in 765 public schools. The game will not replace physical education and health classes but will provide an alternative for students who dislike sports. The "Dance Dance Revolution" video game is a favorite among young people because of its fast pace, energizing music, and physical challenge. The game is played on a dance pad with arrow panels that players press with their feet, timing their steps to the music and to prompts on the video screen.

Konami Digital Equipment www.konami.com

New resources

Dying too young: Addressing premature mortality and ill health due to non-communicable diseases and injuries in the Russian Federation

Explains key risk factors contributing to early deaths from CVD and calculates social and economic costs, as well as options for responding to this challenge on the basis of international good practices. Downloadable PDFs are available:

30-page summary of the report: [http://site-resources.worldbank.org/INTECA/Resources/Dying too Young Summary UPDAT ED Oct 19.pdf](http://site-resources.worldbank.org/INTECA/Resources/Dying%20too%20Young%20Summary%20UPDAT%20ED%20Oct%2019.pdf)

Full report: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECA/Resources/DTY-Final.pdf>

A toolkit for progressive policymakers in developing countries evidence-based policy: Importance and issues

Identifies lessons and approaches from Evidence-based Policy in the United Kingdom which may be valuable for policymakers and policy advisers in the public sector in developing countries. [http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Publications/Documents/EBP toolkit web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Publications/Documents/EBP%20toolkit%20web.pdf)

Promoting public health through smart growth. Building healthier communities through transportation and land use policies and practices

Examines how the built environment shapes transportation choices, and in turn, human health; reviews the existing research for a range of transportation-related health impacts on public health outcomes, including physical activity and obesity. Available online at [http://www.smart-growth.bc.ca/downloads/SGBC Health%20Report%20Final.pdf](http://www.smart-growth.bc.ca/downloads/SGBC%20Health%20Report%20Final.pdf)

INASP health links

Internet Skills for Health Information Workers: provides links to training sites and gateways to related resources. Topics include basic Internet; using health databases; electronic resources; PubMed; and evaluating medical information on the web.

<http://www.insap.inifo/health/links/intskills.html>

Cardiovascular Resources: Links to organizations and online resources <http://www.inasp.info/health/links/cardio.html>

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