



Applying Public Health Policies to Effectively Reduce Health Inequalities amongst Families and Children

Health inequalities are currently regarded as one of the most important public health challenges in the EU. However, we do not have sufficient knowledge of which actions are effective to level up the gradient in health inequalities. The Gradient (March 2009 – 2012) aims to address this knowledge gap, to ensure that political momentum is maintained and that operational strategies can be developed to make progress on this issue. The focus of the research project will be on families and children, since the greatest impact on reducing the health gradient can be achieved through early life policy interventions and by creating equal opportunities during childhood and adolescence.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Gradient project strives to:

- Develop a consensus-based European Framework to monitor and evaluate public health policies and their impact on the gradients that exists in the social determinants that generate health inequalities.
- Investigate if and why children and families from different socio-economic groups respond and act differently to public health policy interventions
- Identify protective factors for the health of children and young people and their families focusing on social relations and social networks, in order to explore alternative policy options that moderate social inequities in health.
- Analyse and compare the impact of general policies for families and children with the impact of policies targeted at 'at risk' families and children.
- Formulate policy recommendations at European, national, regional and local level and to disseminate the findings across the European Union

OUTPUT

YEAR ONE

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| May 2009 | (1) Cooperation agreement for an effective research consortium that operates at a European level and has the ability to further develop the evidence base for public health policies that reduce health inequalities, (2) a communication and dissemination strategy and project web-tool |
| 22-23 June '09 | Project Steering Group Meeting 1 in Brussels |
| July '09 | Glossary of concepts and publicity material |
| October '09 | First Evaluation Framework Workshop |
| January 2010 | Review of protective factors for health inequalities (article) |
| March '10 | (1) a publication on evaluation methodologies related to policy impacts on health inequalities, (2) a review paper on differential impacts of |

policies among families and children from different socio-economic groups, (3) a literature review on universal and targeted policies.

YEAR TWO

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| April '10 | Project Steering Group Meeting 2 in Brussels |
| May '10 | Second Evaluation Framework workshop |
| June '10 | Report on results of the secondary data analysis related to social capital |
| July '10 | Overview of effective health policies aimed at children and families |
| August '10 | Interim policy recommendations on protective factors |
| November '10 | Report on results from document analysis: targeted and universal policies |
| January 2011 | Analysis of differential impact of public health policies between SES groups |
| March '11 | Third Evaluation Framework workshop Project Steering Group Meeting 3 in Brussels |

YEAR THREE

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|----------------|---|
| May '11 | Quality Matrix on success factors and barriers for effective impact of policies amongst lower SES groups |
| June '11 | Evaluation Framework & best practice template |
| September '11 | Report on results from interview study about universal and targeted policies |
| June –Oct. '11 | Interim policy recommendations on evaluation methodology, on differential impacts of policies by SES groups, and on universal and targeted policies |
| December '11 | Project Steering Group Meeting 4 in Brussels & Book and Final policy recommendations |
| March '12 | Several published articles |

ORGANISATION AND COORDINATION

This work will be undertaken by a research consortium consisting of 34 members from 12 institutions with expertise in the areas of public policy, public health and health promotion, and child and adolescent health at the local, regional, national, EU and international level. The work will be divided into 6 work packages, making use of 12 work package meetings and coordinated by different work package leaders. EuroHealthNet will provide the overall coordination and will feed research results into policy making processes at the national and EU level. In addition, a Scientific Advisory Board consisting of four leading experts will help to ensure scientific excellence.

| Participant organisation | Country |
|--|---------------------|
| EuroHealthNet (coordinator) | |
| Flemish Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention | Belgium (BE) |
| University of Ghent | Belgium (BE) |
| National Institute of Public Health | Czech Republic (CZ) |
| Int. Health Development Research Centre (University of Brighton) | England (UK) |
| Bundeszentrale für Gesundheitliche Aufklärung | Germany (DE) |
| Research Centre for Health Promotion (University of Bergen) | Norway (NO) |
| Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota | Slovenia (SI) |
| Universidad de la Laguna | Spain (ES) |
| Karolinska Institute | Sweden (SE) |

NL Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
(NL)

Netherlands

Public Health Institute of Iceland

Iceland (IS)

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