



PUBLIC HEALTH EVIDENCE SOUTH ASIA NEWSLETTER

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Director's Message



Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair

In this summer's issue of the PHESA newsletter, I am delighted to report about the ongoing activities at PHESA! Starting out as the South Asian satellite of the Cochrane Public Health, we have now been recognized as a centre of Manipal University. As part of the recognition, we have recently moved into a new space and set up our department at the Edu building of Manipal University. We have grown into an international network with global collaborations, and have managed to acquire funds up to INR 14,305,794 and chair fund of INR 1,000,000. We aim to partner with entities across subject areas to address public health problems faced by low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

I am pleased to report the addition of two new members to the organisation i.e. Dr. Bhumika TV as the Assistant Professor

and Dr. Nikisha Mehta as a Research Assistant. The department would like to warmly welcome Prof. Subhadra Menon and Dr. Shrinivas Darak who have been recently appointed as adjunct faculty at PHESA. I am equally excited to report that Dr. Ajay Bailey, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, The Netherlands, and is closely collaborating with us as a qualitative research specialist, has been recently awarded the Dr. TMA Pai Endowment Chair from Manipal University.

I am pleased to announce the setting up of the Trans-disciplinary Centre for Qualitative Research (TCQR) under the leadership of PHESA at Manipal University. Additionally, we have initiated our own E-Library which comprises a digital collection of books, guidelines, reports, etc. to support learning, research and preservation of our recorded knowledge. I am also happy to note that Mr. Ravishankar, who has been supporting PHESA and its activities since its genesis is on the verge of finishing his Ph.D. He worked on the complexities in public health systematic reviews and developed a tool to measure complexities in public health interventions called the "PHESA complexity tool."

In this issue, we focus on the ongoing projects and workshops conducted by PHESA which have been an invaluable influence on our success and growth. I would like to

thank the whole team including staff, interns, Ph.D. scholars and exchange students for all their efforts and contributions.

"May we always be like marching ants carrying one grain of sugar at a time – falling again and again but never give up until we reach the top."

I would like to conclude by wishing three members of my team i.e. Dr. Shruti Murthy, Dr. Myron Godinho and Mr. Theophilus Lakiang, good luck and a safe journey as they embark on their data collection trip all over India. I hope that you enjoy this issue of the PHESA newsletter!

Warm Regards,



The Trans-disciplinary Centre for Qualitative Research (TCQR)

While quantitative methods form the backbone of public health research, venturing into newer research areas and finding explanations for sociocultural behaviors often requires qualitative methodology to effectively explore new territories. As public health is increasingly being viewed as a social science, there is a growing demand for qualitative techniques. Our Trans-disciplinary Centre for Qualitative Methods (TCQR) will aim to meet this need by serving as a regional hub for capacity building in qualitative methods.

The establishment of the TCQR at Manipal University was recently approved on the 29th of April, 2016 under the leadership of PHESA. It will be coordinated by Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair and Dr. Ajay Bailey.

The main aim of the centre is to educate, facilitate and promote trans-disciplinary qualitative research for a comprehensive understanding of the issues pertaining to public health.

The main objectives of the TCQR will be:

- To promote inter-disciplinary research in public health
 - To provide impetus to researchers from across disciplines to share expertise and collaborate.
 - To create awareness about qualitative research in public health in South Asia.
 - To build capacities of young scholars in teaching and conducting qualitative research.
 - To establish a regional hub in qualitative research in South Asia through a trans-disciplinary approach that involves researchers, practitioners and civil society organisations.
-

CAPACITY BUILDING

Internship Programme

The internship programme at PHESA is between a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 1 year on a full-time basis. It is a well-rounded programme open to undergraduates and postgraduates, and usually culminates in the production of high-quality evidence worthy of publication in national and international journals. It enables interns to work with experienced systematic reviewers and meta-analysts on international projects in public health. At present, we have four interns working at PHESA.

Miss Valeria Bevilacqua
Medical Anthropologist
Department of Anthropology & Sociology
School of Oriental & African Studies
London, UK

Currently working on a project on contextualisation which is a part of the project titled, Behavior Change Communication in Maternal and Child Health: an evidence summary. So far, she has worked on two papers:

“An overview of current trends in policies and interventions targeting Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) and Behavior Change Communication (BCC) in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) with a focus on South Asia.”

The paper presents an overview on the status of RMNCAH in LMICs in the aftermath of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and at the outset of the recent Sustainable Development agenda.

Particular reference is given to MDG 4 and MDG 5. This introduces more context-specific insights on the current status of RMNCAH in South Asia, with a further focus on three countries on which extensive data was available, respectively: Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The second part of the paper addresses BCC interventions with respect to RMNCAH in the South Asian context. Three case studies of successful BCC interventions are presented and analyzed, respectively: the Meena Communication Initiative (1998-2005), the Population Council BCC strategy to improve family health outcomes in Uttar Pradesh, India, and the Aama Programme for maternal health and antenatal Care (ANC) in Nepal.

This preliminary work helped building a robust understanding of the multiple factors affecting RMNCAH related behaviors and the complexities in implementing a BCC intervention, especially when it comes to contextualisation, an issue that has been addressed in another paper, “Behavior change communication (BCC) for antenatal care (ANC): a conceptual framework to contextualise global evidence to South Asia.” This paper aims to guide policy-makers in the contextualisation of global evidence on BCC interventions for ANC to the South Asian region. It looked at the effectiveness of communication strategies targeting three main outcomes: ANC coverage, uptake of ANC services and uptake of ARV prophylaxis.



Dr. Sirjana Dahal, Dr. Santosh Agrawal & Miss Valeria Bevilacqua (left to right)

Dr. Sirjana Dahal & Dr. Santosh Agrawal
Public Health Dentists
Department of Public Health Dentistry
B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences
Dharan, Nepal
(7th March to 4th June, 2016)

replacement and disinfection of toothbrushes. This review will be the first to synthesize evidence on the effectiveness of interventions aimed at sanitisation of toothbrushes. It aims to highlight the evidence gap and inform future interventions.

Currently working on "A systematic review to evaluate the sanitisation of toothbrushes using various decontamination methods"

Toothbrushes can be considered as one of the causes of disease transmission and increase the risk of infections since they can serve as a reservoir for micro-organisms in healthy, orally-diseased or medically ill adults. The sanitisation techniques used so far have shown varying levels of effectiveness, however, none of the methods have proved to be ideal techniques for decontamination of toothbrushes. The limited awareness about toothbrush contamination and maintenance gives rise to the need to educate people about ideal methods for storage,



Mr. Kiran Bhandary

Mr. Kiran Bhandary
Biostatistician
Department of Biostatistics
Manipal University
Manipal, Karnataka, India

Currently working on "Application of Bayesian Meta-analysis in Public Health Systematic Reviews" Public health interventions are complex due to the presence of heterogeneity in terms of Population, Intervention, Outcome and Context. These interventions are also assessed with a variety of study designs ranging from interventional to descriptive studies. Moreover, descriptive studies are relatively more predominant than RCTs. One of the common findings in the available literature is that a research question can be answered by both interventional and descriptive studies. The traditional meta-analysis technique does not provide an opportunity for pooling of information coming from a variety of study designs for a single question: which is usually the situation in public health interventions. Therefore, in most of the circumstances a subgroup analysis is performed for each type of study design. In addition, most of the authors emphasize more on quantitatively summarizing only the results of randomized controlled trials rather than evidence from observational studies. Hence the present study explores the possibility of incorporating evidence from all studies irrespective of difference in study design and consolidates into one effect measure. Bayesian meta-analysis was employed by formulating priors from Observational studies and likelihood from Randomized controlled trials in order to obtain the posterior distribution. A comparison between traditional meta-analysis and Bayesian meta-analysis will be made.

Workshops

As a part of the capacity building process, PHESA conducts workshops throughout the year in different parts of the world. Three workshops were conducted this year in Vienna, Austria, and Manipal and Gandhinagar, India.

- Miss Melissa Glenda Lewis conducted a workshop on "Bayesian Meta-analysis: Hands-on in WinBUGS" at the Cochrane Colloquium in Vienna.
- Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair, Prof. B Unnikrishnan and Miss Melissa Glenda Lewis conducted a workshop on "Systematic reviews and Meta-analysis" at GMERS Medical College in Gandhinagar.



Workshop on Systematic Reviews & Meta-analysis at the GMERS Medical College, Gandhinagar
6th January, 2016

Winter School, 2015

As part of the collaboration with the University of Groningen, The Netherlands, PHESA conducted a workshop on “Qualitative Methods for Health Research in Asia” at Manipal University. The workshop was conducted by Dr. Ajay Bailey and Dr. Shrinivas Darak from the Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen. Dr. Nilangi Deshpande conducted a workshop on ethics in qualitative research and Prof. Subhadra Menon conducted a day’s workshop on qualitative research and public health engagement. The main aim of the workshop was to educate researchers and professionals about the use of qualitative research methods to equip them with skills to better understand people’s problems. It was a week long workshop and was conducted between 7th and 12th of December, 2015. It was attended by an interdisciplinary group of 33 professionals working in the field of medicine, dentistry, occupational therapy,



Dr. H. Vinod Bhat at the inaugural ceremony of the Winter School, Manipal University



Prof. Sreekumar Nair, Dr. Ajay Bailey, Dr. Ramjee, Dr. Shrinivas Darak & Prof. Subhadra Menon at the Winter School (left to right)



anthropology and demography, and came from India, Thailand, Italy, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh. PHESA will soon be conducting an advanced course on qualitative research methods.

Winter School - Qualitative Methods for Health Research in Asia, Manipal University, 7-12th December, 2015

Student Exchange Programme

The student exchange programme is between a minimum of 1 month to a maximum of 6 months on a full-time basis. The programme throws light on quantitative & qualitative research methods, paves the way for understanding the foundational concepts of public health research, and highlights the role of systematic reviews in building high-quality evidence to inform health policy. We have had 4 exchange students this year (9th April to 5th May, 2016) from the **University of Groningen, The Netherlands.**

Mr. Bart Vloedveld worked on a qualitative research project titled "South to south international student migration: about the push and pull factors for international students at Manipal University."

Feedback

"My experience at the PHESA department at Manipal University has been very positive. The workspace we were appointed to work in was well equipped, even though I had a rough start considering the lack of internet. This was solved by giving me a room with a computer which was helpful. The working atmosphere is relaxed and the people are very friendly and welcoming. Initially when we arrived there was some confusion as to where to go and what we still had to arrange, but after, everything ran smoothly. Overall I can say I really enjoyed doing my research at the PHESA department, even though it was only for a month."

Mr. George Sevenhuijsen worked on a qualitative research project titled "Student migration: the push and pull factors of international students migrating to Manipal University."

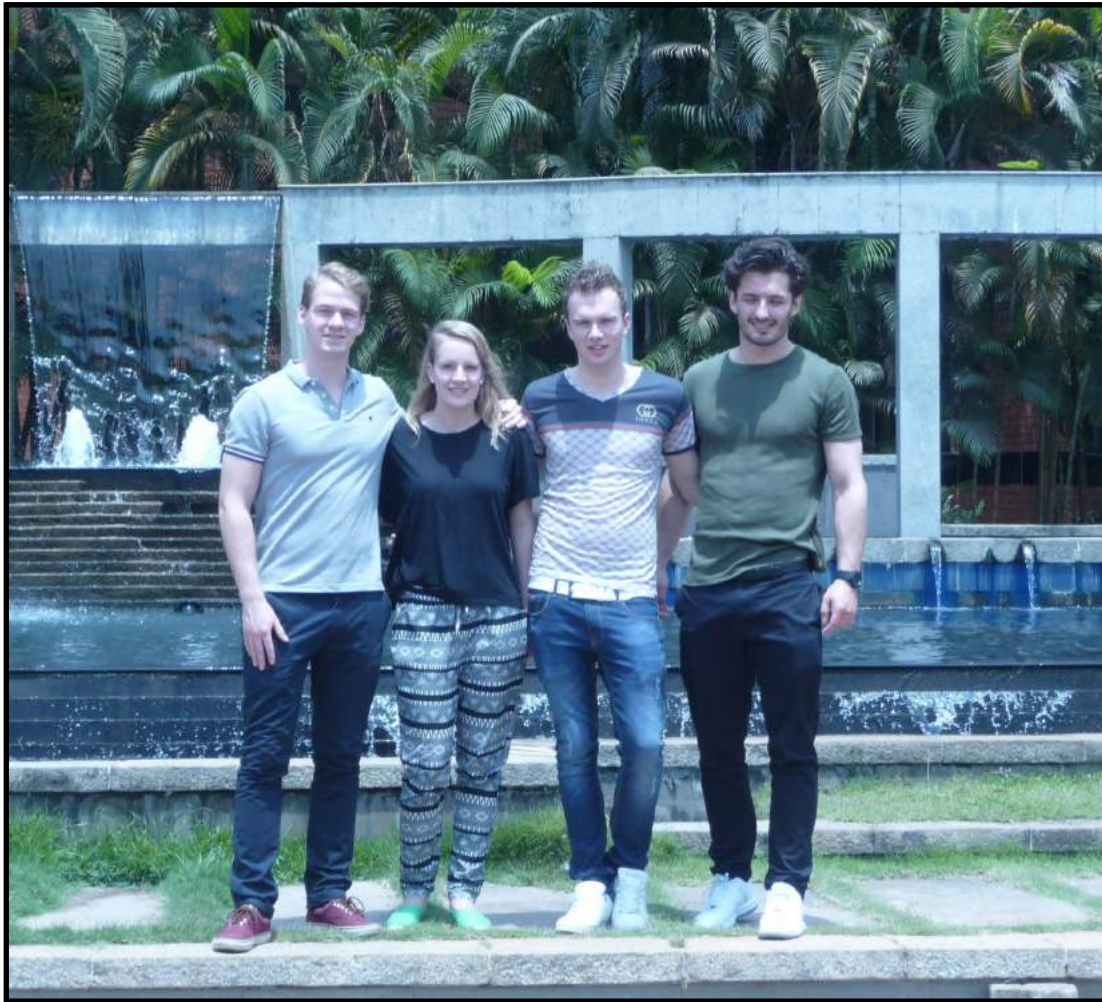
Feedback

"First of all I want to mention that the people working at PHESA are really helpful whenever you have a question and are really sociable persons. The working atmosphere is good. (Apart from the ac which made me sick). Everyone can sit and work wherever they want. A lot of freedom in that. But I think working 6 days a week is a bit too much. It kills the efficiency. I'm also glad that everything is clean in this part of the university and I feel like that you guys really make a difference in the world with your research."

Miss Mirthe Heikens conducted a qualitative research study titled "South to south student migration: how do foreign students from the south build friendships and social networks at Manipal University."

Feedback

"Everything for our stay had been perfectly arranged by Dr. Bhumika. The only thing which could be improved that was some information for when we were to arrive. Because we were put in our hostels, without any information about what to next. Eventually we found this all out on ourselves, but some directions would have been helpful. The working environment at the PHESA department was very comfortable. All the internet arrangements were done for us and it was made possible that we had a working space. We didn't receive much help with the interviews, but this wasn't needed. And if we had some problems we could always consult Dr. Bhumika or the international admissions office. I can say our stay was much improved by the PHESA department. Not only in all the arrangements made, but also due to the people working there. We were welcomed very friendly by



Mr. Bart Vloedbeld, Miss Mirthe Heikens, Mr. George Sevenhuijsen & Mr. Erwin Reijenga (left to right)

everyone and were shown around Manipal. So I would like to thank everyone for that and we sure would like to come back some time."

Mr. Erwin Reijenga conducted a qualitative research study titled "Student integration at Manipal University: the experiences of student integration among international students from the global south."

Feedback

"The past four weeks I really enjoyed my time here in Manipal. Beforehand I had this idea we were going to get a hostel room from where we can work and try to do our

research. Which for me wasn't how I wanted to spend those four weeks in India. Instead we got to work at PHESA where other people also do qualitative research. This was a way better environment than I expected. The people really helped us out a lot, not only regarding our research but also to tell us what places we should visit or experience more of Manipal or India. They helped us get in contact with people we could interview and showed us different parts of Manipal. Since we were not exchange students that actually follow a program here at Manipal, it maybe wasn't that easy to integrate for such a short period in a different city. However the people here were so kind to invite us for different social events where we could interact and socialize with different people.

Because of this we basically built a small social network over here. Now it is time to leave and I begin to realise how short four weeks in Manipal actually is. Everything put togeth-

er this was a really good experience and I am glad I had the chance to come here. Working in this environment was inspiring and I am really thankful for everyone at PHESA and Manipal."

EVIDENCE BUILDING

Completed Projects

• **Effective Rehabilitation Strategies for Disabilities Caused due to Stroke or its Treatment: An Overview of Systematic Reviews**

This overview was aimed at compiling evidence from existing systematic reviews to identify and summarize the available evidence on the different types of rehabilitation strategies used for disabilities caused due to stroke and their effectiveness on the functioning and participation of these individuals, thus making the implementation of evidence-based strategies easier for policy makers.

• **Effective Rehabilitation Strategies for Disabilities Caused due to Breast Cancer or its Treatment: An Overview of Systematic Reviews**

This overview was intended to deliver an up-to-date evidence of the various types and effectiveness of rehabilitation strategies for disabilities caused due to breast cancer or its treatment which will improve functioning and participation of the individuals.

Team for both the projects:

1. Late Prof. Elizabeth Waters (Jack Brockhoff Chair of Child Public Health, Director Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Well-being Program, The Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, The University of

Melbourne)

2. Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair

3. Dr. Shradha Parsekar (Senior Systematic Review Officer, PHE-SA, Manipal University, Manipal)

4. Dr. Mannat Singh (Systematic Review Officer, PHESA, Manipal University, Manipal).

Collaborators



Funders



Ongoing Projects

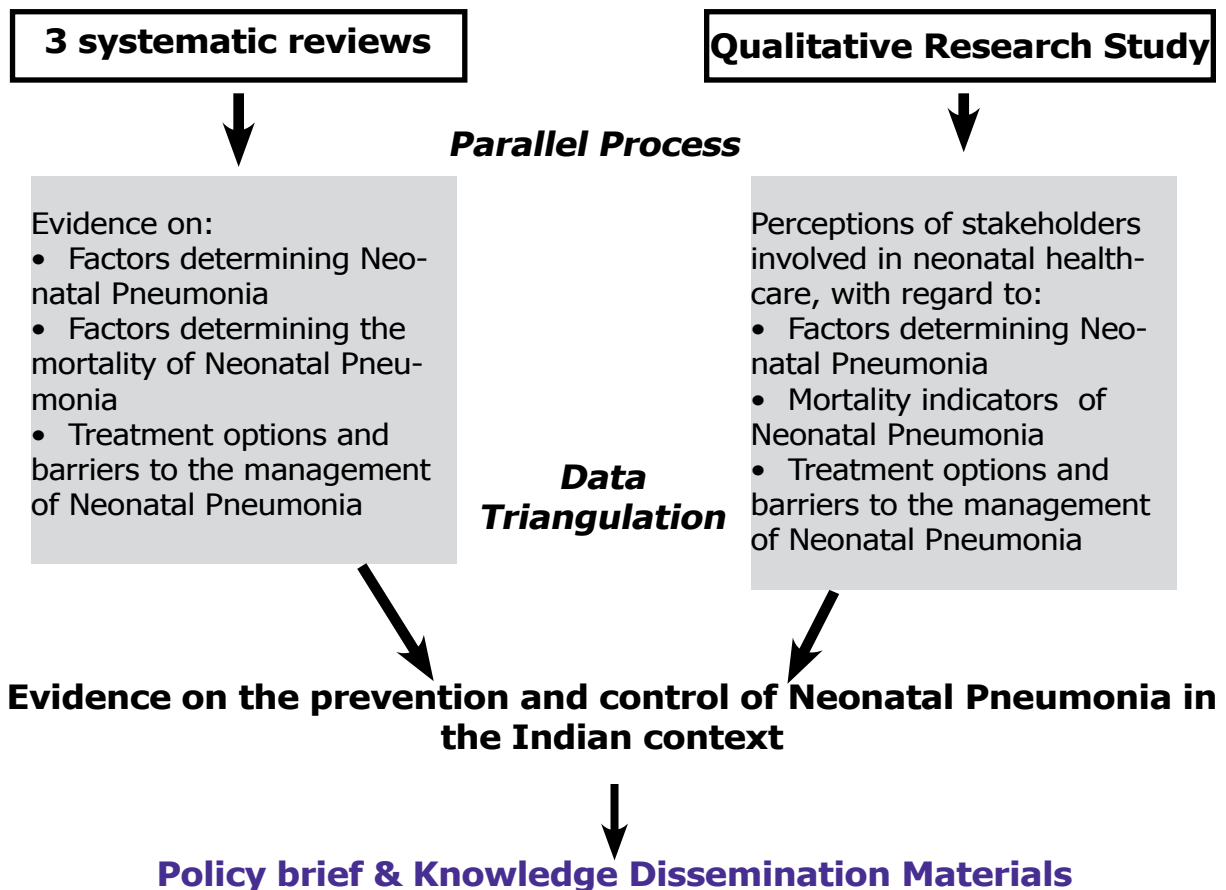
• The Neonatal Pneumonia Project: Determining the Barriers to case management and Stakeholder Perceptions

India has the greatest number of neonatal deaths in the world. Among the three largest global killers of neonates (i.e. sepsis, tetanus and diarrhoea), pneumonia is the leading infectious cause of mortality among India's newborn (17%). More than half of childhood pneumonia-related deaths happen in the neonatal period, of which around 45% occur during the 1st week of life. Through 3 systematic reviews, we will address the dearth of consolidated evidence on the determining factors and barriers to the case management of neonatal pneumonia in the Indian context. Moreover, we will interview vari-

ous stakeholders at all levels of the neonatal healthcare system to better understand their perceptions on the prevention and management of neonatal pneumonia.

Team:

1. Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair
2. Prof. Leslie Edward Lewis (Professor and Head, Neonatology Unit, Dept. of Paediatrics, Kasturba Medical Hospital, Manipal University, Manipal)
3. Dr. Shruti Murthy (Research Associate, PHESA, Manipal University, Manipal)
4. Dr. Myron Godinho (Research Associate, PHESA, Manipal University, Manipal)
5. Mr. Theophilus Lakiang (Research Associate, PHESA, Manipal University, Manipal)



Funders



Protocol Workshop for the Neonatal Pneumonia Project with Prof. B Unnikrishnan, Prof. Shantaram Baliga, Prof. Sreekumaran Nair & Prof. Leslie Edward Lewis (right to left) on 9th & 10th February, 2016

● **Effectiveness of Behavior Change Communication interventions in delivering health messages on antenatal care for improving Maternal & Child Health indicators in a limited literacy setting: An Evidence Summary of systematic reviews** Maternal and child health (MCH) outcomes have remained poor in low- and middle income countries. The coverage of antenatal care (ANC) (at least four visits during

pregnancy), one of the indicators of maternal health, is 56% in the South Asian region. One of the most cost effective ways of targeting the issues of MCH is through Behavior Change Communication. This evidence summary of systematic reviews aims to identify different types and mediums; and the most effective BCC.

Team:

1. Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair
2. Dr. Shrinivas Darak (Senior researcher, Prayas Health Group, Pune)
3. Dr. Shradha Parsekar (Senior Systematic Review Officer, PHE-SA, Manipal University, Manipal)
4. Prof. Subhadra Menon (Deputy Director, The Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, New Delhi)
5. Dr. Ritu Parchure (Senior researcher, Prayas Health Group, Pune)
6. Miss Ratheebhai V (Librarian, Manipal Institute of Communication, Manipal)
7. Dr. Trupti Darak (Study Coordinator, Prayas Health Group, Pune)
8. Miss Hanna Nelson (Research Officer, PHESA, Manipal University, Manipal)

Collaborators



Funders



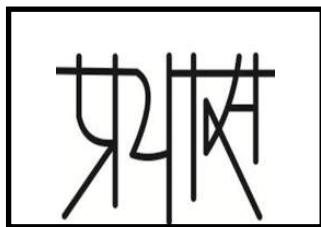


Protocol workshop for the Behavior Change Communication project on the 19th & 20th October, 2015

● **Effectiveness of different gender responsive policing (GRP) initiatives designed to enhance confidence, satisfaction in policing services and reduce risk of violence against women in LMICs**

The review focuses on identifying and thematically classifying interventions related to gender responsive policing to address violence against women in LMICs, and synthesizing the existing evidence on the effectiveness of different interventions designed to enhance confidence and satisfaction in policing services, and reduce risk of violence against women in these countries. The findings will be contextualised to the South Asian region and would be particularly helpful for policy makers, police training academies, national and international agencies, and organizations working on the issues of violence against women.

Collaborators



Funders



Team:

1. Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair
2. Dr. Shrinivas Darak
3. Prof. Anjali Dave (Professor and Chairperson, Women Centered Social Work, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai)
4. Dr. Bhumika TV (Assistant Professor, PHESA, Manipal University, Manipal)
5. Miss Ratheebhai V
6. Dr. Trupti Darak (Researcher, Prayas Health Group, Pune)
7. Dr. Kaveri Haritas (Assistant Professor, Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, Manipal University, Manipal)
8. Miss Maria Mathews (Research Officer, PHESA, Manipal University, Manipal)
9. Miss Lourembam Dayashwori Devi (Research Officer, PHESA, Manipal University, Manipal)



Protocol workshop for the Gender Responsive Policing project at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai on the 17th & 18th October, 2015

● **Vitamin A fortification and its impact on nutritional status: A Cochrane Review**

Vitamin A deficiency is a significant public health problem in many developing countries and food fortification of staple foods with vitamin A may increase vitamin A consumption by vulnerable populations. To date, there is a lack of systematically reviewed evidence on the effectiveness and safety of this intervention to inform policy-making. This review will complement the findings of other studies that explore the effects of interventions that may contribute to reduce vitamin A deficiency and its associated morbidities among different age groups.

Team:

1. Dr. Juan Pablo Pena-Rosas (Coordinator, Micro-nutrients Unit, Department of Nutrition for Health and Development, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland)
2. Dr. Luz Maria De-Regil (Director of Research & Evaluation at the Micro-nutrient Initiative)
3. Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair
4. Miss Aditi Hombali (Research Assistant, Institute of Mental Health, Singapore)
5. Dr. Bhumika TV
6. Dr. Ravishankar N (Biostatistician, Department of Virus Research, Manipal University, Manipal, India).

● **Rice Fortification with Vitamins and Minerals and its impact on micronutrient deficiency**

Team:

1. Dr. Juan Pablo Pena-Rosas
2. Dr. Luz Maria De-Regil
3. Prof. B Unnikrishnan (Associate Dean and Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore)
4. Dr. Prasanna Mithra P (Associate Profes-

- sor, Department of Community Medicine, Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore)
5. Dr. Kumar Nithin (Biostatistician, Department of Biostatistics, Manipal University, Manipal)
6. Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair

Funders for both the projects



Publications

1. Prabhu RA, Nair S, Pai G, Reddy NP, Suvarna D. Interventions for dialysis patients with hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2015, Issue 8. Art. No.: CD007003. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD007003.pub2.
2. Lewis MG, Nair NS. Review of applications of Bayesian meta-analysis in systematic reviews. Global Journal of Medicine and Public Health. 2015;4(1):1-9.
3. Nayak DR, Balakrishnan R, Deichu M, Nair S, Hazarika P, Lewis MG. Clinicopathological Evaluation and Survival Rate of Advanced Laryngeal Malignancy (t3, t4) Managed with Widefield total/near total Laryngectomy with Neck Dissection. Odisha Journal of Otorhinolaryngology and HNS. 2015;9(2):14-9.
4. Ravishankar N, Sreekumaran Nair N. Public Health Evidence Synthesis - Existing Challenges, Inadequacy of Existing Methods and Opportunities (A review submitted to Public Health - Under review)

Ph.D. Scholars

Completed Ph.D.

Mr. Ravishankar N has recently completed his Ph.D. on "A Statistical Methodology to Integrate the findings from Studies of Complex Public Health Interventions." The study is a new contribution to the public health evidence consolidation. It involves measuring the complexity in public health interventions by a tool and adjusting the measured complexity in meta-analysis by the technique of meta-regression. The tool has been named as "PHESA Complexity tool". In addition, the statistical properties of the complexity score were also studied.

Ongoing Ph. Ds.

There are currently 5 Ph.D. scholars in PHESA.

Dr. Bhumika TV is currently working on "An investigation into the Concept of Well-being: A Mixed Methods Approach."

Miss Melissa Glenda Lewis is currently working on "Application of Bayesian Methods in Public Health Evidence Synthesis."

Miss Amitha Puranik is currently working on "Aggregate Level Missing Data in Spatial Epidemiology."

Dr. Shruti Murthy is currently working on "The Economic Burden of Neonatal Systemic Infections: A Mixed Methods Study."

Dr. Shradha Parsekar is currently working on "Caring for Breast Cancer Patients in the Indian Context: Concept of Informal Caregiver, Quality of Life and Burden of Care."



**PhD Scholars at PHESA -
Dr. Bhumika TV, Ms. Melissa Lewis,
Ms. Amitha Puranik, Dr. Shruti Murthy
& Dr. Shradha Parsekar (left to right)**



**PhD Scholar at PHESA -
Mr. Ravishankar N**

Dr. TMA Pai Endowment Chair

Dr. Ajay Bailey, Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen, has been recently awarded the Dr. TMA Pai Endowment Chair in Qualitative Methods by Manipal University, Karnataka, India.

His work has contributed immensely to the collaboration between PHESA and the University of Groningen. PHESA hosted 4 exchange students this year from the University of Groningen as part of the collaboration.

Dr. Bailey is actively involved in conducting winter schools every year in collaboration with PHESA at Manipal University, Manipal, India. He will be training researchers and students in qualitative research methods and also contribute to setting up the Trans-disciplinary Centre for Qualitative Methods (TCQR) at Manipal University. The centre will form a significant part of PHESA and serve as a regional hub for capacity building in qualitative methods in South Asia.



Dr. Ajay Bailey
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Spatial Sciences,
University of Groningen, The Netherlands

INTERNATIONAL BIOMETRIC SOCIETY-INDIAN REGION & PHESA JOINT CONFERENCE

The 2nd International Biometric Society - Indian Region (IBS-IR) and Public Health Evidence South Asia (PHESA) joint conference was held on January 11-12, 2016 at Interact, Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), Manipal, Karnataka, India. This conference was attended by an interdisciplinary group of professionals working in the field of research, statistics and public health. Prof. N. Sreekumaran Nair welcomed delegates before the conference was inaugurated by Dr. Poornima Baliga, Dean

of Kasturba Medical College (KMC) Manipal, who was the chief guest of the conference. More than 20 experts shared their expertise and knowledge in the field with over 100 delegates. The schedule included paper presentations and plenaries. Please visit the following link to get further information on the sessions: <http://www.phesa.manipal.edu/documents/IBS-PHESA%20Conference.pdf>

The conference provided highly informative and educational updates on statistics and public health. It served as a common



**International Biometric Society-Indian region & PHESA Joint Conference,
Manipal University, Manipal
11-12th January, 2016**

platform where statisticians, researchers and public health professionals engaged in knowledge transfer and inter-professional collaboration. It focused on the public health priorities of LMICs and new developments in statistical methods. In addition to presentations and plenaries, the conference also provided an opportunity to socialize with colleagues from different Indian institutions, and included a trip to a potentially exotic locale, the Malpe beach.



Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this event, especially the hard work and dedication of the planning committee. We would also like to thank the IBS-IR and Department of Statistics for all their support. We would like to thank the organizing committee, Prof. N. Sreekumaran Nair, Director of PHESA, and Dr. Binu VS, Associate Professor, Department of Statistics. This conference would not have been possible without the support, time and efforts of the speakers, conference committee, sponsors and public engagement.

Dr. Binu VS, Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair, Dr. Poornima Baliga & Dr. Venkatesan P (Left to right)



Melissa Glenda Lewis awarded the Girijakant Shukla - IBS (IR) Young Biometrician Award

RETREAT - THE TURTLE BAY BEACH RESORT

In this rapidly changing field of research, public health and healthcare, retreats can be critically essential in enabling one to focus on the quality and efficiency at work. PHESA, along with the Department of Statistics, usually pauses once a year to evaluate systems and reallocate resources efficiently. PHESA often has new members joining as interns, exchange students or project staff. The retreat helps integrate new staff members and re-energizes current employees. This year the retreat was held at the Turtle Bay Beach Resort, Kundapur on the 20th of February, 2016. The venue provided an extremely pleasant setting which favoured discussion and

enabled people to move away from their day-to-day activities making the event a real “retreat” and not just a project meeting. This break enabled the team to brainstorm different issues, come up with innovative ideas, and prevented the team from growing complacent.

As far as the format of the retreat was concerned, about a quarter of the day was spent in discussion where each participant proposed relevant research directions. As the dialogue progressed, it allowed the participants to understand each other’s views and expertise (considering the wide range of competencies that the retreat brought together). The remaining part of

the day was spent in playing games, swimming and sun-bathing on the beach. All in all, it was an overwhelming experience for the team who now eagerly look forward to the next one!



**Annual Retreat - The Turtle Bay Resort
20th February, 2016**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Evening Certificate Course (ECC)

This course will provide an opportunity to all those graduates, postgraduates and Ph.D. scholars who cannot apply for full-time internship programme and wish to learn about behavior change communication and research methodologies especially systematic reviews, meta-analysis and evidence summaries.

Winter School on Qualitative Methods for Health Research in Asia

PHESA in collaboration with the University of Groningen, The Netherlands will be conducting the 2nd workshop on qualitative methods between 5th and 9th December, 2016 at Manipal University, Manipal. Please visit the following page to know more about the winter school: www.rug.nl/winter-schools

International Seminar on Gendering Qualitative Methods: People, Power and Place

The Winter School on Qualitative Methods will be followed by the international seminar between 12th and 13th December, 2016 (tentative) at Manipal University, Manipal, India.

Dissemination Workshop on Behavior Change Communication for Maternal & Child Health

PHESA will be conducting a workshop for dissemination of the results of the Behavior Change Communication Project and contextualisation of the findings to South Asia.

Neonatal Pneumonia Project-Data Collection Trip around India

The Neonatal Pneumonia Project team members will travel around the country to conduct interviews with national stakeholders of neonatal health, including policy-makers, neonatologists and community health workers to address the qualitative component which explores the perceptions of the people involved in newborn healthcare system.

24th Cochrane Colloquium

Cochrane Colloquium will be conducted between 23rd and 27th October, 2016 at Seoul, Korea.



PUBLIC HEALTH EVIDENCE SOUTH ASIA
INCLUDES THE SOUTH ASIAN SATELLITE OF COCHRANE
PUBLIC HEALTH)

The PHESA Newsletter has been published by Public Health Evidence South Asia, Manipal University. We would like to express our gratitude to the PHESA team (Page 20) who contributed to the making of this newsletter.

Chief Editor: Prof. N Sreekumaran Nair
Editors: Dr. Nikisha Mehta, Mr. Ravishankar N,
Dr. Bhumika TV, Miss Hanna Nelson &
Dr. Myron Godinho
Design: Mr. Ravishankar N & Dr. Nikisha Mehta

OUR TEAM



**Prof. Sreekumaran
Nair**



Dr. Suma Nair



**Prof. B
Unnikrishnan**



**Prof. Subhadra
Menon**



**Dr. Ajay
Bailey**



**Miss Maria
Mathews**



Dr. Bhumika TV



**Dr. Shradha
Parsekar**



**Dr. Shrinivas
Darak**



**Miss Dayashwori
Devi Lourebam**



Miss Melissa Lewis



Dr. Shruti Murthy



**Mr. Theophilus
Lakiang**



Miss Hanna Nelson



Dr. Nikisha Mehta



**Miss Amitha
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Dr. Myron Godinho



Mr. Ravi Shankar

