

Worry, trust and back pain : Survey reveals big differences in citizen health perceptions

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The unique public health survey EUROHEPRO reveals that citizens' perceptions of well being and health vary significantly between Baltic EU countries.

When asked about their national health care services, back pain and worry for example, 72% of Norwegians declared that they have fair or very great confidence in their health care system, while only 38% of Poles reported such confidence. Back pain was reported by 25% of respondents in Denmark and 53% in Estonia and Lithuania. During an average week 26% of respondents in Lithuania reported that they were "worried about things" a lot or quite a bit while only 10% of Norwegians reported such worries.

These findings are a small sample of new information gathered in this first ever EUROHEPRO public health survey. The findings were reported at the HEPRO final conference 9 November in Brussels. The survey is based on interviews and questionnaires completed by over 45000 citizens in 39 cities and municipalities in Norway, Denmark, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 2006-2007.

EUROHEPRO is a WHO supported initiative part-funded by the BSR INTERREG programme. The aim of HEPRO is to put public health issues on the political agenda and to give input into local policy making and health planning. WHO Healthy Cities member Østfold County in Norway leads the project.

"This survey provides the first standardized and most comprehensive measure of citizen perception of health and well being in our Baltic Region," notes project leader Mr Arvid Wangberg "The data provides a powerful basis for policy and research action."

"For the public health or health promotion worker it is not enough to merely describe the extent of health problems, their causes and determinants and consequences," says Research Consultant Niels Kr. Rasmussen at the National Institute of Public Health in Denmark. "The HEPRO survey model views health and wellbeing as something more than just absence of disease and illness, by focusing also on the individual's own definition of health."

[See a flash presentation of the results](#)