

They were:

- The partnership with the popular television series *Plaza Sésamo*, through which Colombian and other Spanish-speaking children in the Americas are learning about heart-healthy habits.
- The Rheumatic Fever/Rheumatic Heart Disease project in the Pacific Islands, focused on secondary prevention, particularly for children.
- The Grenada Heart Project, through which the heart health of island communities and health systems is being mapped and appropriate community and health systems interventions designed and implemented.
- The “polypill” – a three-in-one pill that would be developed for post myocardial infarction patients at one fifth of the cost of current therapies.
- The China Bridging the Gap programme, through which the World Heart Federation and its Chinese partners are seeking to bridge the gap between cardiologic guidelines and actual treatment and care.

Dr. Fuster emphasized the importance of the World Heart Federation’s hands-on leadership.

“We cannot afford to wait for the world’s health policymakers to face the truth,” he said.

The next Congress will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in May 2008.

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World Heart day 2006 asks: “How young is your heart?”

World Heart Day fell on Sunday, 24 September, and was observed with more than the usual high interest and enthusiasm. There were more than 4.7 million hits to the World Heart Day web site (www.world-heartday.com). Although the final tally has not been compiled, media coverage was extensive.

The day’s theme – “How Young is Your Heart?” – emphasized the importance of taking active measures to keep one’s heart fit into old age.

Czechs, Estonians and Dutch enjoy World Heart Day events

In the Czech Republic, the day got off to a running start with the traditional “Bechovice Run” to

encourage jogging as a way to keep one’s heart young and healthy. More than 1000 Czechs participated. Five thousand red balloons were released into the air to symbolize the number of Czechs who die of cardiovascular diseases each month. The Czech Society of Cardiology’s mobile unit offered free cholesterol measurements and information about heart-healthy lifestyles. In the month before World Heart Day, the mobile unit visited 14 Czech towns and cities in every region of the Central European country.

In the Estonian capital of Tallinn, the Estonian Heart Association organized speeches, lectures, games, a presentation by the children’s book illustrator Asta Vender and live choir music. It also offered free cardiovascular risk assessments, T-shirts and World Heart Day diplomas. Researchers from the Estonian Institute of Cardiology and the University of Tartu lectured on such topics as the effects of lifestyle as a determinant of cardiovascular health. The activities were designed to inaugurate a year-long campaign of cardiovascular health awareness building in the Baltic country.



In the Netherlands’ Veluwe National Park, the Netherlands Heart Foundation organized a walking tour. The 2000 participants received free apples and cardiovascular risk assessments and were treated to a percussion concert.

A few days before World Heart Day, the Swiss Heart Foundation posted volunteers at major railway stations to hand out flyers, fruit and tapes for measuring waist circumference. The goal was to stress the importance of maintaining a normal body weight to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Honduras, Barbados and Kenya emphasize heart health

In the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, the Cardiology Society of Honduras posted volunteers in supermarkets to provide free cardiovascular risk assessments to 850 people.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados celebrated World Heart Day as part of Barbados Heart and Stroke Week. The activities included a poster and essay competition for primary school students.

In Kenya, the Kenya Heart Foundation emphasized the importance of physical activity to heart health by organizing a 5-km walk and two football matches. One match was between high school girls to stress the importance of women's heart health.

Asia responds

The Japan Heart Foundation celebrated World Heart Day with various awareness building activities. Its volunteers distributed tapes for measuring waist circumference. In Tokyo, it organized a public symposium about walking and controlling blood pressure as means to ensure a healthy heart.

In Taiwan, the Taiwan Society of Cardiology emphasized physical activity. Despite rain, 600 people participated in the various events, which included health check ups, educational games and the sharing of athletes' tips about exercise.

In Mangalore, India, Olympian Vandana Shanbhag led a 4-km race to encourage jogging as a way to keep one's heart young and healthy. Volunteers distributed free water bottles. The race culminated with refreshments and speeches about the benefits of a heart-healthy lifestyle.

In the Seychelles, Health Minister Macsuzy Mondon presented 30 "Healthy Heart Award" certificates for sustainable projects to improve community heart health. Among the recognized projects were restaurants that serve heart-healthy food, schools



that have taken steps to reduce student obesity and workplaces that have banned smoking and organized exercise classes for their workers.

The next World Heart Day will be on Sunday, 30 September 2007, and will focus on healthy families and communities.

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World Heart Federation launches global RHD centre

The World Heart Federation has launched a global Centre of Excellence for the control of rheumatic heart disease (RHD).

"The global Centre of Excellence in RHD Control is a web-based resource primarily for clinicians, health practitioners and policy-makers in developing countries, where the disease is still common," said Professor Sidney Smith, Chairman of the World Heart Federation's Scientific Advisory Board.

"Anyone with access to the Internet can download the latest guidelines, educational and training materials, ask questions and submit their own materials. It is an invaluable resource for developing countries and is a model for how health information should be presented for any disease."

Some of the training resources and training materials are already available online at: <http://www.worldheart.org/about-sab-councils-acute-rheumatic-fever.php>

Bacterium causes RHD

Rheumatic fever (RF) can develop after an infection by the group A streptococcus bacterium. The resulting inflammatory illness, called rheumatic heart disease, can damage heart valves, leading to disability or death.

RF strikes an estimated 500,000 people per year. The number of people living with RHD is estimated at 15.5 million to 19.6 million, of whom more than 3 million are estimated to be children. RHD kills up to 300,000 people per year.¹

¹ *Heartbeat*, September 2004, Carapetis J, Chairman, World Heart Federation Council on Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease.