CROATIAN CENTRE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH - A SMALL INSTITUTION WORKING FOR GLOBAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

IVANA KOLČIĆ, OZREN POLAŠEK*

Croatian Centre for Global Health is a scientific unit within Medical School, University of Split, dedicated to research excellence in various fields of biomedical research. It consists of five departments, which are committed to improving global health through basic and applied research in genetics, genomics, ecogenetics, identification of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide and recognizing priorities for research and investment, application of evidence based medicine in every-day clinical practice and research on how to overcome challenges in international scientific communication. Such integrated efforts, from genetic influence on human health to global policy development are crucial for appropriate response to contemporary and future challenges of ever changing global health landscape. Croatian Centre for Global Health collaborators were very successful in their work so far, measured by number of projects awarded and papers published in leading scientific journals. The future goals of Croatian Centre for Global Health include further development and creation of new ideas and turning them into research projects aiming to discover new knowledge applicable to enhancing people's health all over the globe - to people from developed countries, but more importantly to people coming from low- and mid-income countries.

Descriptors: WORLD HEALTH, BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH, MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, CROATIA

Croatian Centre for Global Health (CCGH) was established in 2008 as a research unit of the Medical School University of Split. The main idea behind the Centre development was to create an independent, efficient and successful research team, which will be capable of responding to contemporary and future challenges of ever-changing global health landscape. Croatian Centre for Global Health collaborators were very successful in their work so far, measured by number of projects awarded and papers published in leading scientific journals. The future goals of Croatian Centre for Global Health include further development and creation of new ideas and turning them into research projects aiming to discover new knowledge applicable to enhancing people's health all over the globe - to people from developed countries, but more importantly to people coming from low- and mid-income countries.

Address: 16 17 *Croatian Centre for Global Health, University of Split, Croatia

COUNTRY WORKING FOR GLOBAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Pregled

 Croatian Centre for Global Health was Professor Igor Rudan, who is one of the leading researchers of morbidity and mortality in children under five years of age. Working as an Associate Professor for Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative (CNHR) of the Global Forum for Health Research he contributed to reduction of global mortality and morbidity from pediatric infectious diseases, particularly childhood pneumonia and neonatal sepsis. Currently, he serves as a consultant to the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, UK Department for International Development, Global Forum for Health Research, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and others. Additionally, he developed a systematic methodology for setting priorities for investment in the global health research (2). He authored more than 50 publications related to various issues in global health in journals such as The Lancet, BMJ, PLOS Medicine, PLoS One, Bulletin of the World Health Organization, BMC Public Health and others, and was awarded with a prestigious Chancellor's Award for his research excellence. He is also a founder and co-editor of a relatively new journal - Journal of Global Health, with the mission "to serve the community of researchers, funding agencies, international organizations, policy-makers and other stakeholders in the field of international health by publishing high-quality peer-reviewed original research and providing objective reviews of global health and development issues" and other types of publications, like editorials, news, viewpoints, and review articles in two issues per year (3). Professor Rudan vacated his post at CCGH in 2011, as he became a Chair in International Health and Molecular Medicine of the University of Edinburgh. His role was then succeeded by Assistant Professor Ozren Polašek, whose main research interest lies between genetics and public health, in a research area that can be identified as public health genomics. It covers an interdisciplinary area that focuses on investigation of population genetics and attempts to understand how genes affect health, disease and entire populations. The main research initiative within this line of work is the research program "10,001 Dalmatians", which now for over a decade has been producing top level results. Over the past five years, based on this project and international collaborations, a total of 21 articles were published in Nature Genetics journal and three in Nature Journal, what clearly reflects the large research potential of this initiative.

CCGH currently holds funds from 3 EU-funded projects in FP7 cycle, alongside with a project of the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports and other sources of funding, making it one of the most effective units of entire Medical School.

CCGH has 5 departments: I) Department for large population-based studies, II) Croatian branch of Italian Cochrane Centre, III) Department for international scientific communication, IV) Department for global health research, and V) Department for ecogenetics.

Department for large population-based studies hosts the largest biobank in Croatia - "10,001 Dalmatians". This is a scientific program which started in 1999, and it is aiming to investigate genetic and environmental determinants of health and disease in the populations of remote Adriatic islands: Vis, Korčula, Lastovo and Miljet. Scientists working on this resource published some 150 papers in the leading journals, bringing new insights into the genes associated with refractive error and myopia, genetic control of the phenotypic variability of body mass index, genetic background of blood pressure, high, lung function, menarche, smoking, chronic kidney disease, gout etc. (4-12).

The Croatian Biobank "10,001 Dalmatians" is the most successful project in the field of biomedicine funded by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and at the meeting of the European Network of Research Integrity Offices and Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting. Department for international scientific communication is dedicated to development and management of Registry of Cochrane Centre is dedicated to the creation of systematic reviews and meta-analysis, based on strict methodological protocols, providing clinicians, stakeholders and policy-makers reliable information on various health issues (14). Collaborators of the Croatian branch of the Italian Cochrane Centre have published 4 papers and 7 protocols in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.

Department for international scientific communication is committed to promotion of skills needed for successful scientific career and scientific integrity. This Department organised Summer school for scientific communication for doctoral students for three consecutive years now, along with the courses on how to write and publish in biomedicine. It also hosts special meetings, like the meeting of the European Network of Research Integrity Offices and Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting. Department for international scientific communication is devoted to scientific communication, IV) Department for global health research, and V) Department for ecogenetics.

Department for global health research studies hosts the largest biobank in Croatia - "10,001 Dalmatians". This is a scientific program which started in 1999, and it is aiming to investigate genetic and environmental determinants of health and disease in the populations of remote Adriatic islands: Vis, Korčula, Lastovo and Miljet. Scientists working on this resource published some 150 papers in the leading journals, bringing new insights into the genes associated with refractive error and myopia, genetic control of the phenotypic variability of body mass index, genetic background of blood pressure, high, lung function, menarche, smoking, chronic kidney disease, gout etc. (4-12).

The Croatian Biobank "10,001 Dalmatians" is the most successful project in the field of biomedicine funded by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and at the meeting of the European Network of Research Integrity Offices and Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting. Department for international scientific communication is dedicated to development and management of Registry of Systematic Reviews. This Department is also a co-editor of the Journal of Global Health.

Department for global health research is committed to contribution and understanding of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide, regionally and by particular countries. Activities of this Department include "engagement in the systematic search and documentation of credible information sources about health; creation of methodologies which can help to disseminate information in concrete advice to decision-making people in the international health to invest in health care and health research" (15). These activities are needed more than ever, since the inequalities in the world she is living in, while the poor girl in Sierra Leone is actually lucky to reach the age of 5, was never vaccinated against leading killer diseases, such as pneumonia and measles, is not educated at all, gives birth at the age of 16 all alone and without any professional help, and her first baby dies. Eventually, when she contracts AIDS, she dies before reaching her 36th birthday, leaving two orphans behind. This sad story is a real eye-opener about poverty - the main driving force of hunger, disease, violence and other forms of human suffer. Hungry still affected as many as 850 million people in the world in the 2006-2008 period, which accounted for 15.5% of the world's population (17). Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is the first of the eight Millennium Goals (MDGs), proposed by World Health Organization, which accompanied the World Health Report 2003. It is a tale of two girls, born on the same day, one in Japan and the other one in Sierra Leone (5). The story walks you through the lives of these two girls - a girl born in Japan gets all of the wealth of the world she is living in, while the poor girl in Sierra Leone is actually lucky to reach the age of 5, was never vaccinated against leading killer diseases, such as pneumonia and measles, is not educated at all, gives birth at the age of 16 all alone and without any professional help, and her first baby dies. Eventually, when she contracts AIDS, she dies before reaching her 36th birthday, leaving two orphans behind. This sad story is a real eye-opener about poverty - the main driving force of hunger, disease, violence and other forms of human suffer.

* Croatian Centre for Global Health, Medical School, University of Split

Address: Ivana Kolčić (MD, PhD) Croatian Centre for Global Health, Medical School, University of Split 21000 Split, Srbanka 2

Pregled

Review

Ratne osnove za razvoj javnog zdravlja s ciljem obezbjeđivanja globalnog zdravlja

I. Kolčić, O. Polašek

Hrvatski centar za globalno zdravlje je znanstvena jedinica unutar Medicinskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Splitu, koja se potiče iz javno zdravstveno zdravlje i drugih disciplina, a svojim zimskim znanstveno-izradnom radom materijalima i metode urađenih provedenih znanstvenih istraživanja.

Sažetak

Hrvatski centar za globalno zdravlje je znanstvena jedinica unutar Medicinskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Splitu, koja se potiče iz javno zdravstveno zdravlje i drugih disciplina, a svojim zimskim znanstveno-izradnom radom materijalima i metode urađenih provedenih znanstvenih istraživanja.
