

Research Network

Social Epidemiology, Population Health and Violence (SEPHV)



Research Network Description

The SEPHV

The research network (group) *Social Epidemiology, Population Health and Violence (SEPHV)* aims at advancing research on the determinants of health inequalities and determinants of interpersonal violence globally. In addition it aims to promote research on interventions and policies to eliminate those inequalities (especially inequities). The network rely on different disciplines and methodologies such as Medicine, Epidemiology, Social Medicine, Statistics, Demography, Psychology, Nursing, Ethnology, Anthropology, Sociology and Political Science.

The group's main goal is to increase understanding of the determinants of population health and health inequalities in developed and developing countries (low and middle income) which operate at multiple levels and promote effective action to improve overall population health. In addition, the group also investigates the impact of societal factors on interpersonal violence throughout the life span in developed and developing countries as well as violence across specific groups (e.g.homeless) and promote intervention research aimed at reducing violence, abuse and neglect.

Current Research Projects

A. Socio-Epidemiological Studies of Interpersonal Violence

There has been a long history in sociology of viewing social and economic conditions as general determinants of violence behaviour but recently epidemiologists have come to view socioeconomic factors as explanatory variables contributing to causations for violence instead of only use them as controlling variables. The

SEPHV group is interested in understanding the mechanisms through which upstream determinants are related to victimization as well as physical and psychological health outcomes. We use data from European, middle and low-income countries to investigate the role of socioeconomic status, context, and neighbourhood deprivation on victimization and health outcomes across life span (childhood, adulthood and among elderly). Currently we are collecting data in Sweden and other EU countries (8), Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Mozambique), Latin America (Colombia); Asia (e.g. Bangladesh).

B. Child Health in Developing Countries

Infant and child mortality has declined in many low-income countries. However in many parts of the world and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, childhood mortality still very high. We use data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS Measure+) to assess social determinants of child morbidity and mortality. Current studies focus on child mortality and morbidity (diarrhea and acute respiratory infections) in children under the age of five in Mozambique) and the role of religion as a determinant of mortality and morbidity outcomes.

C. Social Inequalities in Coronary Heart Disease

Although cardiovascular mortality has decreased by approximately three-quarters over the past three decades in high-income countries, mortality rates have increased over the same period in many low- and middle-income countries. It is estimated that by 2030, the number of cardiovascular deaths will increase to 23 million, with about eighty-five percent occurring in low- and middle-income countries. Another greater cause of concern is the early age of cardiovascular disease in developing countries compared with developed countries. Our studies aim at investigating the mechanisms through which social and economic factors influence the risk of CVD in developing countries.

Currently studies are underway in Iran using both hospital and population based data.

D. Health and Health Behaviour among Adolescents

There has been increased interest in understanding the determinants of health and health behaviour among adolescents throughout the world. However the bulk of knowledge on the issue comes from developed Countries. We are conducting a survey of health behaviour among school children (12-14 years of age) in Teheran, Iran to investigate the determinants of health behaviours, lifestyles and their perceptions of different aspects of family and school environment. The project will help to develop national information systems on health and lifestyles among young people.

E. Quality of Life and Congenital Heart Disease

Medical and surgical advances have resulted in most children with congenital heart disease surviving to adulthood. However, little is known about day to day functioning and wellbeing of adults with congenital heart disease in developing countries. Thus, the ongoing project on quality of life among adults with CHD is expected to provide the first insights on the overall quality of life among adults currently living with congenital heart disease in Iran.

C. Euro - Studies (EU- Projects)

The Research group is involved in 4 EU projects: (1) EU-ABUEL Project (Sweden, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Spain and Portugal) which investigated Abuse and Neglect among elderly. The research group is the overall coordinator for this project; (2) EU-PROMO Project which is investigating best practices in mental health among six marginalised groups (UK, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, Poland, Check Republic, Lithuania, Portugal, Ireland, Germany, Hungary). The research group is a partner and coordinator for WP4; 3) EU-Dove Project (Portugal, Sweden, Hungary, Belgium, UK, Germany) which investigates domestic violence in Europe whit the research group as partner and

coordinator of WP and (4) EUGATE Project (best practices of mental health for immigrants in 14 EU countries). The data collection within all projects has ended. However, data analysis and dissemination of results is still unfolding.

D. Employment, Working Conditions and Gender Inequalities in Health in the Mid-Sweden Region (The EWGIHMS Project) (2013-ongoing)

This projects investigates the impact of employment and working conditions on gender inequalities in physical and psychological health in the Mid Region Counties of Jämtland and Västernorrland. The project will apply multilevel methodology to account for inter-country variations in health outcomes. The project is carried out in Collaboration with the two County Public Health Centers, and Mid-Sweden University. International partners in the project are the Department of Epidemiology, University of Porto and Kaunas University of Medical Science.

Education

The research group provides three courses within its research domain: (1) Demography and Health; (2) Social and Economic Determinants of Health in Developing Countries and (3) Violence, Society and Health (Developed Countries). The three courses were approved by KI board of Education, are listed in the KI Catalogue and have been given since 2008. The group is progressively developing other courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Group Members

Senior Researchers

- **Gloria Macassa MD, MPH, PhD in Epidemiology, Professor of Public Health Sciences, Leader of the Research Group/Network.** She is a medical doctor and holds a MPH with emphasis in Demography from Karolinska Institute and a PhD in Epidemiology from the Centre for Health Equity Studies (CHESS), Karolinska Institute/Stockholm University. Her research interest focus on social determinants of health and population health and determinants of interpersonal and collective violence in developed and developing countries. She is involved in several EU (e.g. ABUEL, PROMO, EUGATE and DOVE) and International projects. She is a Professor in Public Health Sciences at Mid-Sweden University, a senior lecturer in Public health sciences at the Department of Occupational and Public Health Sciences, University of Gävle and an *guest Associate* Professor in Social Medicine at the Department of Public Health Sciences, Karolinska Institute.

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- **Joaquim Soares PhD in Psychology, Professor of Psychology and Professor of Public Health Sciences.** He is a PhD in Psychology, a licensed psychologist, psychotherapist and Professor in psychology and public health sciences at Mid-Sweden University and Karolinska Institute. He is currently the Academic Leader for the Division of Public Health Sciences at Mid-Sweden University. His research interests include musculoskeletal

pain, man and women's health situation, violence, burnout, hopelessness and anxiety disorders in the general population. He is an expert in violence research and is involved in four EU-Projects (PROMO, DOVE, EUGATE and ABUEL). He is the coordinator of EU-ABUEL.

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- **Örjan Sundin PhD, Professor of Clinical Psychology.** He is currently the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Mid-Sweden University and Academic Leader at the Division of Psychology, Mid-Sweden University. His research interests include emotion (anxiety, anger), pain, applied psychology and psychophysiology.. He is the Swedish Partner Coordinator for the EU-Dove project. Regarding domestic violence in 8 EU countries. E-mail: orjan.Sundin@miun.se

- **Nicola Graham-Kevan PhD in Psychology, Professor of Clinical Psychology.** She is a reader in the psychology of aggression at the University of Central Lancashire and Mid-Sweden University. Her research interests include sex differences in aggression, physical aggression between young men, family violence and women's offending behaviour, bullying and attributions towards sex abuse.

- **Niclas Oloffson, PhD.** He is a PhD in Public health sciences and a Senior Lecturer at the Center for Public Health – Västernorrland County (Härnösand). His research interests include violence through the life course.

- **Bahareh Eslami MD, PhD.** She is a medical doctor and holds a PhD in Health Sciences (Public Health) from Mid-Sweden University . Her research focus on the quality of life of adults with congenital heart disease as well as interpersonal violence

- **Antonio Ponce de Leon, PhD in Statistics, Professor of Statistics.** He holds a PhD in Statistics from London School of Economics and Political Science and he is Professor in Statistics at the University of Rio de Janeiro (Institute of Social Medicine) and a Guest Professor at the Division of Social Medicine, Karolinska Institute and Center for Health Equity Studies (CHESS). His research interests include the effects of air pollution on population health, multilevel modelling, analysis of longitudinal data and inequalities in health and health care in developed and developing countries.

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- **Ulla Wihlman, RPT, PhD in Public Health.** She is a registered physiotherapist specialized in occupational health care and earned a PhD in Public Health from the Nordic School of Public Health. Her main research interests are leadership and strategic change including inter-organisational collaboration and co-ordination of services to vulnerable groups of society . She is involved in the EUGATE project. She is currently a researcher at the Department of Public Health Sciences KI (Section for Intervention and

Implementation Research and Social Medicine). She is an expert in Qualitative research. **E-mail:** Ulla.Wihlman@ki.se

- **Giorgio Grossi, PhD in Psychology, Associate Professor of Medical Psychology.** He holds a PhD in Psychology from Stockholm University and he is an Associate Professor of Medical Psychology from KI. Currently he is a researcher at the Stress Research Institute at Stockholm University. His research interests are stress, fatigue, burnout, gender differences, and intervention research, mainly involving cognitive behavioural therapy. E-mail: giorgio.grossi@stressforskning.su.se

- **Hamid Reza Kankeh, RN, PhD in Nursing, Associate Professor of Nursing:** He is an Associate Professor in nursing education at University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation in Teheran. He is head of the Disaster Research Group the University University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation in Teheran and a guest researcher at the Division of Social Medicine, Karolinska Institute and Dept. of Clinical Science and Education, Karolinska Institutet Södersjukhuset His research interests and expertise include qualitative research and health care services during disaster times. **E-mail:** hamid.khankeh@ki.se

- **Gebrenergus Ghilagaber, PhD in Statistics, Professor of Statistics.** Dr. Ghilagaber holds BSc and MSc degrees

(AAU), and PhLic, and PhD degrees in Statistics (Uppsala University) as well as PhLic degree in Demography (Stockholm University). Currently, he is the Director of the Department of Statistics, Stockholm University. His research interests include Survival Models (Event-History Analysis), Multilevel and Multiprocess Models, Selection and Causality, Bayesian Methods, and applications of these models/methods in Demography, Public Health, and related areas in developing and developed countries. E-mail: Gebre@stat.su.se

- **Olalekan Uthman, MPH, PhD in Social Medicine, Assistant Professor of Public Health and Research Synthesis.** He is an Assistant professor in Research Synthesis at the Warwick - Centre for Applied Health Research & Delivery (WCAHRD) Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick and Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK.. His research interests include evidence-based medicine and social determinants of population health. In addition he is interested in mathematical modeling of infectious diseases as well as mathematical models to understand epidemiology and control of infections of humans.

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PhD Students

- = **Seyed Hesameddin Abbasi, MD**, Director of the Research Department, Tehran Heart Center, Tehran University of Medical Sciences. *Topic: Social Inequalities in Coronary*

- Heart Disease in Iran (Registered at Mid –Sweden University)*
- **Ismail Yahaya MB; BS, MSc Public Health**, Research Fellow, Public Health, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of Birmingham, UK *Topic: : Childhood Sexual Abuse Against Girls in Sub-Saharan Africa : Individual and Contextual Risk Factors (Registered at Mid –Sweden University). To defend May 15, 2014.*

 - **Diego Arturo Sarasti Vanegas, MD, MPH**, Professor of Social Paediatrics, University of Antioquia, Colombia *Topic: The Impact of Social Stratification and Social Context on Family Violence in the Region of Medellín-Colombia (Registered at the University of Antioquia, Colombia)*

 - **Afroza Begum BSc, MPH, Associate Professor**, Maternal and Child Health Unit. *Topic: Suicide Ideation among Adolescents in Rural Bangladesh (Registered at Mid –Sweden University)*

 - **Maryam Ramzayan Msc Health Economics**, Iran Ministry of Health. *Topic: Determinants of Health and Health Behaviour among School Children in Teheran (Registered at Mid –Sweden University)*

Master Students

- **Rocio Winnersjö BSc** in Ethnology from Stockholm University and a BSc in Public Health, KI. *Topic 1: Social Position, Social Context and Interpersonal Violence in Stockholm County (Registered at Mid –Sweden University). Topic 2: Waiting times in health care*
- **Kingsley Ayuk- NSok**, BSc Anthropology, MPH (Health Promotion), Master Student in Mental Health. *Topic: Suicide Ideation and HIV among Adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa. Registered at Uppsala University, Department of International Health*
- **Jennie Ukala, BSC Public Health, KI**
Master student in Population/Public Health at the Center for Health Equity Studies (CHESS). *Topic: Determinants of health care seeking behaviour in Uganda (Registered at CHESS)*

Guest Researcher (s)

- **Mariona Pons i Viques** MSc, PhD student; Pompeu Fabra University, Spain **Topic: Social Inequalities in Breast Cancer in Barcelone Region**
- **Harry Cepahs Charsmar 2010- current**
He holds a MPH from KI and MSc in Political Science (with major in International Politics and Relations) From Stockholm University. Currently he is MSc candidate in Demography at Stockholm University. He has worked as Research Assistant at University of Southern Denmark, Unit for Health Promotion Research. His research interests include Health and Safety Promotion, Politics of Health, Sovereignty

and globalization, Migration and Health . He is currently investigating the “widening of the gap in life expectancy between women and men in high income countries” (with emphasis to Sweden). *Topic: Morbidity and Mortality decline in Developed Countries*

- **Muhammad Navid Tahir, BSPT, MPH (Health Promotion) 2011-current.** He is Physiotherapist and holds a Masters Degree in Health Promotion from Karolinska Institute. Currently; he is work as a Research Officer in Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. His research interests are HIV/AIDS, Emergency Medicine, Emergency Services, Road Traffic Accidents, Road Safety, Disaster Management, Fire Safety and any other health promotion topics. *Topic1: Traffic injuries managed by Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan; Topic 2: Stress and work environment among emergency workers in Pakistan*

Research Grants (2007-current)

The research carried out by the SEPHV group is funded among others by the European Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) and DG Sanko (for EU projects); SIDA-SAREC and through Local Governments (Ministries of Health, Universities and Research institutes) for projects in developing countries.

Research Partners

The research network (group) maintains research collaboration with several partners around the world. Examples are a) Mozambique Ministry of Health (National Institute of Health) and Eduardo Mondlane University (*Martinho Dgedge, PhD Public*

Health, National Director of Health); b) Department of Public Health, Protestant University of Applied Sciences, Ludwigsburg, Germany (*Juta Lindert, PhD, Professor in Epidemiology and Public Health*); School of Public Health, Universite Catholique de Louvain, Brussels, Belgium (*Vincent Lorant, PhD, Professor in Medical Sociology*); c) Department of Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine, University of Granada, Spain (*Francisco Torres-Goncalvez, PhD, Professor in Psychiatry, Director of GAISAN*); d) National School of Public Health, Department of Sociology, Athens, Greece (*Elizabeth Ioannidi, PhD in Sociology*); e) Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, University of Porto, Portugal (*Henrique Barros, PhD, Professor in Medical Sociology, National HIV/AIDS coordinator*); f) Department of Gerontological Research, Italian National Research Centre on Aging, Ancona , Italy (*Lamura Giovani, PhD Economics; Gabriella Melchiorre, PhD*); Teheran Heart Centre, Teheran University of Medical Sciences; g) Department of Health Management and Department of Family Medicine, Kaunas University of Medicine, Lithuania (*Mindaugas Stankunas; PhD and Lina Jaruseviciene MD, MPH, PhD*), h) Teheran Heart Centre, Teheran University of Health Sciences (Department of Research); National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine, NIPSON, Bangladesh; University of Warwick and University of Central Lacanshire,; Center for Public Health, Landstinget Jämtland, Sweden and Center for Public Health, Landstinget Västernorrland, Sweden.

Publications (Selected 2012/14)

1. Maria Gabriella Melchiorre, Gloria Macassa and Henrique Barros. The chronicity and severity of abuse among older persons by country: a European study. JOURNAL OF

2. Macassa, G. , Walander, A. & Soares, J. J. (2013). Violence against women in Stockholm County : Does marital status matter?. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, vol. 5: 2, ss. 101-111.
3. Macassa, G. , Sundin, Ö. , Viitasara, E. , Barros, H. , Torres Gonzales, F. , Ioannidi-Kapolou, E. , Melchiorre, M. , Lindert, J. & et al. (2013). Psychological abuse among older persons in Europe: A cross-sectional study. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, vol. 5: 1, ss. 16-34.
4. Eslami, B. , Örjan, S. , Macassa, G. , Khankeh, H. R. & Soares, J. J. F. (2013). Gender differences in health conditions and socio-economic status of adults with congenital heart disease in a developing country. *Cardiology in the Young*, vol. 23: 02, ss. 209-218.
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 9. Yahaya, I. , Uthman, O. , Soares, J. & Macassa, G. (2013). Social disorganization and history of child sexual abuse against girls in Sub-Saharan Africa: A multilevel analysis. *BMC International Health and Human Rights*, vol. 13: 33
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 11. Innocent, M. , Ndonko, F. , Ngo'o, G. , Soares, J. & Macassa, G. (2012). Breaking the Silence: Understanding the practice of Breast ironing in Cameroon. *African Journal of Health Sciences*, vol. 23: 4, ss. 232-237.
 12. Macassa, G. , Ghilagaber, G. , Charsmar, H. , Walander, A. , Sundin, Ö. & Soares, J. (2012). Geographic differentials in mortality of children in Mozambique : their implications for achievement of millenium development goal 4. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, vol. 30: 3, ss. 331-345.
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- partner violence in Maputo City, Mozambique. *International Journal of Women's Health*, vol. 4, ss. 491-503.
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