Update on WP1:  
*The role of evidence in policy making*  
By Riitta-Maija Hämäläinen WP1-leader,  
Scientific research is a valuable tool for informing policy making processes on health enhancing physical activity (HEPA). Scientific research and provided evidence may help to identify emerging problems, offer tools to tackle challenges, and forecast the likely impact of policy choices. Policy makers could be better informed about research evidence-informed policies.  
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Update on WP1
The role of evidence in policy making

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An integration of scientific knowledge and know-how, policy making, and practice is needed to bring evidence-informed decisions, policy making and evaluations, as well as cross-sectoral policies that have accountability and sustainability.

Therefore the project called 'Research into policy to enhance physical activity (REPOPA) started in October 2011 with kick-off meeting in November and agreeing with timetables and processes for the first work package: the role of evidence in policy making.

The aim was to conduct an analysis of evidence-informed health enhancing physical activity policies within national, regional and local levels in seven different countries (Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, UK and Canada). The process of policy analysis started by selecting 2 to 5 HEPA policies from each country for a conventional content analysis. The policy analysis was guided by common guidelines and research questions in each partner country.

The document analysis phase will be followed by interviews with the main stakeholders for policy making, starting with Fall 2012. During the document analysis, the complementary and clarification needs of the policy-making process were identified. As the phase of analysis of HEPA policies is on the way, one can state that the use of conventional content analysis together with interviews with the main HEPA stakeholders appears to be a relevant method to identify various approaches to HEPA policy content, identification of stakeholders and use of research evidence. Further, the analysis of HEPA policies will provide an insight regarding the use of research evidence in policy making, but rarely directly expressed for HEPA agenda setting, policy formulation and policy making processes. The analysis on HEPA policies at national, regional and local levels provides rich data that makes relevant to investigate how research evidence was used for HEPA policy making, comparable approaches between countries, and the use of cross-sectoral approaches and structures for HEPA policy making.

Lessons can be learned about the use of research for evidence-informed policy making in relation to HEPA policies on national, regional and local levels. Also, it is important to understand the level of interaction needed between researchers and policy-makers in order to properly communicate and understand each other in order to make policy processes more evidence-informed and effective than presently, REPOPA acting towards this subject as well.
Dissemination reporting (WP6)

In the 1st quarter REPOPA partners were active participants in the dissemination WP, focusing on the launch of REPOPA (October, 2011) and scientific activities developed during Spring 2012.

The REPOPA partners have closely worked through preparing manuscripts for scientific journals, abstracts for conference participation as well as dissemination leaflets, news articles, press releases and participating to local events as well as preparing a plan for future conference submissions. Also, all partners have started working on the REPOPA web-page for their national organisation web-site.

Some recent publications:


Towards evidence-informed physical activity policies in International Society of Behavioral Medicine (ISBM) from March 2012.

A recent conference with REPOPA participation:

At the 13th World Public Health Conference in Addis Ababa on the 23rd - 27th April, 2012, REPOPA coordinator Arja R. Aro gave an oral presentation on the REPOPA research plan and the theoretical and methodological approach of REPOPA. One of the aims of the presentation was a search for interest in and potential links to parallel research activities in other cultures and contribute to discussions that promote ideas for the upcoming project phases and the work packages to come, in order to develop a functional work plan for the coming year of the REPOPA project.

Annual consortium and WP1 meeting

Helsinki, September 2012

On the 20th and 21st September 2012 the annual consortium meeting will gather all the REPOPA partners at The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) in Helsinki. The meeting will mainly be related to the work on WP1, where an update of the on-going research activities will be presented. Also, the upcoming interview phase will be discussed; interview guidelines and ethical issues, as well. The work packages regarding Research into policy making—game situation (WP2), Stewardship approach for efficient evidence utilization (WP3), Evaluation (WP5) and Dissemination (WP6) will all be presented and discussed during the meeting.

Additional topics will be the reporting on EU research and Innovation Participant Portal, legal and administrative issues, internal communicative matters via the platform Sharepoint and discussion on ideas on how to collaborate across partners and countries in writing publications.

Hopefully, this meeting will point out the advantages and challenges the results of REPOPA have brought so far and contribute to discussions that promote ideas for the upcoming project phases and the work packages to come, in order to develop a functional work plan for the coming year of the REPOPA project.
**Conferences with REPOPA participation**

**Autumn 2012**

The 12th International Congress of Behavioral Medicine will take place on 29th - 31st August 2012 in Budapest. The conference focuses on Behavioral Medicine: From basic Science to Clinical Investigation and Public Health. REPOPA has submitted an abstract with the title Challenges of Ethical Clearance in International Translational Health Policy Research that will be presented at the congress.

The 9th European IUHPE Health Promotion Conference on Health and Quality of Life - Health, Economy, Solidarity is held in Tallinn on the 27th - 29th September, 2012. Here, REPOPA coordinator Arja R. Aro will be giving a keynote lecture with the title Challenges in evidence-informed practice and policy development.

On the 10th November, 2012 REPOPA will participate in the 5th European Public Health conference in Malta. REPOPA will chair a lunch meeting named Challenges in international physical activity policy analysis, which will introduce and discuss main challenges faced in the international document analysis of health-enhancing policies, especially the use of both explicit and implicit evidence.

In addition, the Danish REPOPA case of ethical clearance in the area of policy research will be presented at this conference in the Data Protection Session chaired by Arja R. Aro.

The next REPOPA newsletter will be out in Fall 2012, covering the annual consortium meeting in Helsinki and the interview phase of WP1.