Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

DECiPHEr

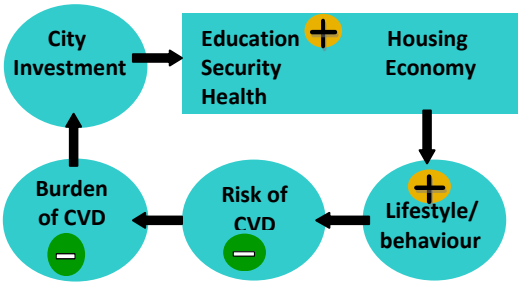
An intercity project funded by the European Union

Rationale

Over one third of the burden of disease in Europe can be traced to five population level risk factors (smoking, blood pressure, cholesterol, obesity and alcohol). These are the primary risk factors for cardio-vascular disease (CVD) which are largely the product of peoples' lifestyle.

The 'New Public Health' agenda in Europe acknowledges the key role of Cities in promoting the health of their populations. At present evidence about the impact of different types of distal ('upstream') investments in a City on risk levels within a population are fragmented and difficult to interpret.

Aim and objectives



Aim: to systematically inform city policy makers decision takers of the relative cost-effectiveness of different types of investments by partners in shaping the lifestyle of the community (proximal determinants) and thus reducing the level and burden of disease.

Objective 1: to enhance and transfer to European cities an innovative modeling tool, designed to predict the impact of population level risk reduction on the cost of acute CHD related hospital admissions and death rates over a five-year period. The enhanced model will be used to assess the impact of City level investments in six domains (of housing, economy, environment, education, security and health) on lifestyle issues and subsequently on risk level and the burden of disease

Objective 2: To jointly develop with partners and transfer an innovative Vocational and Educational Training (VET) Programme, designed for professionals, technicians and Politicians in each domain public, to facilitate the use of the risk assessment tool in the decision making process in City policy planning and investment decisions

The partnership

The partnership brings together four City authorities drawn from the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, together with two academic institutions with a wealth of public health research and VET expertise. The City partners all have relatively well developed City Health Development Plans (CHDPs) and the resources to make an impact.

The project is coordinated by Sheffield Hallam University which has developed (a) models which estimate the cost the cost effectiveness of public health Interventions on the burden of CHD in a population and (b) methodologies for Health Impact Assessments that estimate the effect of City investment programmes on population health.

Outcome

Tangible: (a) a tool for modelling the impact of city level interventions on CHD risk factors; (b) a VET programme that helps planners evaluate their current strategy for City level Public Health (c) An international conference on the impact of evidence based policy on the achievement of the WHO & EU strategies for health

Intangible: (a) improved Public Health investment planning (b) advancement of WHO's healthy cities agenda for City Health Development Planning; (c) improved evidence base for public health investment; (d) healthier city populations.

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