

## Workshop

### The Public Health Relevance of Population-Based Mega Cohorts

August 24, 2011 Basel, Switzerland

Initiated and hosted by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute – Swiss TPH

Location: **Hotel Bildungszentrum 21**  
Missionsstrasse 21  
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[www.bildungszentrum-21.ch](http://www.bildungszentrum-21.ch)

Registration: Participation at the afternoon workshops is based on invitation only.  
Please register for the public morning session, 9-13 h under following email:  
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#### In collaboration with:

 <p>FONDS NATIONAL SUISSE SCHWEIZERISCHER NATIONALFONDS FONDO NAZIONALE SVIZZERO SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION</p>	 <p>Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft Confédération suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun svizra</p> <p>Federal Office of Public Health and FOPH State Secretariat for Education and Research SER</p>
 <p><b>GDK</b> Schweizerische Konferenz der kantonalen Gesundheitsdirektorinnen und -direktoren <b>CDS</b> Conférence suisse des directrices et directeurs cantonaux de la santé <b>CDS</b> Conferenza svizzera delle direttrici e dei direttori cantonali della sanità</p>	
 <p><b>PUBLIC HEALTH SCHWEIZ</b> <b>SANTE PUBLIQUE SUISSE</b> <b>SALUTE PUBBLICA SVIZZERA</b></p> <p>The Swiss Society for Public Health</p>	

## Background

WHO and the World Bank are calling upon countries to prevent health and economic losses due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Understanding the causes of NCDs which may in part date back to the time in utero and during early childhood is an important prerequisite for their successful prevention. Large sample sizes as well as broadly characterized subjects and different biological specimens are essential to disentangle the complex etiology of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Most Western European countries (i.e. UK, Germany, France, Sweden, Norway), the U.S., Australia and others are currently investing millions into the set-up of large population-based cohorts with associated biobanks.

International cohort, biobank, and genomics consortia aim at harmonizing data collection, exchanging expertise and resources as well as maximizing scientific use of collected data and biological specimens. Over the past 20 years, two large population-based cohorts were successfully established in Switzerland, the SAPALDIA Cohort and the Lausanne Cohort CoLaus. They are both part of large international research consortia in their respective key areas and are in the process of strengthening each other's research through exchange of tools, data and expertise. Their research potential is further strengthened by the establishment of the Swiss National Cohort and the National Institute of Cancer Epidemiology and Registration (NICER). These important linkage tools allow assigning information on diseases, causes of deaths, and socio-demographic factors to cohort participants.

The SAPALDIA Cohort was developed in parallel and shares tools with the European Respiratory Health Survey ECRHS in order to improve understanding of the causes of respiratory diseases and allergies. Both, SAPALDIA and ECRHS are key partners of a large European-wide project called ESCAPE, which brings together > 30 cohorts and biobanks to improve understanding of the health impact of ambient traffic-related air pollution. The SAPALDIA Biobank is also a key partner of several international genetics consortia. These international collaborations have helped address important research questions in the context of a broadened range of environmental exposures, lifestyles and genetic backgrounds.

The SAPALDIA and CoLaus were essential for capacity building in various areas of chronic disease, environmental, and genetic epidemiology. By broadening the collection of exposure and health outcome information as well as of biological specimens their research focus will widen. They will continue to contribute very importantly to research over the next years. Yet, it is essential and very timely to evaluate the requirements and challenges to keep Swiss cohort and biobanking research internationally competitive.

## Objectives of the Workshop

- to identify gaps in Swiss cohort and biobank research
- to analyze the pros and the cons of establishing a Swiss mega-cohort
- to identify national and international partners for future cohort efforts
- to discuss funding sources

## Program

Day Chair: Prof. Dr. Felix Gutzwiller, Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine, Zurich

<b>MORNING: open section, but due to limited space registration required</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Title of session/presentation</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
<b>09.00-09.15</b>	<b>Welcome</b>	Prof. Dr. Marcel Tanner, Swiss TPH, Basel
<b>09.15-09.30</b>	<b>Setting the Stage</b> The Value of Mega-Cohorts in Identifying Public Health Relevant Risk Patterns	Prof. Dr. Nicole Probst-Hensch, Swiss TPH, Basel
<b>09.30-11.00</b>	<b>Parallel Cohort Efforts Across Economies, Culture and Climate</b>	
09.30-09.45	German National Cohort	Prof. Dr. Erich Wichmann, Helmholtz Zentrum, Munich, Germany
09.45-10.00	E4N (Etude Epidémiologique des Enfants des femmes de l'Education Nationale)	Dr. Françoise Clavel-Chapelon, University Paris Sud, France
10.00-10.15	Dual Burden of Disease in India	Dr. Sanjay Mehendale, National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai, India
10.15-11.00	Discussion	
<b>11.00-11.30</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
<b>11.30-12.30</b>	<b>Interests, Challenges and Options in Mega-Cohort Funding</b>	
11.30-12.00	Swiss National Science Foundation	Prof. Dr. Stephanie Clarke & Dr. Ayşim Yılmaz, SNSF, Berne
12.00-12.15	Pharmaceutical Industry Perspective	Dr. Walter Fischli, Actelion Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Allschwil
12.15-12.30	Discussion	
<b>12.30-13.00</b>	<b>Population-Based Cohorts in Switzerland: Funding, Structure and Research Focus</b>	
12.30-12.40	Swiss SAPALDIA Study	Prof. Dr. Thierry Rochat, Service de Pneumologie, HUG, Geneva
12.40-12.50	CoLaus Study, Lausanne	Prof. Dr. Peter Vollenweider, Service de médecine interne, CHUV, Lausanne
12.50-13.00	Swiss National Cohort: the relevance of registry-based information for population-based epidemiology	Prof. Dr. Matthias Egger, Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Berne
<b>13.00-14.00</b>	<b>Lunch Break (Buffet)</b>	
<b>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: closed section, by invitation only</b>		
<b>14.00-15.15</b>	<b>Benefit, Focus, Structure and Challenges of a Swiss Mega-Cohort:</b> Introduction and organization by Prof. Nicole Probst-Hensch, Swiss TPH	
<i>Parallel discussions in 3 groups</i>		
<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Adult Cohorts:</b> Pros, Cons and Focus	Moderation: Prof. Dr. Mitchell Weiss, Swiss TPH, Basel
<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Birth Cohorts:</b> Pros, Cons and Focus	Moderation: Prof. Dr. Charlotte Braun-Fahrländer, Swiss TPH, Basel
<b>Group 3</b>	<b>Structures/Funding:</b> needs, funding options, national & international partnership, public-private partnership	Moderation: Prof. Dr. Marcel Tanner, Swiss TPH, Basel
<b>15.15-16.15</b>	<b>Feedback from group's (5'), discussion and conclusion</b>	Moderation and concluding remarks: Prof. Dr. Nino Künzli, Swiss TPH, Basel