2.G. Regular workshop: Observe the gap: Possibilities and approaches for routine monitoring of social health inequalities

Organised by: EUPHA sections on Public Health Monitoring and Reporting and on Public Health Economics
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Regular information about the development of socio-economically driven health inequalities are of utmost importance for integrated health policy making that follows a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. This workshop directly connects to the main results of the 2014 European Public Health Conference (EPHC) in Glasgow. While last years conference called to ‘Mind the Gap’ that is generated by the social determinants of health, we aim to explore at the 2015 EPHC the available resources and tools for routine monitoring of social health inequalities in order to ‘Observe the Gap’ and to inform public (health) policy. However, to enable routine monitoring of social health inequalities it is necessary to link health and socio-economic data which poses problems for many countries and regions in Europe.

In this workshop we will present existing approaches for the routine monitoring of social health inequalities and thereby support good practice exchange. The workshop comprises two presentations with a European perspective and two nationally-focussed presentations. First, approaches for monitoring inequalities in life expectancy by educational attainment on European Union (EU) member state level (plus EFTA and candidate countries) are presented and differences between countries will be shown. This presentation is followed by a presentation of study results on the possibilities to monitor social disparities in stillbirth and neonatal mortality rates in Europe. Next, a national perspective is taken (the Netherlands) to present an approach for routinely monitoring socio-economic differences in healthy life expectancy and respective disparities within the Netherlands. In the last contribution a French system to monitor social inequalities for various health outcomes will be presented. In contrast to the other presentations in this workshop, the French system mainly focusses social disparities and health that are linked on an ecological level rather than on individual level. After that, there will be ample time to exchange experiences in routine monitoring of social health inequalities and to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the presented approaches as well as the resources necessary.

The added value of this workshop is that it provides an overview of the possibilities and state of affairs in routine monitoring of social health inequalities. It is targeted at everyone with an interest in public health monitoring and reporting, especially the monitoring of health inequalities and the social determinants of health. The workshop is a joint
activity of the EUPHA sections on Public Health Monitoring and Reporting and Public Health Economics.

Key messages
- Regular information about the development of socio-economically driven health inequalities are of utmost importance for integrated health policy making
- International and national approaches exist that can support good practice exchange and further development of routine monitoring of social health inequalities