



## Umeå Centre for Global Health Research

Working together globally  
to meet health challenges



[www.globalhealthresearch.net](http://www.globalhealthresearch.net)

## What is 'global health'?

Health determinants know no geographical borders. Most serious threats to health are trans-national, and efforts for prevention and control lead us into the global arena. Researchers, practitioners and policy-makers in public health share a new agenda emphasising the importance of health for economic development, as a means of fighting poverty and for achieving global security.

### Global health:

- is concerned with how global processes affect health, and the resulting opportunities and threats to environmental sustainability and economic well-being.
- is a field at the intersection of several disciplines – demography, public health sciences, epidemiology, medicine, economics, statistics and sociology.
- builds on the awareness that health is a resource, a basic human right and a global public good.
- is determined by factors beyond national boundaries – such as international trade, climate change, pollution and poverty – with health solutions coming from a complex balance between national and global approaches.

- calls for scientists, activists and policy-makers to work together to strengthen partnerships and build regional, national and international fora.
- seeks to bridge inequities, as an overarching goal. Gaps manifest themselves not only as differences in health, but also in research resources, health services and access to health information.

The challenges for public health in a global society will be found in the growing gaps between the winners and losers of globalisation, and in our ability to extend, share and apply existing knowledge.

**... the global health agenda emphasises the importance of health for economic development, as a means of fighting poverty and for achieving global security**



## What role for the Umeå Centre for Global Health Research?

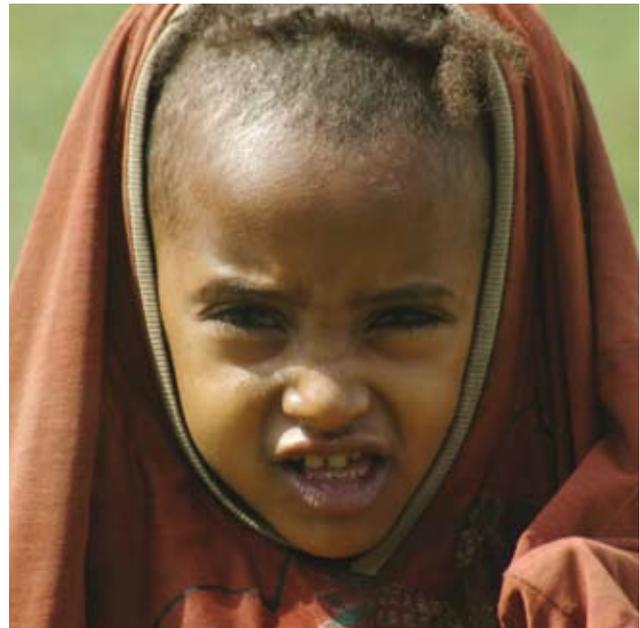
The Umeå Centre for Global Health Research (CGH) is a Centre of Excellence within Umeå University, set up through a grant from FAS, the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (grant no. 2006-1512) and supported by co-funding from Umeå University.

Our mission is to engage with a global agenda on health research and practice, addressing critical issues in global health and facilitating collaboration between and within the North and South. Our long-term research programme has been developed against the background of our international epidemiological research, as well as our public health work in Sweden. It is our intention to consolidate a global perspective on public health problems through collaborative work in Sweden and internationally.

We resolve to:

- become a clearing-house on best practice in translating the evidence base on global public health into action to suggest and inform policy;
- bring together an epidemiological dimension that maps patterns of disease and causes with an action-oriented dimension focusing on interventions and their potential to impact locally and globally;
- contribute to capacity-building through the fostering of sustainable cross-site collaborations worldwide, and encourage evidence-based public health interventions on important and neglected global health issues;
- build a workforce with a broad view of public health, an ability to work collaboratively across disciplines, sectors and cultures, and with skills to influence policy-making at local, national and global levels.

**... our mission is to address critical issues in global health and facilitate collaboration between and within the North and South**





## And how will we do it?

...by focusing our work

Research conducted within CGH is interdisciplinary in nature, with staff and students working together from different professional and cultural perspectives to identify solutions to public health challenges. Our work constantly evolves to meet the needs of current global research and policy agendas, with activities clustered around five areas of expertise:

### **Theme I: The epidemiological transition**

*Theme leader – Nawi Ng*

Research aims to contribute to theoretical and methodological development of the epidemiological transition theory by contrasting disadvantaged communities in low-income countries to the well-developed setting of northern Sweden.

### **Theme II: A life-course perspective on health interventions**

*Theme leader – Maria Emmelin*

Research aims to design and evaluate health interventions targeting different stages of the life course, from the unborn child to old age, taking into account social context and gender aspects, and both advantaged and disadvantaged communities.

### **Theme III: Strengthening primary health care – the roles of rights, ethics and economic analyses**

*Theme leader – Anna-Karin Hurtig*

Research is designed to inform key stakeholders involved in decision-making to strengthen primary health care in low-, middle- and high-income countries, using rights-based approaches integrated with economic analyses.

### **Theme IV: Gender, social inequality and health**

*Theme leader – Ann Öhman*

Research is based on the generation of new knowledge on gender and health, with the aim of contributing to social changes within populations and in health systems.

### **Theme V: Climate change and health**

*Theme leader – Rainer Sauerborn*

Research is intended to fill the knowledge gap regarding links between climate change and health, with a focus on non-communicable diseases, ageing populations, health sector responses in low-income countries and issues particular to the Arctic region.

... health is a resource, a basic human right and a global public good

## ... by sharing our knowledge

Research training is essential to CGH's collaborative projects and, as doctoral students are recruited from partner institutions and Umeå University, knowledge and relationships are generated that cross disciplinary and cultural borders.

The Swedish Research School for Global Health ([www.sweglobe.net](http://www.sweglobe.net)) is the result of an important partnership between CGH and the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm. The School aims to achieve interdisciplinary collaboration in education, research and training by coordinating courses and seminars in global health, and improving the quality of research training. By increasing participation of collaborating institutions in low- and middle-income countries, the School – and CGH by association – seeks to create an international network of institutions.

Another important means of recruiting new researchers is our international Masters in Public Health. Our yearly summer course and other short courses have served as entry points to MPH as well as PhD studies for many public health professionals and researchers from across the globe. These efforts to build capacity and share our expertise have made institutional collaborations long-term and sustainable.

## ... global health seeks to bridge inequities, as an overarching goal

### ... working with established networks

We see CGH as a centre of excellence within a broad network of collaborating institutes and countries.

We have worked closely with INDEPTH – an international demographic and epidemiological network of field sites in Africa, Asia and Latin America – since its inception in 1998 ([www.indepth-network.net](http://www.indepth-network.net)). This network of 38 sites in 19 countries creates a unique platform to share and exchange vital health data between some of the world's poorest countries. Collaboration between CGH and INDEPTH enables comparative studies of key global research questions related to disease development, urbanisation and migration, and provides invaluable opportunities for developing methods, as well as evaluating interventions.

Through INDEPTH we have established links with health surveillance sites and associated academic and research institutes. This web of collaborators enables CGH to share its expertise with leading public health professionals and policy-makers in designing, implementing and evaluating interventions required to meet today's global health challenges.

## ... with strong leadership

The Centre operates within the division of Epidemiology and Global Health at Umeå University ([www.umu.se/phmed/epidemi/](http://www.umu.se/phmed/epidemi/)), and is led by a steering group chaired by a principal investigator. The Centre also receives support from international scholar Professor Robert Beaglehole, in his capacity as external advisor.

### CGH steering group



**Peter Byass** is the Centre's Principal Investigator. Peter has worked in global health for more than 20 years, and for much of that time has been associated with Umeå. He specialises in measuring and quantifying health issues in low- and middle-income countries.  
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**Anneli Ivarsson** is the Centre's Deputy Director. Anneli is a paediatrician and epidemiologist, with extensive research on coeliac disease, and increasing involvement in global child health issues.  
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**Nawi Ng** is a physician whose research interests centre on adult health, ageing and the epidemiology of chronic diseases and their risk factors in low- and middle-income countries.  
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**Lars Lindholm** is a health economist, who has worked extensively with Scandinavian issues as well as globally, particularly in Vietnam.  
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**Stig Wall** founded Umeå's division of Epidemiology and Public Health Sciences (now called Epidemiology and Global Health). Stig has a considerable track record of health research within Scandinavia and in collaboration with low- and middle-income countries.  
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**Lars Weinehall** is a family physician, whose main research interests are community-based cardiovascular health, both in Sweden and internationally. Lars is the head of the division of Epidemiology and Global Health.  
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## ... disseminating our work

For all research conducted within CGH we seek to engage with key stakeholders such as fellow researchers, public health practitioners, policymakers, non-governmental organisations, the media and the general public. Please visit [www.globalhealthresearch.net](http://www.globalhealthresearch.net) for more information about the Centre's researchers, collaborators, publications, events and other activities.

*Global Health Action*, the Centre's flagship publication, epitomises our overall objectives. Set up in 2008, this international peer-reviewed open access journal specifically welcomes articles that relate to the practical implementation of current knowledge and will contribute to a hands-on approach to public health challenges. The Centre's capacity-building efforts and inclusive nature is embedded in the journal through mentorship opportunities offered to authors and its open access model.

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