

IN THIS ISSUE

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Joint Editors

AN OUTING FOR ETHICS AND PUBLIC HEALTH

This month we carry three complementary sets of observations on ethics, science, and public health, including a consideration of the concept of the neutral expert and an exploration of how public health ethics can be accommodated in consumerism.
See pages 3–6

Speaker's corner challenges the conventional epidemiological focus of cardiovascular research on myocardial infarction rather than angina as a hard end point, and in our Gallery we feature Jose Maria Bengoa, who has given 65 years to public health in the Americas.
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For a Glossary, we offer research in occupational health, a collaboration between Valencia and Seattle.
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Health Impact Assessment ventures out of the laboratory in a paper from Glasgow that explores its role in assessing housing improvements, and a paper from Singapore looks at avoidable hospitalisation rates as measures of the quality of primary care.
See pages 11, 17

A suite of Research Reports explore social capital as a variable in leisure time physical activity; the differential correlates of physical activity in urban and rural adults; the risk of coeliac disease among children born in the summer; and the effect of childhood and adult socioeconomic position on cause-specific mortality. Meanwhile, Marmot's group return to publication with a paper on whether retirement is good or bad for mental and physical health of British civil servants, and a Canadian contribution provides support for a role for gaseous pollution in asthma admissions of children to hospital.
See pages 23–55

In Theory and Methods there is a focus on social inequalities in health by individual and household measures of social position; a discussion of low response rates in surveys of adolescent risk taking behaviours and their meaning; and a discussion of the role of the world wide web in data collection for research. Finally, a report from the WHO-CINDI Project adds to our understanding of dietary surveys in epidemiological research.
See pages 56–80

THE JECH GALLERY.....

A homage to Dr Bengoa: the world's conscience of community nutrition



Dr Jose María Bengoa, 88 years old, was designated as one of the Public Health Heroes of the Americas by the PAHO, last February in Caracas (Venezuela). His own words referring to this distinction were . . . "My only merit has been having reached an old age after working for 65 years in public health!! There have been more people that have deserved it as well...". His work is an example of what Margaret Mead said "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world".

Dr Bengoa is considered the world's conscience of community nutrition, because of the emphasis he has placed on the social causes of hunger and malnutrition. He went into exile to Venezuela in April 1938, as a consequence of the Spanish civil war (1936–1939). From 1938 to 1940 he worked as a rural doctor in the villages of Sanare and Cubiro (Lara State), where he acquired important experience in community problems, especially nutritional problems "...In a period when the problem of hunger was a surprise for me (sic), something I had never thought about before...". As a result of his professional activity there, in October 1940, he published a monographic book entitled *The social medicine in the Venezuelan rural environment*, in the Venezuelan Journal of Health and Social Assistance. From 1940 to 1955, Dr Bengoa developed activities related to nutrition at a national level in Caracas and founded the National Institute for Nutrition as well as two journals on this topic. From 1955 to 1974 he worked for the Departments of Nutrition at the PAHO and WHO and wrote several papers and books about community nutrition.

In a conference by Dr Bengoa in Mexico DF, in April 1991, entitled "Nutrition in local health systems" he stated . . . "And the XXIst century, which is just around the corner is going to be a century of social justice and human solidarity, where there will be bread for all . . . And if there isn't bread for all there shouldn't be cake for anyone, as the first FAO Director stated 40 years ago...".

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