

Researchers develop urban health index

November 5 2014, by Anna Varela

A team of researchers at Georgia State University's School of Public Health has developed an Urban Health Index to guide health care professionals, policy makers and researchers around the world, with the support of funds from the World Health Organization (WHO) Kobe Centre in Japan.

WHO has published an online handbook about the index to offer guidance on the use of this innovative tool to measure and evaluate health and [environmental conditions](#) in cities around the world.

Dr. Richard Rothenberg, a Regents' Professor of epidemiology and biostatistics in the School of Public Health and the leader of the effort, said development of the tool has been both a local and international endeavor with the goal of reducing urban health disparities.

"This looks inside countries, cities and neighborhoods. It is a way of connecting the macro and micro kinds of information that we get," Rothenberg said. "The urban health index was generated by the idea that people need a more flexible tool."

Rothenberg said the Urban Health Index has been tested primarily in Atlanta and Tokyo.

"It is a tool for analysis of urban questions. We can use it within the Atlanta area, as well as other areas as a tool for examining certain questions. For example, a paper coming out soon looks at the improvement in health disparities in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro over the past 10 years," he said.

"I think it would be best applied in areas of environmental health and chronic disease, particularly looking at the prevalence of certain diseases. I think it could also be applied in areas that are hyper endemic for things like HIV and tuberculosis, for example. There are lots of different areas that it can be applied to."

Provided by Georgia State University

Citation: Researchers develop urban health index (2014, November 5) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-11-urban-health-index.html>

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