

The EUROCISS project: development of standardized methodology for monitoring Coronary Heart Disease in Europe

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Background and objectives Coronary heart disease (CHD) represents the leading cause of mortality, morbidity and disability. Its frequency and distribution differ largely among countries. A surveillance system based on valid and comparable data collection is essential for evaluating the burden of CHD, its time trends and geographical distribution.

Methods An inventory of CHD surveillance systems existing in the 18 EUROCISS project partner countries has been carried out. At present, the EUROCISS project (European Cardiovascular Indicators Surveillance Set) is preparing manuals of operations for implementing population-based registers of myocardial infarction/acute coronary syndromes (AMI/ACS) and CHD health interview surveys (HIS) and/or health examination surveys (HES).

Results Most countries have national databases on causes of death and discharge diagnosis for hospitalized patients. Some countries have also some kind of HIS and/or HES primarily used for monitoring disease prevalence. In a few countries disease specific registers have been established, which can be either population-based or hospital-based registers.

Starting from a minimum data set and following a step-wise procedure, manuals provide a standardized model for the implementation of Registers and Surveys.

Conclusions A surveillance system based on comparable and valid data collection is essential for evaluating the burden of CHD in Europe, its time trends and geographical distribution and for planning and implementing appropriate preventive actions.