

CHAIN - At a Glance

Mission & objectives

The mission of the Centre for Global Health Inequalities Research (CHAIN) is to create a global transformation in actionable health inequalities research. Bringing together leading scholars and international organizations and acting as a change agent, it will monitor, explain, and reduce health inequalities in the global North and South. These are the three pillars of CHAIN's approach. CHAIN was officially launched October 23, 2017 at the Dragvoll campus, Norwegian University of Science & Technology (NTNU).



We will achieve the mission of CHAIN through delivering on the following five objectives:

- (1) monitor international variations in health inequalities between and within countries,
- (2) identify the causal drivers of health inequalities in different countries,
- (3) evaluate interventions that could reduce health inequalities,
- (4) reduce the distance between research, policy and practice, and
- (5) develop the next generation of global health inequalities researchers.

Research Projects & Publications

In late 2018, CHAIN was one of three successful projects to receive support from the Research Council of Norway under the BEDREHELSE program. UNICEF, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH), EuroHealthNet, and the Global Burden of Disease Study at the University of Washington, Seattle, will be major partners in this effort, along with leading researchers in global health inequalities. CHAIN and this team will establish a novel approach to the better determination of the causes of health inequalities, their impacts on groups such as children and their families, and the identification of best practices for reducing health inequalities in different regions of the world. This latest project builds on a number of ongoing studies, described here.

ESS Health Module 2014

As part of Round 7 of the ESS, Terje Andreas Eikemo together with Johan Mackenbach, Clare Bambra, Olle Lundberg and Tim Huijts successfully developed a rotating module that provides a comprehensive and comparative pan-European data set on the social determinants of health and health inequalities. These data can be used to compare the influence of different European welfare states and to test sociological theories of health and health inequalities for a range of health outcomes. The module has received much attention and shows potential as a contribution not only to European research, but also to the development of research-based actions aiming to reduce health inequalities worldwide.

Trade, Labour Markets and Health

In November 2017, Dr. Courtney McNamara was awarded a FRIPRO Young Research Talent grant from the Norwegian Research Council for her project “Trade, Labour Markets and Health.” This project will generate new knowledge about how international trade impacts population health through labour market and social protection pathways. The project will run from December 2018 until December 2022 and is currently recruiting a PhD student.

South African project

South Africa is one of the economically most unequal nations in the world, as measured by the GINI coefficient. It also carries the legacy of apartheid, one of the most socially unequal political systems in the world in modern times. As such, it presents itself as a very interesting case for studying inequalities in health. The research project aims to untangle the effects of the social determinants of health in South Africa. This research project also links together with health research in Europe. The data is directly comparable to European data. The main data source for this study is the South African Social Attitudes Survey of 2014, which replicated the health module from the European Social Survey the same year. As such, the project has the potential to compare inequalities in one of the few upper-middle-income economies of Africa to inequalities in Europe.

HEALTech

The Heal-Tech project studies technological advances within the areas of injury prevention (i.e. road and car safety), health care (i.e. new screening techniques and electronic patient journals) and lifestyle (i.e. e-cigarettes and pedometers) that have helped avert a substantial number of deaths. The main question of interest in the Heal-Tech project is whether technological innovations have also contributed to a narrowing of the health gap between the rich and the poor. The project, which is a collaboration between the Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management and Faculty of Medicine at NTNU, uses data from The Nord-Trøndelag Health Study (HUNT). Results from the project have so far been reported in the review article “Innovative technologies and social inequalities in health: A scoping review of the literature” ([article](#) in *PLOS ONE*, April 2018), which won the best paper prize at the 2017 Comparing Health Across Societies (CHASE) conference in Belgium, as well as two articles in the *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*.

NORFACE

New Opportunities for Research Funding Agency Cooperation in Europe (NORFACE) is a partnership of national research funding agencies in Europe dedicated to leading and developing opportunities for scientists in the area of social and behavioural sciences. CHAIN was part of the HiNews and the HealthDox projects funded under the third major transnational research programme of NORFACE - Welfare State Futures.

HiNEWS

This project, led by Clare Bambra based in Newcastle University, consists of six interrelated work packages delivered across three project phases. In the first phase, we have provided theoretical elaboration on the pathways whereby welfare states and healthcare systems influence the etiology and reduction of social inequalities in health. In the second phase, we have explored and tested

these pathways using morbidity and mortality indicators. We have also used evidence review methods to examine the effects of macro policy interventions in reducing health inequalities. The HiNews project has published over 50 articles in several journals such as the *European Sociological Review*, *Social Science and Medicine*, *Sociology of Health and Illness* including the Supplement to the *European Journal of Public Health* “Social Inequalities in Health and their Determinants” edited by Terje A. Eikemo, Mirza Balaj, Clare Bambra, Tim Huijts, Jason Beckfield and Courtney L. McNamara.

HEALTHDOX

This project, led by Ellen Immergut based at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, investigates the current political determinants and policy consequences of post-1989 European health reforms. The aim of the project is to document the policy changes that have taken place over the course of the 1990s and through the first decade and a half of the 21st century, and to evaluate the consequences of these reforms for health care provision, especially how these changes in the public-private mix in health affect individual attitudes towards the health system. The HEALTHDOX project is in the process of publishing *Politics in Europe: A Handbook* with Oxford University Press Health. CHAIN has contributed a chapter on Albanian health politics.

MIGHEAL

The main objective of the proposed research is to investigate the health disadvantage among the migrant population as compared to the native born population, from the perspective of the rising social and income inequalities in Greece seen in light of the ongoing economic crisis. The project aims to advancing the state-of-the art in research on the migratory phenomenon and enhancing policies related to integration of migrants in Greek society in order to reduce social exclusion and persistence of ethnic inequalities. Terje, along with Theoni Stathopoulou (National Centre for Social Research, Athens), guest edited the December 2018 supplement of the *European Journal of Public Health*, entitled “[Health in Crises: Migration, Austerity and Inequalities in Greece and Europe](#)” using data from our international MIGHEAL collaboration.

REHEAL

The REHEAL project came about as an extension of MIGHEAL. Any research discussing migration in Greece in 2016 needs to address the situation of large numbers of refugees arriving by sea to the Greek islands. A health survey among refugees in the first receiving center was administered by the National Center of Social Research (EKKE) in Athens. The first results of these survey will be published in the upcoming Special Issue of Journal of Refugee Studies.

Dissemination

CHAIN is active at research conferences both in Norway and internationally. PhD candidates Daniel Weiss and Elodie Besnier both presented at the 2018 European Public Health conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Courtney held presentations on trade, public policy, and health at the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard University and at the School of Global Regulation and Governance (RegNet) at the Australian National University. Terje spoke at the Nordic Welfare Centre in Stockholm at the regional seminar on Health Equity in the Nordic Region this November. Elodie attended the 2018 European Health Forum Gastein though a

Young Forum Gastein scholarship. Postdoctoral fellow Kam Sripada presented on “Toxins in a Globalized World and the Promise of the UN Sustainable Development Goals” at the 2019 meeting of the International Society for Children’s Health and the Environment in Mexico.

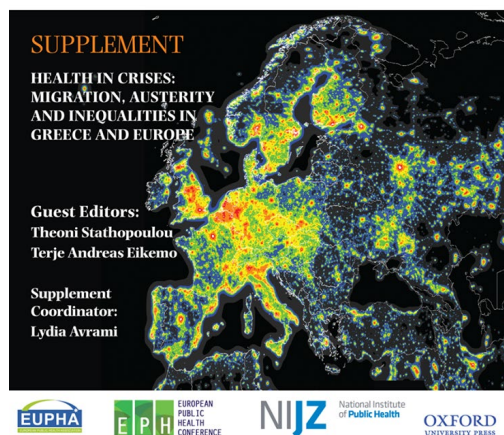
CHAIN has edited and contributed to several international health special issues. In 2017, PhD candidate Mirza Balaj and international colleagues collaborated on a special issue of the *European Journal of Public Health* on the European Social Survey special module on the social determinants of health. Courtney and Indra de Soysa guest edited a [special issue on trade and health](#) in *Global Social Policy* in 2018, following up on the Trade and Health workshop hosted by CHAIN in 2016. See above for a description of the 2018 special issue of the *European Journal of Public Health* on the MIGHEAL project. CHAIN’s findings have been published in *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, *Systematic Reviews*, *BMC Public Health*, *Sociology of Health and Illness*, and *PLOS ONE*, among other journals.

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We strive to bring our research findings to a wider audience. CHAIN contributed to the Norwegian Directorate of Health’s report “[Anbefalte tiltak mot sosial ulikhet i helse](#)” (in Norwegian) and to the Norwegian Research Council’s effort to highlight the need for better data and metrics of social inequalities in health (program details [here](#), in Norwegian). Terje and Labor Party leader Jonas Gahr Støre debated how to solve tomorrow public health challenges at OsloMet in March 2019, following Terje’s keynote on technology’s role in widening health inequalities at the 2018 [Folkehelsekonferanse](#) (in Norwegian), arranged by the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services. Daniel Weiss and Emil Øversveen wrote an article in *Klassekampen* in 2018 entitled “[Et teknologisk klaseskille](#)” (in Norwegian). CHAIN, in partnership with Effektiv Altruisme, hosted a high-level meeting between

Her Royal Highness Mette Marit and Tore Godal from GAVI on vaccination and child health in 2017. On Facebook, posts on our page @CHAINNTNU have reached users 9000 times, elicited over 1300 likes/reactions, and brought a wider viewership to our four videos of recent talks.