

Chronic Disease Prevention & Control in the Americas



Monthly Newsletter of the PAHO/WHO Chronic Disease Program
Pan American Health Organization
Regional Office of the World Health Organization



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Greetings from the Editor

On this occasion of our 1st anniversary of the Chronic Disease newsletter and the end of 2007, the PAHO/WHO Noncommunicable Disease Unit wishes to extend warm wishes for a wonderful holiday season and prosperous new year.

This newsletter has been our avenue to raise awareness of the chronic disease epidemic and the many initiatives that are being undertaken in our Region to address it. Some of our highlights in 2007 include the following:

- ➔ Putting CNCDs on the agenda of all the PAHO Subregional Managers Meetings.
- ➔ Participating in the Caribbean Summit of Heads of State on Chronic Diseases, which led to a declaration to reduce the burden of these diseases in the Caribbean.
- ➔ Establishing the Trans Fat Free Americas Task Force and convening the major food companies in an effort to eliminate trans fat from food supplies in the Americas.
- ➔ Presenting a regional strategy for cervical cancer prevention and control to the PAHO Executive Committee.

- ➔ Uniting all the PAHO focal points for chronic disease prevention and control to build a collaborative team on chronic diseases across PAHO headquarters, country offices and centers.
- ➔ Convening the chronic disease program managers from ministries of health across the Americas, along with partner organizations, for the CARMEN biennial meeting to plan the implementation of the PAHO regional strategy on chronic disease.
- ➔ Collaborating with WHO Headquarters in Geneva on several issues, including the Global Action Plan.

We thank you all for your contributions to this newsletter and for your continued collaboration in chronic disease prevention and control and look forward to a productive year in 2008.



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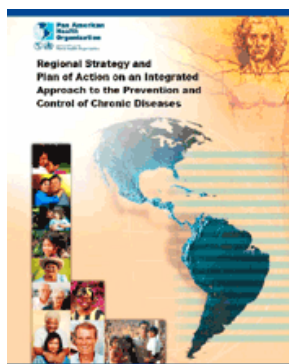
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Regional Developments

CARMEN Biennial Meeting Report

The [final report](#) on the November 2007 Biennial Meeting of the CARMEN Network in the Bahamas is now online at the [meeting website](#). CARMEN is an initiative of the countries of the Region and PAHO.

Its aims are to establish comprehensive, integrated NCD prevention and control policies and programs in the Americas, in support of the [Regional Strategy and Plan of Action on an Integrated Approach to the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases, including Diet, Physical Activity and Health](#). Every two years, CARMEN network participants meet to review progress and make plans for advancing its goals and objectives.



2nd International Cancer Control Congress Report



The [2nd International Cancer Control Congress](#), co-hosted by the Brazil Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization, was held in Brazil in November 2007 and attended by over 550 people from 45 countries. The objective was to share information and knowledge about enhancing cancer outcomes on a large population level, working through a global community of practice. The six themes of the congress plenary presentations and work-group discussions were as follows:

1. *Similarities and distinctions between controlling chronic diseases and cancer*
2. *Cancer prevention strategies: Progress to date and implementation challenges*

3. *Novel approaches and technologies: Matching renewed efforts to cultural and financial realities*
4. *Cancer control and outcomes: Use of evidence indicators in private and public health systems*
5. *The value proposition of investing in population-based cancer control*
6. *Mobilization of a global community of practice.*

The congress began with a global overview on cancer control with keynote speakers discussing the achievements, challenges and next steps in cancer control. Dr. Carissa Etienne, representing PAHO/WHO, delivered a plenary presentation on the [WHO Chronic Disease Program](#) and the [Global Plan of Action against Cancer](#).

During one of the working group sessions, PAHO had an opportunity to present the results of the TATI cervical cancer prevention demonstration project in Peru, to promote the “same-visit screen-and-treat approach,” using visual inspection screening and cryotherapy treatment in low-resource settings. A special PAHO booth and display offered numerous cancer-related publications.

At the end of the Congress, the [Declaration of Rio de Janeiro](#) was issued to call special attention to the need for cancer control programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. The declaration also called for the creation of a *Latin American and Caribbean Alliance for Cancer Control* to improve collaboration among countries and to mobilize political and financial resources for cancer control initiatives in the PAHO Region. The priority goals of the alliance are to advance the [Inter American Tobacco Control Network](#) and to develop a regional action plan for cancer prevention and control. The Ministry of Health of Brazil will work with PAHO/WHO to coordinate the *Latin American and Caribbean Alliance for Cancer Control*.



Progress in the Countries

Mexico: Meeting of Americas' Network for Chronic Disease Surveillance

The [Fourth Technical Conference on the Principles and Practice of Chronic Disease Surveillance](#)

was held in Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico on 9–12 November 2007, under the auspices of the *Americas' Network for Chronic Disease Surveillance* ([AMNET](#)).



Main Thrust of the Meeting

Capacity-building in a university environment, gathering professionals from the state of Coahuila and the Federal District in Mexico and as well as from Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica.

Objectives

1. Provide a basic understanding of the epidemiological, statistical, and public health methods needed to undertake surveillance of chronic disease and their risk factors.
2. Provide an overall perspective of surveillance as evidence for health promotion practice.
3. Provide basic tools to translate surveillance results into evidence and further into public health policy and action, with strong regional (Latin America) content aimed at addressing local issues.

Organization

1. **Modules** provided basic information through lectures followed by discussion. The purpose of this was to promote information exchange between students and faculty. The different modules included:
 - a. Environmental risk factors and health consequences
 - b. Global initiatives in epidemiological surveillance of chronic diseases and risk factors
 - c. Contribution of organized civil society to the process of chronic disease surveillance

- d. Trends in information-gathering for diet, obesity, and physical activity
- e. Overview of epidemiological bias and a catalog of questionnaire bias
- f. Free communications
2. **Workshops** were concurrent, left to the choice of the participant. Themes included:
 - g. Surveillance systems based on hospital discharge and primary healthcare data
 - h. Principles of evaluation and knowledge translation: From surveillance to action
 - i. Principles and practice of surveillance of environmental risk factors and health consequences
 - j. Principles of rates analysis and risk of chronic diseases
3. **Group discussion and breakfasts with experts** provided time and space to facilitate information exchange and build networks among faculty and students.

The session on evaluation and how surveillance can support evaluation was coordinated and taught by Branka Legetic of the [PAHO Noncommunicable Disease Unit](#) and Dr. Bernard Choi of the Public Health Agency of Canada ([PHAC](#)). The session was well accepted, with active and fruitful discussion.



Management Session

There was also a meeting between PAHO and the AMNET Management Committee (Ricardo Granero, President; Juan Carlos Zevallos; Celsa López; Patricia Rivera; Bernard Choi). The purpose of this session was to discuss joint work between PAHO, AMNET, and PHAC on assessment of capacity for NCD surveillance at the country level. The WHO instrument for assessing the country capacity for response to NCDs is currently under revision in the Region of the Americas, initiated by PAHO with the purpose of being transformed into a tool that member countries can use to assess needs and gaps in the response to CNCDS. The part of the instrument dedicated to policy assessment is being jointly revised with PHAC and there is a proposal for part of the surveillance instrument to be jointly revised by AMNET and PHAC.

Participants agreed to pursue the proposed topic and to assemble a working group comprised of representatives from AMNET; PAHO; the Caribbean Epidemiology Center (CAREC); PHAC; the [Universidad del Valle](#) in Cali, Colombia; the University of Puerto Rico ([UPR](#)); and possibly the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)). The final product of this group should be the part of instrument that will support evaluation of surveillance capacity in the Region.

Sponsors

- Autonomous University of Coahuila ([UAdeC](#)), School of Medicine, Torreón and Saltillo branches
- Public Health Agency of Canada ([PHAC](#))
- Pan American Health Organization
- [Institute of Public Health of Finland](#)
- University of Barcelona, [GRAAL](#) Group (*Grups de Recerca d'Àfrica I Àmerica Llatines en Metodologia Estadística en Salut Pública*)
- Venezuelan Heart Foundation ([ASCARDIO](#))
- Autonomous University of Mexico ([UNAM](#))
- [Coahuila State Government](#), Mexico
- [Torreón City Hall](#), Coahuila State, Mexico
- Secretary of Health of Mexico ([SSA](#))
- National Colleges of Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, Orthopedics and Surgeons of La Laguna, Mexico
- [Lara State Government](#), Venezuela
- University of Puerto Rico ([UPR](#))
- [Nestlé](#)
- [Schering-Plough](#)

Source: [Official AMNET meeting report](#) via Branka Legetic, PAHO Regional Advisor on Noncommunicable Diseases.

STOP THE GLOBAL EPIDEMIC OF CHRONIC DISEASE
PROMOTE. PREVENT. TREAT. CARE



The PAHO/WHO Chronic Disease Program invites the readers of this newsletter to submit contributions on activities related to chronic disease the Americas. Send contributions (1-3 paragraphs) to Dr. James Hospedales (hospedaj@paho.org) with copy to Pilar Fano (fanopili@paho.org) and Suzanna Stephens (stephens@paho.org). Instructions and criteria can be found on the homepage for this newsletter at the web link below:

<http://www.paho.org/english/ad/dpc/nc/cronic.htm>

Announcements

PepsiCo Global Health Director Serves on PAHEF Board

The newest member of the board of trustees of the

[Pan American Health and Education Foundation](#) (PAHEF) is

Dr. Derek Yach, Director of Global Health Policy at PepsiCo. Illustrative global health positions he has held in the recent past include Director of

Global Health at the Rockefeller Foundation; Professor in the Division of Global Health at Yale University; and Executive Director of

Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health at the World Health Organization (WHO).



The Americas will benefit from Dr. Yach's broad experience in prevention of chronic diseases and in nutrition (including obesity), as well as his leadership in assessing the impact of globalization on global health. His background fits well with PAHEF's top programmatic priorities of childhood obesity, nutrition, and healthy aging.



Dr. Yach gladly accepted the invitation to join the PAHEF board because, in

his own words, "I deeply share PAHEF's commitment to improving the health and education of all people in the Americas. Further, as an ex-WHO employee, I fully appreciate the critical role of PAHO in supporting this goal and value the chance to strengthen and develop innovative private-public partnerships as the best means of tackling complex social issues in a sustainable way."

Please visit the [PAHEF](#) website to learn more about Dr. Yach and his experience, as well as PAHEF's activities.