

CIRCUMPOLAR HEALTH GAINS AN IDENTITY OF ITS OWN

The Arctic health was the main topic at an expert meeting of the Arctic Council held in Oulu this May.

The need for drawing attention to health issues was recognized as an important part of the international Arctic co-operation. Environmental pollutants in the Arctic as health risk factors will be discussed during the AMAP-collaboration. Also climatic physical factors in the Arctic as health risks are in focus as regards the Arctic Climatic Impact Assessment (ACIA). Global surveillance of HIV and tuberculosis in the Arctic has also started. A similar kind of surveillance should also find its place as regards injuries, infectious and chronic diseases. This basic information on northern health is vital so that proper health care practices could be established. To promote these activities co-operation with health and well-being professionals and officials in different countries is important; active participation at the grass-root level is also valuable when setting priorities concerning health and well-being in the entire circumpolar area. This Journal offers a forum for well grounded opinions when it comes to the needs and practices of the future co-operation.

A council meeting of the International Union of Circumpolar Health (IUCH) expressed a wish to establish special pages in the IJCH for indigenous health information and agreed that Dr. Earl Nowgesic (e-mail: earl.nowgesic@utoronto.ca) would act as the associate editor of these pages. This practice is supposed to start from the February issue onwards next year.

The IUCH council also decided to give its financial support for the planning of the development work of the Journal for the next two calendar years. After that development period the improved Journal can be uti-

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lized to a greater extent as regards the latest knowledge on circumpolar health. How the development process of the Journal is going to be carried out will be introduced at a later stage.

When the meeting of the Working Group of Human Biology and Health of the Scientific Committee of the Antarctic Research took place this July in Shanghai, it was agreed that it is essential to promote the role of the Journal as a forum for the Antarctic health research and development reports. This is a welcoming piece of news when it comes to advancing the mutual use of health knowledge and practices of both circumpolar areas.

In this issue we have articles focusing on the wide geographical variety of all northern circumpolar continents and also on the Antarctic research by Australian and New Zealander researchers. Regarding the subject area this issue includes three reports based on the health registers of British Columbian aboriginals which give new information on diabetes, a disease which has an increasing importance in relation to circumpolar well-being. Extreme cold and hot environmental temperatures are an important risk factor as regards the northern well-being, both sides of these extreme temperatures are discussed in separate articles of this issue. Further discussion on this topic will take place in a review article of the next issue. The article of AJW Taylor gives an environmental view to the general system theory; comments on it are welcome on the pages of the next issues. Still, there are three articles focusing on the use of substances, physical activity and the body mass of newborn babies, all of which have their own circumpolar orientation and which encompass a wide spectrum of scientific knowledge on circumpolar health. Then there are two invitations to two different circumpolar meetings in the near future to be taken notice of by the reader.