

Workshop
“Quantifying the health impacts of policies - Principles, methods, and models”
16 - 17 March 2010 LIGA.NRW Düsseldorf

Welcome speech by Dr. E. Lehmann, Director General of LIGA.NRW

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to Düsseldorf, welcome to the NRW Institute of Health and Work, LIGA.NRW. I am very glad that so many international researchers found time to join this workshop and share expertise and experience about “Quantifying the health impacts of policies - Principles, methods, and models”.

A short introduction to our institute may help you to understand why we have put this topic on our agenda.

LIGA.NRW was founded in 2008 as a merger of the State Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Landesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz) and the Institute of Public Health (Landesinstitut für den Öffentlichen Gesundheitsdienst Nordrhein-Westfalen, Iögd) with local offices in Düsseldorf, Bielefeld and Münster.

The institute is part of the new “Gesundheitscampus = Health Campus” North Rhine-Westphalia, which is currently developed at the city of Bochum in the Ruhr area. The Campus aims to concentrate expertise in health, endorse innovations in the health economy and to offer a venue for meetings and networking of research, health economy and education.

We are engaged in advising and supportive tasks for the state government, the authorities and bodies as well as the municipalities of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia on issues of health, health policy, and health and safety at work.

The institute’s main areas of activity range from health policy to prevention and health promotion, innovation in health, health management and the healthy design of working conditions as well as drug safety & surveillance and protection against infectious diseases and hygiene.

The mission of the institute is to **promote health for all** by reducing burden of disease, focussing especially on 3 settings: community (physical and social environment), workplace and health care system.

This workshop is organised by the group ‘Innovation in Health’ of the ‘Department “Prevention and Innovation”’. The group and the issues the group members are working on are quite new on the institute’s agenda. North Rhine-Westphalia - like most regions in Europe with a long industrial tradition - faces the challenges of the economic breakdown, an ageing population and increasing incidence of chronic diseases. Against this background LIGA.NRW established the group ‘Innovation in Health’.

Regarding health relevant innovations in NRW, the prediction of future development of disease burden and changing health needs play an important role in the activities of the group. Key questions we address are:

- What are the future trends with regard to the disease burden?
- What kind of problems will NRW face in the future?
- What innovative approaches may be effective to improve population health in NRW?

In this context we also focus on policies and interventions that may deliver positive health outcomes. However, we are aware, that many proposed new policies inside and outside the health domain may have unintended – and undesired - health consequences. Impact assessments of these policies will guide policy makers to develop better, evidence-based policies by careful consideration of the impact on the health of the population. Therefore, the policy-related quantification of health impacts is an essential component in the work of the group 'Innovation in Health'.

I am sure Ms. Mekel will provide some more details in her introduction - following as next topic of the programme.

We want to participate in the international research and dialog of measuring impact on health. Therefore, we have enlisted our WHO Collaborating Centre for Regional Health Policy and Public Health to join this workshop and use it as a platform for further exchange with other regions in Europe and worldwide.

The Institute was designated in 2008 as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Regional Health Policy and Public Health. **The mission** of the Centre is to contribute to the national and international exchange of concepts, data and professional expertise, and also to improve regional and local health policy throughout the policy cycle. **The objectives are** to promote exchange on regional and local health policy including assessments, evaluations and reviews. Local and regional health policy is planned to be connected to European and global developments. **Main topics** are research, policy and development, health promotion and education, health systems research and development.

We believe that the quantification of health impact is essential for fulfilling these tasks. Both for policy advice and the public we have to answer the questions of why, when and how.

I am sure there will be two days of intensive exchange, discussions and networking, very informative and fruitful for all of you.

Have a successful workshop and thanks for your attention!