



# Research for Health Newsletter

## April-June 2016

*A periodic, informative bulletin reporting on the activities of research for health from the office of Knowledge, Bioethics, and Research to inform countries, partners, and PAHO managers and staff on the advances in the execution of PAHO's [Policy on Research for Health](#). Please send questions and comments to [cuervolu@paho.org](mailto:cuervolu@paho.org).*

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## SPOTLIGHT

### Key lessons for knowledge translation in Latin America



The roundtable “how to improve the integration of research evidence with health policies in Latin America?” was held on June 24<sup>th</sup> during the [Epidemiology Congress of the Americas 2016](#). It discussed current practices and strategies to bridge scientific knowledge with public policies and the need to further engage epidemiologists and especially social sciences in the process. Key points were having a common understanding of what constitutes evidence, defining research to be prioritized, and having mechanisms for effective knowledge dissemination. The roundtable included Dr. Miranda from PAHO's [Advisory Committee on Health Research](#), PAHO partners, members of the International Epidemiological Association (IEA), and representatives of prestigious universities in the Americas. PAHO was represented by Dr. Luis Gabriel Cuervo, Senior Advisor for Research Promotion and Development, and Louisa Stüwe, consultant, both from the Office of Knowledge Management, Bioethics and Research.

### Equitable Access to Health Communications for Deaf



The World Health Organization (WHO), as an inclusive organization, has promoted equitable access to health communications among deaf and hard of hearing populations across the globe by providing sign language versions in [American \(ASL\)](#), [French \(LSF\)](#), [Spanish \(LSE\)](#), and [British \(BSL\)](#) in relation to Zika. [Christopher Khanoyan](#) from KBR advocated making this happen by collaborating with WHO Headquarters and addressing barriers to online resources on the WHO website for deaf and hard-of-hearing populations across the globe.

## Students 4 Best Evidence Network and Opportunity!



Students 4 Best Evidence (S4BE) is a network for students interested in evidence-based healthcare. It features blogs written for - and by - students from all over the world, from school-age to PhD level, who want to discuss and contribute to the development of evidence-based practice. Students' blogs typically fall into three categories: 1) [critical appraisals of the latest health research and claims](#), 2) [tutorials on and explanations of evidence-based concepts](#), and 3) reviews of evidence-based resources. In addition, students can blog about any topic relating to evidence and/or healthcare that they are passionate about! If interested, please sign up to blog for [Students 4 Best Evidence](#). It is free!

If you want more reasons why you should join, read a [blog](#) by Ana Castro who is currently interning with PAHO (see more on her achievements on page 6).

# RESEARCH POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

## In the Region

### Regional Research Agenda Related to Zika



WHO/PAHO has released a regional research agenda in line with the WHO's global prevention and control strategy for the Zika virus outbreak in May 2016. The main goal of this research agenda is to provide evidence to strengthen public health guidance and actions. The immediate research needs are to better characterize Zika virus outbreaks and obtain knowledge about means of transmission and infection during pregnancy, including the link with Guillain-Barre Syndrome. Fifty-two experts identified high priority areas, which will help to direct efforts towards research that is meaningful for the current scenario and informative for public health decision-making. The full agenda is available [here](#).

## Assessment of Training of Disease Research Program



15 PAHO staff members from Health Systems and Services (HSS), Communicable Diseases and Health Analysis (CHA), and KBR, gathered to give feedback to Dr. Gabriel Carrasquilla's assessment of the [Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases](#) (TDR) program on June 2, 2016.

TDR funds research in infectious diseases, and provides support and training to researchers and institutions in the countries where these diseases occur. The main aim of this assessment was to provide an updated and systematic account of the achievements of [TDR](#) in the Americas. The greatest achievements of this program in the region are providing seed capital for the creation of research institutes for tropical diseases, training courses on [Effective Project Planning and Evaluation \(EPPE\)](#), and participation in social innovations for health. All attendees valued the opportunity to share their views to help improving the important work of TDR. For more details, click [here](#).

## In the Countries

### Brazil

#### Why is Waste in Research an Ethical Issue?



The recording of the presentation made by Elizabeth Wager during the [4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Research Integrity](#) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is now available. The focus of the presentation was on research rewards and integrity: improving systems to promote “responsible research”. Elizabeth Wager discussed why waste in research was an ethical issue. Four main arguments were presented: asking questions already answered wastes funding and exposes patients to suboptimal treatment; weak study designs overestimate treatment effect; non publication of negative results wastes funding and biases pooled estimates; and poor reporting decreases possibility of applying in practice research findings. You can view the [clip](#) to listen to her discussion.

## Dominican Republic

### Workshop: “Scientific-technical information resources for research for health”



Fifty professionals in the field of health-related areas attended a workshop at the Technological Institute of Santo Domingo ([INTEC](#), by its initials in Spanish) on June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The workshop was organized by the [Ministry of Public Health](#) of Dominican Republic and INTEC. It aimed to increase professionals’ understanding on the use of digital information resources for health decision-making and to improve searching skills for scientific articles. This workshop was aligned with the objectives set out in the [National Policy for Research for Health](#), and it was part of the National Program for Human Resources Formation managed by the National Directorate of Research for Health.

## Geneva, Switzerland

### 69<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly



The 69<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) took place in Geneva on May 23-28, 2016. WHA is the decision-making body of WHO, which is attended by delegations from [all 194 WHO Member States](#) and focuses on a specific health agenda prepared by the Executive Board. In this opportunity, with the aim of identifying achievements and pressing challenges, the discussion was focused on the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDG), the International Health Regulations (IHR), tobacco control, road traffic deaths and injuries, nutrition, HIV, hepatitis and STIs, mycetoma, research and development, access to medicines, and integrated health services. With regard to research and development in health, the Assembly agreed to make further efforts for a faster development of the [WHO’s Global Observatory on Health Research and Development](#), a source of information on progress health research systems and policy developments. The Observatory contributes to the identification of gaps in research and development (R&D) by defining priorities for new R&D investments based on public health needs. For example, the challenges in getting research investment and incentives to develop needed treatments where markets are not attractive. Click [here](#) for more information.

## Promoting plain packaging to curb tobacco consumption



In the framework of this year's [World No Tobacco Day](#), the WHO and the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control have launched a campaign to prepare countries to adopt standardized packaging for tobacco products. Plain packaging is expected to reduce tobacco consumption as it makes the product less attractive. Tobacco-related illnesses are a major public health threat with a death toll of almost 6 million people per year and a forecast of 8 million by 2030.

Summaries of the evidence that informed the policy option of the plain package campaign were commissioned by [Ireland](#) and the [UK](#). In Australia, plain package and enlarged health warnings were introduced in 2012 and a [post-implementation study](#) found a 0.55% decline in smoking attributable to those changes in the packaging. The report compiling the evidence, "Plain Packaging of Tobacco Products: Evidence, Design, and Implementation", can be accessed [here](#).

## In the Secretariat

### Research Interest Group

#### Dr. Patricia O'Campo - Social epidemiology



The Research Interest Group (RIG) is an informal meeting to share thought provoking research from experts on different fields. On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, a RIG was held for PAHO/WHO staff and external members to discuss the topic of improvement of health and socio-economic outcomes in housing programs. Dr. Patricia O'Campo, a social epidemiologist who has conducted policy-relevant intervention research addressing the social determinants of health and well-being of adults and children for over 25 years, was invited. She described the differences between participation, engagement, and consultation during health interventions. Dr. O'Campo also pointed to the evidence of impacts in health and development of participation and engagement. She tapped into how important community engagement was, including discussing her publications about bringing stakeholders together for urban health equity. [Toronto Final Report: At Home and Chez Soi Project](#) (randomized controlled trial) is now available. For more information details, click [here](#).

## Dr. Gabriel Carrasquilla - EcoHealth approach



On June 2, 2016, another valuable RIG has been organized for Dr. Gabriel Carrasquilla to discuss research for prevention of mosquito borne diseases. Dr. Carrasquilla is a seasoned epidemiologist with over 30 years of experience researching on tropical diseases prevention and control. He explained the

main features of the EcoHealth approach: systemic approach, transdisciplinary, social and gender equity, social participation, and environmental sustainability. To exemplify how this approach can be used for control of mosquito-borne diseases, Dr. Carrasquilla showed the development of a research project to control the spread of Dengue in Girardot, Colombia. The project was done with the local, regional, and national government, research institutions, the involved communities, and development partners such as the PAHO/WHO. The participation of all these stakeholders has been instrumental to the successful uptake of the project and the adoption and scaling up of the findings. For more information, click [here](#).

## Meet the Newest Team Members

### Ana Cristina Castro



[Ana Cristina](#) is an intern at PAHO/WHO between May and September 2016. She studied physiotherapy at the University of Chile, and she worked in pediatric intensive care units after she graduated. Her interest in improving the use and quality of evidence supporting physiotherapy practice led her to do an MSc in evidence-based health care at the University of Oxford, England. After her return to Chile, she taught research methods at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. A year later, she began a PhD in health sciences (York, England)

investigating the cost-effectiveness of accreditation schemes of healthcare institutions on clinical outcomes.

At PAHO, Ana is working on initiatives to improve the quality of research in the Americas targeting early career researchers (see her blog in [Students 4 Best Evidence](#)). One product is the development of an online course to improve the use of reporting guidelines produced by the EQUATOR network.

## Johanna Fedorovsky



[Johanna Fedorovsky](#) is an intern at the PAHO/WHO between June and September 2016. During her internship, Johanna will advance a systematic review and an evaluation of healthcare services, and will support collaboration networks such as the Social Innovation Health Initiative. Johanna worked for the National Institute for Cancer of the Ministry of Health in Argentina improving referral systems, and in a certification scheme for healthcare centers to improve cancer care in children. Johanna is a sociologist and she studied a Master's degree in International Relations at the Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO) in Argentina. She has a Fulbright scholarship and is studying international development with a focus on international economic politics and global health, at American University

## PARTNERSHIPS

### Cochrane Community: Health Evidence



[Health Evidence™](#) (formerly known as Health Systems Evidence) has a new look! The online repository of 4,600+ quality-rated public health relevant reviews (including 700+ Cochrane Reviews) has implemented website updates to improve the user experience. Maureen Dobbins, Scientific Director of Health Evidence™, continues ensuring that Health Evidence delivers high-quality needed products to the public health community in Canada (and internationally) as a commitment to help public health by using best evidence in practice. The website includes one page summaries with assessments and helpful background information in the four PAHO/WHO languages (English, French, Portuguese and Spanish). [Check it out!](#)

## EvIDeNCe Portal for the Caribbean



**CARPHA**

*EvIDeNCe Portal*

As a joint effort of Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), Regional Virtual Library in Health (BIREME from its name in Spanish) and the University of West Indies, Faculty of Medicine, a new tool has been developed to make accessible published and grey literature that can help policy decision-making in the Caribbean. The tool combines information from [BIREME](#), [MedCarib](#) (database with information of any research with an author from the Caribbean), pre-appraised research evidence, and other sources with Caribbean data. To make use of this new tool, follow this [link](#).

## Team Grant: Zika Virus Program Application



The CIHR Institute of Infection and Immunity in partnership with International Development Research Centre (IDCR) recently launched [Team Grant: Canada-Latin America-Caribbean Zika Virus Program](#), which is a web-based tool in order to help link researchers with focus areas. If you would like to use this tool to form collaborative teams for your Zika virus program application, please complete the [survey](#). All of your contact information, research area of interest, and expertise will be posted on a [CIHR web page](#), and the CIHR web page with the list of potential collaborators will be updated regularly until the application deadline on **July 12, 2016**.

## Study Protocols to be published



The [EQUATOR Network](#) shared an article towards transparency in reporting trials due to a lack of easy access to study protocols for most readers. [The Annals of Internal Medicine](#) has developed a requirement for authors of manuscripts reporting clinical trial data to submit the original study protocol alongside the trial report, which shows a positive move towards transparency that affects research for health effectively. For more information in relation to the requirement for protocols and materials, this [link](#) will direct you to the Annals of Internal Medicine.



## Selection Committee for Scholarships Allocation – 2016 CONACYT-OAS-AMEXCID-PAHO Scholarships



On June 7, 2016, the Selection Committee for Scholarships Allocation gathered at Organization of American States (OAS) Headquarters in Washington, D.C., to select scholars for the 2016 edition of the CONACYT-OEA-AMEXCID Scholarships program. The Committee was integrated by representatives from these three institutions and PAHO, and considered the following criteria to award the candidates: geographical balance; priority given by University receiving the scholar; gender balance; geographical distribution of Universities; level of study (PhD program preferred); and previous academic performance. A total 65 scholarships were granted and these included doctorate and masters degrees for health. All scholars have access to an array of tools that support the production and use of scientific research, offered by PAHO. The next call for scholarships to study in Mexico will open in 2017. The call for applications for master and PhD studies in Brazil is now open, as detailed below. For more information details, click [here](#). You can check the list of this year's awardees [here](#).

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

### RECENT CONFERENCES:

#### EvidenceLive 2016



Evidence Live is a conference where researchers, users of research, commissioners, and editors meet to discuss and share thought-provoking ideas about evidence-based decision making at every level of the healthcare chain. This year the conference took place in Oxford, United Kingdom, between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of June, focusing on six themes: improving quality of research evidence; disentangling the problems of too much and too little medicine; transforming the communication of evidence for better health; training the next generation of leaders in applied evidence; translating evidence into better quality health services; and holding medical journals to account for publishing trials with switched outcomes. A very popular presentation was entitled “[Why most clinical research is not useful?](#)” given by [Prof John Ioannidis](#), which was a trending topic in the UK on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The abstracts of the oral presentations and posters are available [here](#).

## **UPCOMING CONFERENCES:**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Public Health**



The international conference on Public Health this year will be focused on bringing the gap between research and policy, aiming to create an international platform for discussion of evidence-based public health interventions and policies. It will take place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, between **July 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>**. The main themes cover several aspects of public health: maternal and child health,

antibiotic resistance, nutrition, environmental occupational issues, policies and management, and health economics. More details [here](#).

### **9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation**



Submit your abstract! The Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences of the National Cancer Institute (Washington, D.C.) has opened a call for [abstracts](#) submissions for the [9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference](#) on December 14-15, 2016, at the Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, D.C. A forum for discussing the science of dissemination and implementation, the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference aims to grow the research

base by bridging the gap between evidence, practice, and policy in health and medicine.

## Putting Evidence to Work: What Works Global Summit 2016

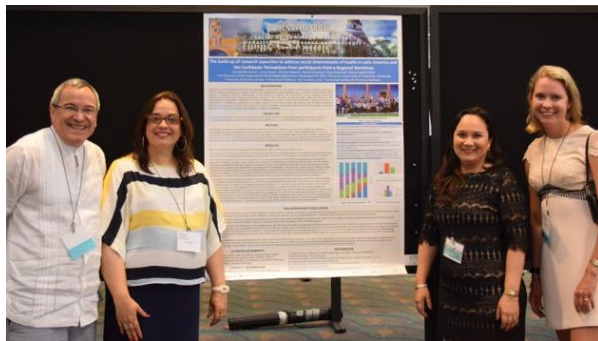


The What Works Global Summit (WWGS) is an international culture-shifting event, putting evidence at the heart of policy and practice. The conference will take place in London, United Kingdom on **September 24-28, 2016**, including the pre-summit workshops. The conference will also share

experience from around the world and across sectors on measuring policy impact, experiences in the use of evidence, promoting policy uptake, knowledge translation, and critical appraisal of evidence as well as discussions of new evidence and study methods. This conference will also provide perspectives from people or stakeholders from developing countries who can apply to attend. For more information, click [here](#).

## PUBLICATIONS

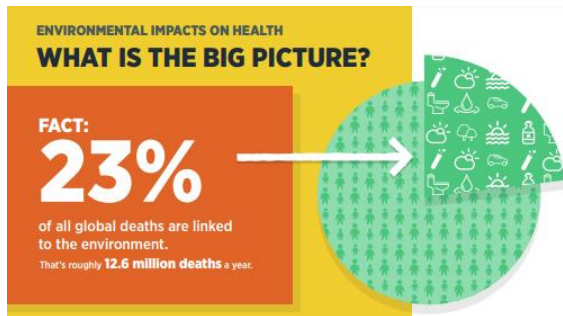
### Outcomes of the Social Epidemiology Workshop



Leading contributors to the [Social Epidemiology Workshop – Antigua, Guatemala](#) held in November 2015 authored a study to assess the influence of the workshop on networking. The authors presented a poster entitled “The buildup of research capacities to address social determinants of health in Latin America and the Caribbean”

summarized the findings of a survey done six months after the event. The poster was authored by Dr. Luis Gabriel Cuervo, Louisa Stuwe, Patricia O’Campo, Michele Monroy-Valle, Dr. Paula Braveman, and Dr. María Angélica Milla and can be seen [here](#).

## Preventing Disease through Healthy Environments



New comprehensive global assessment can prevent premature death and disease through healthier environments. Analyzing the latest data on the environment-disease nexus and the devastating impact of environmental hazards and risks on global health, backed up by expert opinion, this report covers more than 100 diseases and injuries. The analysis shows that

23% of global deaths (and 26% of deaths among children under five) are due to modifiable environmental factors. Brochures and infographics in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish are available [here](#).

## Tuberculosis in the Americas series in the Pan American Journal of Public Health



The [Pan American Journal of Public Health](#) has published a thematic issue on [Tuberculosis in the Americas](#), which was the result of a joint project led by the [Communicable Diseases Research Program](#) and the [Regional Tuberculosis Program](#) of the Communicable Diseases and Health Analysis Department at PAHO. The issue comprises ten original peer-reviewed research articles that

highlight strategies for addressing tuberculosis (TB) treatment and care in a number of countries of the Region of the Americas, and specific challenges related to TB diagnostics (Peru and Mexico) and other related concerns in countries. The papers will soon be available also in Spanish or Portuguese.

Readers interested in the topic are also invited to visit the [Public Health Panorama](#), the journal of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, to access a free similar [supplement on tuberculosis](#) comprising seven additional articles.

## Special issue on Strengthening of Regulatory Systems for Medicines in the Pan American Journal of Public Health



The [Pan American Journal of Public Health](#) has recently published a special issue on [Regulatory Systems for Medicines in the Region of the Americas](#). Effective regulation of medicines promotes the public's health by guaranteeing medicines quality, safety, and efficacy; promoting the adequate manufacture, storage, and distribution of medicine; facilitating the fight against substandard, spurious, falsely-labeled, falsified, or counterfeit medical products; providing the necessary information to health professionals and patients; and ensuring access to medicines is not hindered by inefficient regulatory frameworks. This issue of the Journal aims at highlighting the progress and remaining challenges that the Region faces in ensuring access to safe, efficacious, and quality-assured medical products.

## Portal/Blog for PAHO's Equity List and Knowledge Network



The goal of the Portal/Blog of the [Equity List \(mostly known as Lista Equidad\)](#) is to share public health information on international level, prioritizing the topics related to Health and Human Development. The [complete list](#) of the topics is now available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Additionally, the Portal allows the visitor to gain access to recent posts disseminated through the Equity distribution list and to leave their comments and share information through social networks. The *Lista Equidad* includes over 25,000 core recipients (public health professionals, researchers, authors, economists, and policymakers), and it is also connected to multiple global networks. It represents a successful partnership between PAHO and the [Rockefeller Foundation](#). To become a recipient of the list, please click [here](#).

## Human Development – the Way Ahead



The 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the **2016 Human Development Report (HDR)** will be published in the second half/ last quarter of 2016. For over 25 years [these reports](#) have extensively influenced the development publication, provided a strong lens to assess human well-being, and informed policy making. From a human development perspective, time has come to focus on three fundamental aspects: extending the frontiers of the paradigm, reviewing how human development is measured, and revisiting the policy options linking various strategies and focusing on institutions at both country and global level. Check out the [2016 Human Development Report](#) for more information.

## CALLS FOR APPLICATIONS

### EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN BRAZIL |The call for scholarship applications is open!



The sixth consecutive edition of the Partnerships Program for Education and Training (PAEC) between the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities (GCUB), with the support of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Division of Educational Topics and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO / WHO), offers more than **400 scholarship opportunities** to outstanding citizens of OAS Member States to pursue master's or doctoral programs in Brazilian universities. Since its first edition in 2011, the OAS-GCUB Scholarship Program has offered a total of 1,792 scholarships for master's and doctorate degrees in over 50 participating universities! Benefits include full tuition waiver, living and settlement expenses, and Portuguese language support. The application deadline is **July 26th, 2016**. For more information, click [here](#).

## Call for applications for Wellcome Trust scholarships for masters and doctorates degrees in Brazil



The graduate program in [Epidemiology of the Federal University of Pelotas \(Brazil\)](#) has opened the selection process for the Wellcome Trust's Master of Science (MSc) and PhD degrees with a focus on equity on health, especially in maternal-child health. The

program will give five scholarships to international students, non-residents in Brazil. The scholarship consists of a tuition waiver, payment of the trip from country of origin, and economic support to cover living expenses during 48 months for master degrees and 36 months for PhD degrees. The program is given in Portuguese. The call will be open between **July 4<sup>th</sup> and October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016**. More information available in the following [link](#),

## NIH Funding Opportunity on Hypertension Outcomes



The National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) has published a [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#) (FOA) to solicit applications for Hypertension Outcomes for implementation at national level (T4 which seeks to evaluate the “real world” health outcomes of population health practice) research within Lower Middle-Income Countries (according to World Bank's classification). This call for applications aims at stimulating the development of in-country collaborative research teams to identify implementation gaps for evidence-based interventions for prevention, treatment, and control of hypertension in adults. The announcement is expected to be published in the summer of 2016 with an expected application due date in Fall 2016.

## NIH Funding Opportunity Announcement: Mobile Health



The purpose of this [Funding Opportunity Announcement \(FOA\)](#) by NIH and Fogarty International Center (FIC) is to encourage exploratory and developmental research applications that focusing on the development or adaptation of innovative mobile health (mHealth) technology specifically suited for low and middle income countries (LMICs). The opportunity includes

determining the health-related outcomes associated with implementation of the technology. Applicants are required to propose partnerships between at least one U.S. institution and one LMIC institution. For more information details and submission requirements (**Deadline: August 31, 2016**), click this [link](#).

*For the compilation of material for this newsletter PAHO technical areas, PAHO country offices, the ACHR as well as strategic partners for the advancement of the Policy on Research for Health were invited to send contributions.*

*It was compiled by the Office of Research Promotion and Development; Johanna Fedorovsky, Ana Castro, Christopher Khanoyan, Dr. Luis Gabriel Cuervo, and Louisa Stuwe.*

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