

ANNOUNCEMENT

WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

**International Workshop on
Urbanization, Transport and Health in Asia**

Organized by
Asian MetaCentre
for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis

Supported by
The Wellcome Trust
United Kingdom

Date
16 – 19 February 2003

Venue
National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health
Australian National University
Canberra, Australia

Context and Scope

Scope and Context Asia is rapidly urbanizing, and within another generation a majority of Asians are expected to be city-dwellers. Not only are more Asians living in urban areas but those towns and especially cities are becoming increasingly large with Asia expected to dominate the list of megacities in excess of 10 million people. The changes are bringing with them major changes in transportation. Cities because of their huge populations, constricted space, and their complex economies have complex transportation needs of people and goods. Urbanisation usually leads to higher population density and a wider distribution of residences, workplaces, schools and other services. For many, daily life involves more and longer transport needs than in traditional rural society. These transport needs are increasingly met by motorized transport, particularly private vehicles.

These transportation requirements vary according to the specific characteristics of the city and the level of economic development. The transport solutions adopted, consciously or unconsciously, have major implications for the health and well-being of the urban populations. Increased use of motor vehicles can lead to greater rates of death and injury through motor vehicle accidents. It also affects human health directly via exposure to air pollution, the “heat-island” amplification of heatwaves and the micro-environment of urban housing, and less directly through the change in physical activity patterns resulting in obesity and health disorders; and indirect ways via changes in family formation, social networking and individual mobility.

Transportation also has positive affects on health. It can help critically ill people get urgent medical treatment. It can improve people’s livelihood by making it possible to commute to a wider range of workplaces. Transport is one of the major employers especially of the poorer sections of the urban community.

Addressing the issues related to the health consequences of population, urbanization and increasing complex transportation systems calls for renewed commitment to understanding underlying forces. Programmes need to be multidisciplinary, be proactive, move beyond what is already known, and have a policy perspective to be effective. A variety of research strategies ranging from the assessment of macro-level interactions between population, social and economic development, to more focused micro-level studies between life-course events, exposures, health status and health care utilization. Research is needed to support efforts to improve the health of people in greatest need and to support efforts for environmental protection at local and global level. The research agenda needs to be broad, ranging from assessment of macro-level interactions between population, economic development, environmental quality and public health, to focused micro-level studies of local determinants of ill health and interventions to reduce health impacts. In particular, there is a need for research that brings together the clinical, social and population perspectives.

The workshop will consider the empirical situation of cities, transport and health, and look at the methodological issues involved in improving relevant data collection. More specifically it will:

- 1) examine the health gains and losses of different transport systems, and
- 2) investigate the linkages between transport and health in terms of the diversity within cities (for example the rich and the poor, those who live close in and further out), and the

diversity between cities in different countries with varying levels of economic development and different social and cultural perspectives.

The workshop will review the literature, include case studies, examine how to get better empirical data, and how to apply this data to improving scenario modeling.

The focus is on the larger Asian cities — what has been called the mega cities — as this is where transport issues are most urgent, and where different transport scenarios are most likely to influence health.

Invitation to Submit Abstracts

The first phase of the MetaCentre program on urbanization, transport and population health aims at identifying experienced researchers in Asia, who are interested in developing further research in this field. A key feature of such research will be interdisciplinary team development involving public health and population research expertise as well as other relevant disciplines. Collaboration between MetaCentre institutions and other research institutions will be explored.

A workshop to discuss research priorities and methods, and to review tentative research proposals from Asian researchers will be held in Canberra 16-19 February 2003. Participation is by invitation after a selection procedure has been completed. Some preference will be given to applicants able to demonstrate active membership of an interdisciplinary team, appropriate to this type of research. If two or more members of any such team intend to apply for participation, their application should be linked.

Interested participants should submit an abstract for a brief presentation of their past research experience related to the topic of the conference, their Curriculum Vitae (include research projects and publication record), together with their application forms to:

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Applicants are encouraged to send in their materials via email. The deadline for submission of abstracts is **15 November 2002**. Notification of acceptance of participation can be expected by 14 December 2002.

Application For Funding Support

Participants are expected to find their own funding to attend the workshop, but limited funding to cover economy-class return airfare, and accommodation for the duration of the workshop is available for the best abstracts selected on a competitive basis to successful applicants.

If you are applying for funding support from the Asian MetaCentre, please indicate clearly in your correspondence whether you are applying for full support or a partial subsidy (in which case indicate the type of support needed (e.g. accommodation only)).

Information on accommodation options will also be made available in our subsequent announcements.

Applications should reach us by **15 November 2002** and the results can be expected by 14 December 2002.

Enquiries

For enquiries, please contact Ms Verene Koh at fax: 65-68746797 or email: popnasia@nus.edu.sg. Correspondence address: Asian MetaCentre, c/o Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 5 Arts Link, Shaw Foundation Building, AS7, Singapore 117570.