

European Health Examination Survey

Tool for evidence-based health policy making and
a rich data source for research



EHEC
Measuring
the Health of
Europeans

European Health Examination Survey

What is EHES?

The European Health Examination Survey (EHES) is a collaboration to collect nationally representative, high quality health data which are comparable between countries and over time.

- All countries should cover at least the age group 25–64 years.
- Nationally representative probability sample of at least 4000 people.
- Core measurements: height, weight, waist circumference, blood pressure, total and HDL-cholesterol, fasting glucose or HbA1c and questionnaire(s).
- Additional measurements based on national needs, interests and resources.
- Complementary to health interview surveys and administrative registers.

Why EHES?

Public health situation in Europe

- Chronic diseases cause 86% of deaths in Europe.
- Cardiovascular diseases alone cost 192 billion € a year, which is 57% of direct health care costs in EU.
- Chronic diseases, especially ischaemic heart disease and lung cancer, are the major causes of premature (below age 65) mortality and disability in EU.
- Five key risk factors for many chronic diseases are high blood pressure, high total cholesterol, high blood glucose, overweight and obesity, and tobacco smoking.
- The key risk factors can largely be prevented and treated.
- Currently only 3% of the annual health expenditure in the EU Member States is used for prevention.

How the EHES can help?

- By providing information, not available from other data sources, on key health indicators.
- By facilitating evidence-based planning and evaluation of public health policies and actions.

Structure of EHES

National activities

Countries are responsible for

- Planning and preparing for the national health examination survey in their own country.
- Conducting the health examination survey in the country.
- National reporting of the results.
- Funding of the national health examination survey in their country.

EHES Reference Centre

EHES Reference Centre (RC) is responsible for

- overall coordination of EHES,
- maintaining and further developing the European level standardized survey protocol,
- providing support to the countries in conducting their national health examination surveys,
- organizing training seminars and providing training materials,
- organizing external quality assessment,
- maintaining the common database,
- evaluation of the national health examination surveys,
- European level reporting of the survey results.

In the EHES pilot phase, EHES Reference Centre (RC) was jointly established by

- National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Finland,
- Statistics Norway (SSB), Norway and
- Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS), Italy.



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<http://www.ehes.info>

EHES Manual and training programme

EHES Manual

Available from the EHES website at: http://www.ehes.info/manuals/EHES_manual/EHES_manual.htm.

Part A	Part B	Part C
<p>Guidelines for the planning of national health examination surveys, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• definition of target population and sampling,• ethical issues,• selection of survey site and personnel,• organizing quality control, and• budgeting.	<p>Detailed instructions for the fieldwork phase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• detailed procedures for the core measurements,• instructions on how to organize the fieldwork, motivate participation, and obtain informed consent.	<p>European level collaboration and co-ordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• principles for data sharing and use of EHES data,• evaluation of the national surveys and quality of the data,• definition of the indicators for reporting,• basic reporting of the results.

Training programme

EHES training programme includes training seminars and online training materials.

Material is available from the EHES website at: http://www.ehes.info/training_programme.htm



Current status of EHES

Feasibility study

The Feasibility of a European Health Examination Survey (FEHES) Project was conducted in 2006–2008 (<http://www.ktl.fi/fehes>). FEHES concluded that

- it is feasible to conduct a health examination survey in a nationally representative sample in nearly all European countries,
- many countries are doing it already.
- Key prerequisites for this are:
 - Sufficient funding nationally to plan and conduct a survey, and to analyse and report the findings.
 - European level standardization and advice in planning the surveys.

FEHES proposed the structure for EHES.

Results from the pilot phase

The EHES pilot phase was conducted in 2010–2011 in 13 countries.

The results of the pilots were encouraging:

- European-level collaboration helps in capacity building within countries.
- Training national survey organizers for preparing, planning and conducting standardized measurements of a national health examination surveys.
- The pilot surveys provided valuable information on conducting health examination surveys.
- Cultural differences between countries in organizing and conducting a national health examination surveys did not affect the quality and comparability of the survey results.
- Pilot data shows preliminary results and the potential for reliable national-level health data and European-level comparisons.



Future of EHES

The vision of the EHES is to become a sustainable system of national health examination surveys in Europe:

- Covering all EU and EFTA/EEA countries.
- Providing information for planning and evaluation of health policies and preventive activities.
- Providing a valuable data source for research.



More information:

<http://www.ehes.info>

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