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## **EURO-URHIS 2: Indicators for Urban Environmental Health**

**Arpana Verma**

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There are a number of issues that affect urban areas (UA), that have specific problems associated with health that are different to non-urban areas that national or regional investigations would not identify. Many urban areas have health policy determined at local level. Policy makers require data at urban area level to inform these local policies. Resource allocation is usually at local level in many countries. The European Urban Health Indicator System (EURO-URHIS [www.urhis.eu](http://www.urhis.eu)) project funded by DG SANCO, identified urban health indicators and their availability. One of the key findings from the first

project was the lack of routinely collected, comparable environmental indicators. Therefore, EURO-URHIS 2 developed methodology and validated tools useful to policy makers at all levels to make health gains via evidence based policy decisions for urban populations. The objectives were to collect data at urban area level; provide tools for evidence based policy; develop methods for cross-sectional and longitudinal assessment for urban population health including all relevant determinants of health; validate these tools and methods by using existing population-based registries and databases; apply the tools in the field and ensuring they are easy and intuitive to use by policy makers. The EURO-URHIS 2 project adds to information that is already locally available, in that it is the first study to enable reliable comparisons of health status between

different cities in Europe. Policy makers can use the information to prioritise topics for urban health policy and for interventions in an evidence-based way. The data was collected using surveys of existing sources; priorities of policy makers in terms of policies and interventions for their urban area, and a lifestyle/environment surveys. The meta-data collected has formed the context to investigate trends in policy, major health problems, and it has allowed for investigation of the link between the two. The EURO-URHIS 2 project collaborated with policy-makers, researchers, non-governmental agencies and civil society through a number of activities including consultation during the development stage, through training workshops and through European Conferences.