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Public Health Evidence South Asia (PHESA) includes the South Asian satellite of Cochrane Public Health Group, and is one of the seven centres under Prasanna School of Public Health (PSPH), Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), Manipal. PHESA aims to meet the public health evidence needs of the South Asian region. Presently, we have grown into an international network with global collaborations, including many universities, public health organizations and NGOs. Our staff and interns have roots across the globe. We aim to partner with various organizations and individuals spanning subject areas to solve a variety of public health problems faced by low-and middle-income countries. We work together to foster a flexible environment that inspires new ideas, debates, changes and innovation, with a focus on evidence synthesis and capacity building in public health research.

Highlights of this edition

- **Capacity building visit of the staff to University College London, UK, for the project 'Indigenizing Evidence Synthesis and Systematic Reviews for International Development and Global Challenges' under SPARC grant.**
- **India-Israel workshop on environmental health, Manipal organized by PSPH and Public Health Foundation of India in collaboration with faculty from leading Israel institutions.**
- **Certificate Course on Evidence Synthesis.**
- **Symposium on 'Mahatma Gandhi in the 21st century', Manipal.**
- **Cochrane India Network meeting, New Delhi.**

Message from the Coordinator:

Hello readers! I hope you all have been healthy and safe during this global crisis. The past few months have been exceptionally difficult for all of us, and the nationwide lockdown brought lives to a halt. The effects of this pandemic were directly and indirectly felt by us too. One of our staff member, on a visit to UCL for our project work, was stranded in London, UK, for three months and another staff member got affected by COVID-19 but with timely diagnosis and treatment, coped and recovered well. We have had our share of difficulties, but we have taken this as an opportunity to initiate/ complete research papers and utilizing online platforms for work. I am happy to share that PHESA conducted an online certificate course, published seven papers in high impact-factor journals and registered eight systematic review protocols during this period! This pandemic may have slowed down our lives, but it cannot affect our spirit of teamwork. Wishing you all strong immunity to fight this disease. Take care.

-Dr. Bhumika T.V., Coordinator, PHESA

Capacity Building Workshops and training

Workshop on research synthesis methods and indigenising knowledge, UCL, London



Dr. Bhumika T.V underwent fifteen days of training and Dr. Eti Rajwar, Research Officer, PHESA, completed 45 days training in advanced methods for evidence synthesis at University College London (UCL), London, UK, in the month of February and March 2020. The training was a part of the capacity building visit of the staff to UCL, UK, for the project 'Indigenising Evidence Synthesis and Systematic Reviews for International Development and Global Challenges' under Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Researcher Collaboration (SPARC) grant in collaboration with UCL and EPPI- centre, UK. During the course of the training, they were trained in newer methodological approaches for evidence synthesis including indigenizing of the evidence to local context. The collaborative work on collaborative methodological papers was also initiated.

At present, the Indian and UK partners are working on three methodological papers (1) An update of an overview (2) A methodological paper on indigenizing global evidence to India (3) A mixed-method review. More information on the project is given in the section 'Evidence building' under current projects.

Symposium on 'Mahatma Gandhi in the 21st century', Manipal: 7th August, 2020.

SPARC project team of PHESA and MCONS, MAHE, in association with Social Science Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education, University College London, organized a virtual symposium on 'Mahatma Gandhi in the 21st century'; on 7th August, 2020. The speakers for the symposium were Dr Krishna Kothai, Coordinator, Poornaprajna Centre for Research and Development, Udupi, Prof Varadesh Hiregange, Director, Gandhian Centre for Philosophical Arts and Sciences, MAHE, Manipal and Ms Abhilasha Principal, SMS English Medium School, Brahmavar, Udupi.

India-Israel workshop on environmental health, Manipal: 4th June, 2020



PSPH and Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), in collaboration with faculty from leading Israel institutions, organized a virtual Indo-Israel workshop on environmental health as a part of the Indo-Israel Environmental Health (EH) collaborative initiative on 4th June, 2020. The aim of the workshop was to leverage the joint expertise across institutions and facilitate a dialogue on mutual environmental issues of concern and interest. The objectives of the initiative are to develop strategies/ ideation for research and capacity building in EH, and provide a platform to develop a long-term collaboration between PSPH, PHFI- Centre for Environmental Health and Israel. Dr. Bhumika T.V and Dr. Shradha S. Parsekar, Research Officer, PHESA attended the workshop and will be involved in future activities under this initiative.

Certificate Course on Evidence Synthesis: 20th July -1st August, 2020

PHESA has successfully completed the third Certificate Course on Evidence Synthesis. The course aimed at sensitizing participants on systematic review methodology and provided step by-step guidance on how to perform systematic reviews and meta-analysis. This course was based on the principle of “Learning by doing”. Participants were provided with practical tips on do’s and don’ts during the review process. At the end of this course, participants gained in-depth knowledge about systematic review methodology. In light of the current COVID-19 situation, an online certificate course was conducted from 20th July -1st August, 2020. Fifty participants, representing various disciplines from all over India, completed the course.

Systematic Review course for M.Sc. Health Economics (1st semester)

PHESA mentors a course module on systematic reviews for the first semester M.Sc. Health Economics students from the Department of Commerce, MAHE. The course is structured for the students to initiate a systematic review as a part of the research work during their two-year academic programme. Currently, PHESA staff is guiding the third batch of M.Sc. Health Economics students.

Three protocols have been registered in PROSPERO, an International prospective register of systematic reviews for the previous two batches of M.Sc. Health Economics:

A. 2018-2020 batch

1. Impact of increased taxation on tobacco use among tobacco product users in India: A Systematic Review
2. Cost Effectiveness of Interventions for Diarrhoea Management among Children in Community-based Settings in LMICs: A Systematic Review

B. 2019-2021 batch

1. Instruments measuring the quality of life among people living with type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in India: A systematic review

The details of the registered protocols can be found in the section 'registered protocols' below.

Internship program at PHESA

As a part of the capacity building exercise of PHESA, interns are trained to work on public health issues of south Asia and the core area of evidence synthesis. Ms. Ashima Rao joined as an intern with us in May 2020, for a period of six months, and is working on a systematic review titled "Interventions for women with psychological morbidity due to breast cancer or its treatment: An evidence summary of systematic reviews". Online training is being provided to her because of the COVID-19 situation in the country.



Ms. Ashima Rao

Evidence Building

Current projects

Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Researcher Collaboration (SPARC) 'Indigenizing Evidence Synthesis and Systematic Reviews for International Development and Global Challenges'

PHESA, PSPH, MAHE, Manipal and Manipal College of Nursing (MCON), MAHE, Manipal, received the prestigious Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Researcher Collaboration (SPARC) grant in 2019. SPARC is a Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India initiative that aims at improving the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian institutions and the best institutions in the world. This project concentrates on strengthening and promoting evidence policy for India in the area of public health, social, and health sciences. Research scholars, early career researchers, post graduate students and faculty from MAHE are getting trained by experienced researchers and staff from the University College London (UCL), UK; in new methods for evidence synthesis. Through this project, essential resource material relevant to India for high quality research in the domain of evidence synthesis will be developed, and sustainable research activities and programmes in the area of evidence synthesis in India will be designed and implemented. Collaborative workshops between MAHE and UCL are being organized for consolidation of bilateral cooperation through academic and research partnerships between India and UK.

Professor Sandy Oliver (Director of the Social Science Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education), Dr. Mukdarut Bangpan (Associate Professor, IOE, UCL), Dr. Preethy D'Souza (Research Associate, IOE, UCL) and Dr. Claire Stansfield (Senior Research Fellow, IOE, UCL) are the trainers in this project. Prof. Sandy Oliver is the founding member of the EPPI-Centre (the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Coordinating Centre) and has been directing the work of the Social Science Research Unit at UCL since 2015. All other members, from the UCL team, hold massive experience in the field of evidence synthesis.

Evidence Synthesis on Health Insurance in India

Evidence Synthesis on Health Insurance in India for Public Health Research initiative in collaboration with Allied Health Sciences funded by Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI). Dr. B. Reshmi, (Associate Professor, Department of Health Information Management, MCHP, MAHE) is the principal investigator for this project. Under this project, two reviews are ongoing:

1. Impact, enrolment factors, and willingness to pay (WTP) for health insurance in India: A rapid review synthesis
2. Health insurance awareness and utilization of health care services in India: A rapid review synthesis.

Knowledge Dissemination and Advocacy

Journal Publications

- **Rajwar E, Parsekar SS, Venkatesh BT, Sharma Z.** Effect of Vitamin A, Calcium and Vitamin D fortification and supplementation on nutritional status of women: an overview of systematic reviews. *BMC Systematic Review* 2020; 9:248. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-020-01501-8>
- **Saran A, Rajwar E, Venkatesh BT, Patil DS, White H.** PROTOCOL: Development evaluations in India 2000–2018: A country impact evaluation map. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*. 2020;16:e1122. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1122>
- **Yadav UN, Rayamajhee B, Mistry SK, Parsekar SS, Mishra SK (2020).** A syndemic perspective on the management of non-communicable diseases amid the COVID-19 pandemic in low- and middle-income countries. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8, 508. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2020.00508>
- **Patil DS, Pundir P, Dhyan VS, Krishnan JB, Parsekar SS, D'Souza SM, Ravishankar N, Renjith V.** A mixed methods systematic review on barriers to exclusive breastfeeding. *Nutrition and Health*. A mixed-methods systematic review on barriers to exclusive breastfeeding. *Nutrition and Health*, 26(4), 323-346. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0260106020942967>
- **Chourasia PK, Verma A, Pundir P, Shukla N, Chourasia MK.** Underlying Challenges in the Path of Malaria Elimination: From India Perspective. *South Asian Journal of Parasitology*, 2020; 9-12. Available at: <https://www.journalsajp.com/index.php/SAJP/article/view/30113/56504>
- **Parsekar SS, Bailey A, Binu VS, Nair S.** Exploring perceptions and practices of cancer care among caregivers and care recipients of breast cancer in India. *Psychooncology* 2020; 29(4):737-42. doi:10.1002/pon.5326. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/pon.5326>
- **Parsekar SS, Pundir P, Bevilacqua V.** Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and related Behaviour Change Communication strategies in Bangladesh, Nepal and India: A narrative review. *Clinical Epidemiology and Global Health* 2020; 8(1):280-6. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cegh.2019.08.014>

Manuscripts accepted for Publication

- “Weathering the storm: Psychological impact of COVID-19 pandemic on clinical and non-clinical health care workers in India” in *Indian Journal of Critical Care Medicine*.

Registered protocols

- Ashima Rao, **Shradha S. Parsekar**. Interventions for women with anxiety, depression and distress caused due to breast cancer or its treatment: Review of reviews. PROSPERO 2020 CRD42020203517 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020203517
- Manasa Kolibylu Raghupathy, Bhamini Krishna Rao, **Shradha S. Parsekar**, Alicia J. Spittle, Shubha R. Nayak. Effect of family-centered care interventions on motor and neurobehavior development of preterm infants: a protocol of systematic review. PROSPERO 2020 CRD42020201047 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020201047
- Polani Rubeshkumar, **Prachi Pundir**, Prabal Kumar Chourasia, Sam Marconi, Sherin Susan Paul, Mehul Kumar Chourasia, Immo Kleinschmidt. Effect of asymptomatic malaria on haemoglobin levels: A systematic review. PROSPERO 2020 CRD42020198449 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020198449
- Preethy D'Souza, Mukdarut Bangpan, **Eti Rajwar, Bhumika TV**. Role of partners in contraception choice and usage: a mixed methods synthesis. PROSPERO 2020 CRD42020186236 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020186236
- Druti Hazra, Kiran Chawla, Vitali Sintehenko, **Bhumika TV**, Nathan Bachmann, Connie Lam, **Vijay Shree Dhyani**. Whole-genome sequencing as a predictor of treatment outcomes for MDR-TB/XDR-TB: A systematic review. PROSPERO 2020 CRD42020197099 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020197099
- Chetna Demla, Anns Thomas, Jomol Jose, Angela Joshy, Hrishikesh M A, Ambigai Rajendran, **Shradha Parsekar**. Instruments measuring the quality of life among people living with type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in India: A systematic review. PROSPERO 2020 CRD42020180432 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020180432
- Keerthan R Manipura, Siddhant S Nair, Sruthy Xavier, Greeshma Gopalan, Prashant Singh, Ajitha G Nath, Ambigai Rajendran, **Bhumika TV, Prachi Pundir**. Impact of increased taxation on tobacco use among tobacco product users in India: A Systematic Review. PROSPERO 2020 CRD42020158660 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020158660
- Greeshma Gopalan, Prashant Singh, Sruthy Xavier, Keerthan R.M, Siddhant S. Nair, Agitha G. Nath, Divya Sussana Patil, **Eti Rajwar**. Cost Effectiveness of Interventions for Diarrhoea Management among Children in Community-based Settings in LMICs: A Systematic Review. PROSPERO 2020 CRD42020156021 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020156021

Cochrane Public Health Group

Activity for promotion and dissemination of Cochrane reviews

PHESA includes the South Asian satellite of Cochrane Public Health (CPH) group and undertakes various activities as a part of this role. One of the activity is to disseminate the information on Cochrane reviews using various web-based platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and PHESA website. Following are the latest CPH reviews relevant to LMICs:

- Quarantine alone or in combination with other public health measures to control COVID-19: a rapid review ([Review link](#))
- Travel-related control measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic: a rapid review ([Review link](#))
- Universal screening for SARS-CoV-2 infection: a rapid review ([Review link](#))
- Taxation of the fat content of foods for reducing their consumption and preventing obesity or other adverse health outcomes ([Review link](#))
- Community-level interventions for improving access to food in low- and middle-income countries ([Review link](#))
- Cochrane systematic review on 'Unconditional cash transfers for reducing poverty: effect on health services use and health outcomes in low- and middle-income countries' ([Review link](#))

Cochrane India Network meeting, New Delhi: 20th- 21st February 2020



Dr. Bhumika T.V., Assistant Professor and Coordinator, PHESA, attended the Cochrane India Network meeting to discuss challenges, opportunities, and vision for Cochrane in India. During this meeting, discussion on the process of further developing a Cochrane India Network was held. The meeting was held at New Delhi, on 20th- 21st February 2020.

Awards and Recognition

The Cancer Collective 2020, KMC, MAHE, Manipal



Dr. Prachi Pundir won the best entry award in 'Cancer Undone', a creative writing contest conducted by The Cancer Collective 2020 held at KMC, MAHE on February 29, 2020. (In picture: Dr. Shradha S. Parsekar collecting the certificate on her behalf).

Recognition of research work (regional and global)

Dr. Shradha Parsekar's research work has been featured in a Goan regional Marathi daily, "Dainik Gomantak" dated 31 October 2020. Dr. Shradha is a Research Officer at Public Health Evidence South Asia, Prasanna School of Public Health, MAHE. Every year October is commemorated as 'Breast cancer awareness month' and as a part of this, she was interviewed about her research work with caregivers of women with breast cancer.

Daily Gomantak also highlighted her research article that is published in Frontiers of Public Health, titled "A Syndemic Perspective on the Management of Non-communicable Diseases Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic in Low- and Middle-Income Countries" and the details are mentioned under 'journal publications' section of newsletter. This publication has received an Altmetric Coverage score of 295 (<https://www.altmetric.com/details/88555376>).

Consultancy

PHESA is providing consultancy for conducting systematic reviews. For any queries related to consultancy services, please contact PHESA office.

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