



International Epidemiological Association

European Epidemiology Federation

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Letter from the Chair

The IARC, for the first time, and following years of research, has defined “air pollution” as a leading environmental cause of cancer. This important decision was announced in a press release on 17th October 2013 (www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarcnews/pdf/pr221_E.pdf). “Our task was to evaluate the air everyone breathes rather than focus on specific air pollutants,” explains Dana Loomis, Deputy Head of the Monographs Section.

“Air pollution” as a whole and “particulate matter” as a component of it have been separately evaluated; both have been classified as “carcinogenic to humans” and

placed in group 1 of the IARC classification. The summary evaluation has been published online by Lancet Oncology. The strength of association between lung cancer and air pollution has been evaluated to be similar to the association for passive smoking but the impact on the population is much more relevant for the former given that it is much more difficult for an individual to avoid air pollution than passive smoking, and therefore common policies are needed to improve air quality and health for all. This evaluation and the subsequent concern it raises comes on top of other evidence of risks associated with environmental and societal disease determinants and it emphasizes the need to put major social, environmental and occupational disease risk factors on the agendas of research institutions and research commissioners.

The European Union is launching HORIZON 2020, the European framework for research in all scientific fields running from 2014 to 2020. A draft document, “Health, demographic change and well-being”, circulated in September 2013, refers to the main funding programme for health related research in the EU for the next two years. The International Epidemiological Association (IEA), the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE), and the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) have expressed their concern that the document does not sufficiently focus on major social, environmental and occupational disease risk factors and does not adequately address the pressing public health problems of European citizens. An IEA, ISEE, and EUPHA joint statement has been prepared and a letter sent to Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, the EU commissioner, asking for a revision of the draft document in order to add among its priorities health systems and policy research in order to better fit the European

population's health problems. In past frameworks different priorities have been set for public health research. The hope is that the EU gives heed to the concerns raised by epidemiologists by introducing more opportunity to develop public health research at the European level.



IEA-EEF board meeting in Aarhus: (left to right) Henrik Støvring, Katarzyna Szamotulska, David Batty, Henrique Barros, Maurice Zeegers, Adele Seniori Costantini, Eva Grill.

The theme of health systems and policy research is crucial for Europe in the light of local health inequalities and cross-border differences in health programmes. This topic will be the theme of the special European session that will be held at the WCE2014 in Anchorage entitled "Politics, Policies and Inequalities". We intend to present in outline the differences across countries in developing research and in evaluating solutions. We intend to discuss what research is needed to provide scientific basis for policies directed to the principles of appropriateness, cost effectiveness and fairness. We call upon epidemiologists involved in this type of study to present their projects and results in order that we all gain a better understanding of the state of the art and of the research needs.

Adele Seniori Costantini

Chair of the IEA European Epidemiology Federation (IEA EEF), European Councillor, International Epidemiological Association (IEA)

Short profiles - Portuguese Association of Epidemiology (APE)

The Portuguese Association of Epidemiology (APE) was founded in 1988 to promote Epidemiology research and training.

Since the beginning, APE:

- Has an interdisciplinary focus on epidemiological work providing a forum for professionals with several backgrounds and engaged in different activity sectors
- Promotes meetings and conferences, congresses and other similar activities;
- Cooperates with governmental or private agencies, consulting, suggesting and taking the appropriate initiatives, through specialized committees that explore scientific concerns or advising entities in the field.



To better achieve the purpose of providing a scientific forum for Portuguese Epidemiologists, the Association promotes the exchange of information and contacts between its members (more than 200 members), encourages the training and continued education. It also collaborates with national or international organizations in pursuit of statutory objectives.

The Portuguese Association of Epidemiology has a special focus on young epidemiologists and an award for the best publication by a young epidemiologist was created.

The 2013 National Congress was organized together with the Spanish Society of Epidemiology, last September, in Granada (Spain), as part of the Ibero-American

Congress of Epidemiology and Public Health. More than 30 Portuguese members presented oral communications on major areas of clinical, population and translational epidemiology.

Henrique Barros

Chair, Public Health Institute of Porto University, Portugal

European Congress of Epidemiology 2013 in Retrospect

August 11, 2013, was a Sunday with sun right from the early morning in Aarhus. In the organizing committee all were excited and arrived early to the venue at Aarhus University where pre-congress courses were held. The first I met this morning was however not an organizer, but four participants from Thailand who had risen early to be sure not to miss the event. To me this energy and enthusiasm defined the events in the next four days. In total nearly 300 had signed up to participate in the morning courses, as had for the afternoon courses. All courses were in high demand, but in particular the courses given by Miguel Hérnan (Causal Inference in Epidemiology) and Tyler VanderWeele (Mediation Analysis) were very popular. In the evaluations several participants indicated that for them the courses had been the highlight of the congress. Logistics were however strained with just 300 in the University setting with long lines for food, and as organizer it was a relief to arrive at the main venue Sunday afternoon, Scandinavian Congress Center. This five star congress facility provided a very professional setting for the remainder of the congress, which above all secured that participants, speakers and organizers could all focus on the scientific content of the congress. Valerie Beral and Neil Pearce were the two invited speakers Sunday afternoon followed by a festive reception at Aarhus Concert Hall hosted by the Mayor of Aarhus.

Monday and Tuesday were the core days of the European Congress, while Wednesday was dedicated to a Nordic perspective with Scandinavian registerbased research at the forefront. Both Monday and Tuesday started with invited lectures attended by all 650 participants. During each of these days nearly 200 posters were on display in the entrance lobby, and more than 60 contributed oral presentations were given in parallel sessions



ranging in topics from diabetes, cancer, infections to genetics and population studies over reproductive epidemiology and mental health. All presentations had been confined to just nine (9!) minutes to allow as many as possible to present their research, which meant that the congress had to be to executed in a continued high pace. While this overall was a success, it did mean that time for discussion was in relatively short supply in parallel sessions. This was however offset by some of the invited sessions where discussions were lively even though they took place in a large congress hall and with a large audience. Monday evening the congress dinner took place at the Varna mansion located at the forest clad shores in the south of Aarhus with a nice view over the bay. The dinner was followed by live music and rumor has it that only with the greatest efforts of patience and persistence was it possible to close the party and get everyone back to their hotels with the last pre-booked bus.

Tuesday had a special session where three editors, Shah Ebrahim, Vera Ehrenstein, and

Peter Allebeck, all presented a poster they had chosen as most noteworthy and likely to be publishable in their respective journals. Not only did this provide a celebration for the three winners, but the session gave a unique insight into the reasoning and motivation of editors, which provided most useful guidance for everyone about to plan and write up epidemiological research. The scientific program Tuesday ended with an invited talk on the future of epidemiology given by Timothy Lash, which was also the official closing session of the European part of the congress. In the evening a reception, guided tour and a social dinner was held at the campus of Aarhus University, which is a renowned architectural site for its modernist yellow brick-stone buildings carefully placed and modeled into a park creating a distinctly sober and minimalistic Scandinavian feel, while maintaining a welcoming and pleasant appearance.



During the congress nine special symposia were held which allowed for a more expanded and in-depth focus on current topics in epidemiology. Topics ranged from more applied studies on for example migrant reproductive health and screening and

lifestyle intervention for chronic diseases to more methodological ones with focus on self-controlled case series and excess and etiological fractions.



The final day was dedicated to Nordic register-based research, and yet many non-Scandinavians had decided to stay and participate, which meant that nearly 400 were in attendance for hearing Mads Melbye, Camilla Stoltenberg, and Anders Ekbohm, among others.

Of the 220 returned evaluation schemes only one was not either “Very satisfied” or “Satisfied” when rating their overall impression of the congress. The congress accounting shows that the finances came out with a small profit, and so we as organizers came away very positive and relieved – it felt more or less like having been part of a four day festive event with 650 happy and smiling attendants. A great thank you to everyone making this unique experience possible!

Henrik Støvring

President of the Local Organizing Committee and of the Danish Epidemiological Society

Concepts of Epidemiology: seventh crash course 9th-13th of December 2013, Edinburgh, UK

This is the 9th 5-day crash course for those who want to lay a sound foundation to their knowledge of epidemiology, particularly as it relates to public health practice, policy and research. It is most suitable for people in the health professions, such as nurses, doctors, health promoters, health policy makers and health researchers. Social sciences, statistics and health management colleagues may also find the course useful. Delegate feedback from the previous courses has been superlative.

The course website is:

<http://www.lifelong.ed.ac.uk/epidemiology/courseinfo.htm>

Raj S. Bhopal

*Bruce and John Usher Professor of Public Health
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Open Access Epidemiology

An invitation to IEA/EEF members

With pride we announce that the Netherlands Epidemiology Society, in collaboration with Open Access Publishing House London, has launched a new scientific journal: Open Access Epidemiology.

This is one of the first journals in Epidemiology that is truly accessible and for free for readers by anyone from anywhere and with a strong base in Europe. It will be indexed by all relevant search engines, including Medline, Google Scholar and Embase.

To be competitive, the page charges for authors (i.e., £250) are a fraction when compared to other Open Access journals in the Medical field. We do not impose article processing charges for submissions from

upper middle or lower middle income countries and supports low income country submissions by waiving APC charges. It is further our policy that the authors retain their copyright and not the journal.

By these means, the journal hopes to facilitate further developments in Epidemiology across Europe and the world and as an independent discipline in the health sciences.

To celebrate the launch of this new journal and to create a strong European base, we would like to invite the European members of the IEA to submit a paper to OA Epidemiology. We have been able to negotiate that a member of the IEA/EEF can submit a paper for free in the year 2013 (discount code EEF2013). If you are interested please email us directly.

Maurice Zeegers

Editor-in-Chief of OA Epidemiology

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Obituary

Patricia Buffler, president-elect of the IEA, whose term was to start in August 2014, died on 26th September 2013. All those who had the opportunity of knowing her, certainly will have appreciated her intelligence, vivacity, empathy, her ability to communicate and not least her contribution to research on societal and environmental causes of disease as well as her attitude to advocacy for disease control in society. She was actively contributing to the next WCE 2014 in Anchorage, where a specific session is now planned to remember her and her work. Patricia's death leaves a big gap in the whole scientific community. She has left us a great stimulus to continue to proceed along the road of research and disease prevention.

Remember

Events, Courses and Jobs are listed on the constantly updated RSS Feed. Go to

<http://www.iea-europe.org/>

to subscribe and to be up to date.

Note from the Editors

Please send us any material you think (hope) will be of general interest to epidemiologists working across Europe. We are particularly interested in news from national societies, the announcement of international events and training courses (both short and long term), vacancies and any other work or paper related to epidemiologic research. Your information will be published on our website as feed, in our newsletters and/or sent into the world as



a tweet. Please follow us on twitter if you want to stay up to date on the latest vacancies @EEF_Jobs or interesting courses and events @EEF_Events related to epidemiologic research.

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Almost surreal – Ginkgo biloba under the Bavarian autumn sun.