
Health and risk factors surveillance: a global perspective

Dear reader

In the fall of 2003 the 3th International Conference on Global Health Surveillance took place in Noosa, Australia. This conference presented a vital forum for surveillance experts from scientific backgrounds, from health policy and health services areas, to share ideas about the principles and current practice of health and risk factor surveillance. Keynote speakers were asked to contribute their talks to SPM making their insights and expertise available to a wider audience.

As a result this supplement brings together papers discussing central issues on what surveillance is or should be about, and the approaches on how to conceptualise and put into practice monitoring systems for the sake of improving the public's health. In this collection of papers, experts from different countries present their ideas and experiences in the growing field of surveillance and monitoring. The authors

of this issue represent basically two different positions – researchers from academic settings and policy makers who report their views mostly from governmental positions. As a result, this collection of papers presents a broad range of current issues and perspectives in health and risk factor surveillance. Key questions and some of the major challenges for future surveillance systems are identified and discussed. Additional issues, however may have to follow in future discussions, among them data ownership and public access, risk of misuse of surveillance data, and others. We hope that this supplement of SPM International Journal of Public Health will contribute to a systematic and advanced development of surveillance systems, and their theoretical, conceptual and practical bases.

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Editors-in-chief



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