

ISPM News Archive 2008

06.11.2008 17:08

Study on neurodegenerative diseases and exposure to magnetic fields from power lines published

Persons who live within 50 meters of a high-voltage power line have an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease, reports a study of the Swiss National Cohort published in the American Journal of Epidemiology.



The relation between residential magnetic field exposure from power lines and mortality from neurodegenerative conditions was analyzed among 4.7 million persons of the Swiss National Cohort (linking mortality and census data), covering the period 2000–2005. Cox proportional hazard models were used to analyze the relation of living in the proximity of 220–380 kV power lines and the risk of death from neurodegenerative diseases, with adjustment for a range of potential confounders. Overall, the adjusted hazard ratio for Alzheimer's disease in persons living within 50 m of a 220–380 kV power line was 1.24 (95% confidence interval (CI): 0.80, 1.92) compared with persons who lived at a distance of 600 m or more. There was a dose-response relation with respect to years of residence in the immediate vicinity of power lines and Alzheimer's disease: Persons living at least 5 years within 50 m had an adjusted hazard ratio of 1.51 (95% CI: 0.91, 2.51), increasing to 1.78 (95% CI: 1.07, 2.96) with at least 10 years and to 2.00 (95% CI: 1.21, 3.33) with at least 15 years. The pattern was similar for senile dementia. There was little evidence for an increased risk of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, or multiple sclerosis.

Links:

- [American Journal of Epidemiology](#)
- [Press release \(in German\)](#)

30.10.2008 09:15

Inaugural-Symposium of CTU Bern on November 5th

On Wednesday, November 5th, 2008, the Inaugural-Symposium of CTU Bern will take place at the Langhans Auditorium, Institute of Pathology, University of Bern.



Speakers include Dr Stuart Spencer, The Lancet, London, Prof. Christian Gluud, Copenhagen Trial Unit, and Dr Davina Ghersi, WHO, Geneva. The Symposium is organised in collaboration with the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine and the Department of Clinical Research of the University of Bern. No registration is required. The detailed program can be found [here \(pdf, 19 KB\)](#).

CANUPIS-Studie zu Kinderkrebs um Kernkraftwerke gestartet

Die Arbeiten zur Schweizer Studie über Krebserkrankungen bei Kindern mit Wohnort in der Nähe von Kernkraftwerken sind im September angelaufen. Die sogenannte CANUPIS-Studie wurde von der Krebsliga Schweiz und vom Bundesamt für Gesundheit (BAG) in Auftrag gegeben. Sie wird vom Schweizer Kinderkrebsregister in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Institut für Sozial- und Präventivmedizin der Universität Bern und der Schweizerischen Pädiatrischen Onkologie Gruppe (SPOG) durchgeführt. Die Ergebnisse werden 2011 veröffentlicht.



Die CANUPIS-Studie («Childhood Cancer and Nuclear Powerplants in Switzerland») folgt auf eine Studie aus Deutschland, deren Ergebnisse Ende letzten Jahres publiziert wurden. Die deutsche Kinderkrebsstudie wies auf ein erhöhtes Krebsrisiko hin, insbesondere für Leukämie, bei Kindern unter fünf Jahren, die in unmittelbarer Nähe eines Kernkraftwerks leben. Die CANUPIS-Studie will untersuchen, ob dieses Risiko auch im Umfeld von Schweizer Kernkraftwerken besteht.

Optimiertes Studiendesign

Die deutsche Studie wurde sorgfältig durchgeführt, weist aber – wie auch viele frühere Untersuchungen – gewisse Schwächen auf. Deshalb wurde für CANUPIS das Studiendesign optimiert: Einerseits betrachtet die CANUPIS-Studie die Gesamtheit der zwischen 1985 und 2007 in der Schweiz geborenen Kinder. Andererseits berücksichtigt sie nicht nur den Wohnort, an dem die an Krebs erkrankten Kinder zum Zeitpunkt der Diagnose lebten, sondern auch alle früheren Wohnorte bis zurück zur Geburt der Kinder.

Das Schweizer Studiendesign bringt wesentliche Vorteile: Ein möglicher Einfluss von Kernkraftwerken kann so auch für sehr frühe Lebensphasen untersucht werden. Darüber hinaus lässt sich prüfen, welche Faktoren – beispielsweise ionisierende Strahlung, elektromagnetische Felder oder industrielle Immissionen – ein allfällig erhöhtes Krebsrisiko verursachen könnten.

Umfassende Studie dank schweizweiten Datenbanken

Die Studie beruht auf den Daten aus dem Schweizer Kinderkrebsregister. Dieses registriert seit 1976 landesweit alle Krebserkrankungen bei Kindern und wird am Institut für Sozial- und Präventivmedizin der Universität Bern geführt. Für den Vergleich mit gesunden Kindern werden die Daten der «Swiss National Cohort» verwendet, einem gesamtschweizerischen anonymen Datensatz, der auf den Volkszählungen von 1990 und 2000 sowie auf weiteren Statistiken beruht.

Die Durchführung der Studie wird rund zweieinhalb Jahre in Anspruch nehmen. Die Ergebnisse werden 2011 veröffentlicht. Insgesamt kostet die CANUPIS-Studie 820 000 Franken. Diese Kosten werden von der Krebsliga Schweiz und vom Bundesamt für Gesundheit zu gleichen Teilen getragen. Die Stromproduzenten Axpo und BKW leisten einen finanziellen Beitrag, der jedoch vom BAG verwaltet wird. Die beiden Schweizer Unternehmen haben keinerlei Einflussnahme auf Studiendesign und Veröffentlichung der Resultate. Wissenschaftliche Qualität und Unabhängigkeit der Studie werden durch eine international zusammengesetzte Begleitgruppe garantiert. Dem Gremium gehören sechs weltweit führende Experten aus Frankreich, den Niederlanden, Deutschland, Grossbritannien, den USA und der Schweiz an.

Bei Fragen wenden Sie sich bitte an:

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- Dr. Werner Zeller, Leiter Abteilung Strahlenschutz, Bundesamt für Gesundheit (BAG), Tel.: 031 322 96 03, [werner.zeller\[at\]bag.admin.ch](mailto:werner.zeller[at]bag.admin.ch)
- PD Dr. med. Claudia Kuehni, Projektleiterin, Leiterin Schweizer Kinderkrebsregister, Tel.: 031 631 35 07, [kuehni\[at\]ispm.unibe.ch](mailto:kuehni[at]ispm.unibe.ch)
- Prof. Dr. Matthias Egger, Direktor Institut für Sozial- und Präventivmedizin (ISPM), Universität Bern, Tel.: 031 631 35 01, [egger\[at\]ispm.unibe.ch](mailto:egger[at]ispm.unibe.ch)

Weitere Informationen:

- www.canupis.ch
- [Medienmitteilung CANUPIS](#)
- [Communiqué pour les médias CANUPIS](#)
- [Comunicato Stampa CANUPIS](#)

05.09.2008 07:15

Collaboration between science and politics or science and industry: current trends and the role of young researchers

PhD students of the ISPM are organising a one-day conference for young researchers at the University of Bern on the 30th October 2008.



Collaboration between science and politics, or science and industry, is a point of controversy. A large proportion of research in health sciences is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and is thus dependent on political decisions. However, many projects would be difficult to sustain without strong support from industry, a funding source, which raises critical questions in the scientific community. For young scientist it is important to understand the current trends regarding these collaborations and to develop one's own opinion. Therefore, the PhD students of the ISPM, supported by the "Mittelbauvereinigung" of the University of Bern, are inviting speakers from various institutions to present their perspective at a one day conference at the "Haus der Universität" at the University of Bern. This conference will also provide young researchers the opportunity to establish contacts to representatives of the following invited institutions: University/Swiss National Science Foundation, Federal office of Public Health, Council for Accident Prevention, World Health Organization, Novartis and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The conference is free of charge and open for all young researchers interested.

Register now as places are limited. Applications will be considered in the order in which they are received

Date and time: Thursday, October 30, 2008, 09:00-16:30 Uhr

Place: Haus der Universität, Schöllslistrasse 5, 3008 Bern

Links:

- [Conference agenda \(PDF, 20KB\)](#)
- [Registration form \(doc, 55KB\)](#)
- [Flyer \(PDF, 237KB\)](#)

02.09.2008 08:17

Studies on the safety and effectiveness of drug-eluting stents published

Two papers by ISPM and CTU Bern on the safety and effectiveness of drug-eluting stents published simultaneously in the Lancet and the BMJ.



Simultaneously with talks by Stephan Windecker and Peter Jüni on the safety and effectiveness of drug-eluting stents at the European Society of Cardiology Meeting in Munich, two papers by ISPM and CTU Bern appeared in the Lancet and in the BMJ.

The article by Stephan Windecker, Simon Wandel, Peter Jüni and colleagues in the Lancet describes a randomised controlled multi-centric non-inferiority trial in 1700 patients with chronic stable coronary artery disease or acute coronary syndromes comparing a novel drug-eluting stent using a biodegradable polymer with the currently most effective drug-eluting stent, which uses a non-degradable polymer.

The article by Christoph Stettler, Sabin Allemann, Simon Wandel, Stephan Windecker, Peter Jüni and colleagues in the BMJ describes results from a network meta-analysis comparing the effectiveness and safety of sirolimus eluting, paclitaxel eluting and bare metal stents in people with and without diabetes.

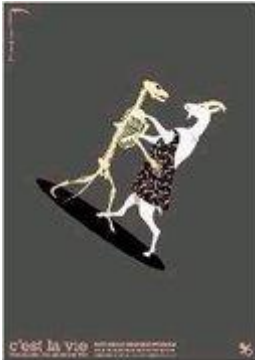
Links:

- [The Lancet \(Direktzugriff Artikel\)](#)
- [The Lancet](#)
- [BMJ](#)

22.08.2008 11:20

C'est la vie

Beitrag des ISPM zu Ausstellung im Naturhistorischen Museum Bern



«C'est la vie» heisst die Ausstellung im Naturhistorischen Museum Bern, welche am 30. August eröffnet wurde. Die Ausstellung zeigt auf, wie nahe beieinander Leben und Tod sind. Leben ohne Tod ist undenkbar: die Ausstellung zeigt anhand überraschender Inszenierungen vertrauter Lebenszyklen, wie totes Material abgebaut und die Bühne des Lebens als Regenwurm, als «Tiger im Tank» oder als Kinderspielzeug erneut betritt. Das ISPM Bern half mit, die Sterblichkeit in der Schweiz mit Hilfe von Karten zu illustrieren. Die Daten stammen von der Swiss National Cohort, einer grossangelegten longitudinalen Studie der Schweizer Bevölkerung.

Links:

- [C'est la vie](#)
- [Swiss National Cohort](#)

12.08.2008 18:35

AIDS 2008 Mexico conference latebreaker on HIV transmission

Suzanna Attia presented a study of HIV transmission rates according to viral load, ART and presence of other sexually transmitted infections at the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City.



The systematic review was done to examine evidence underpinning a statement from the Swiss National AIDS Commission (EKAF).

Links:

- [Conference slides](#) (pdf, 53 KB)
- [Conference session video, Late Breaker Track C, 7 August 2008](#)
- [Commentary on presentation by Aidsmap news](#)
- [Swiss National AIDS Commission \(EKAF\) statement, German version](#) (pdf, 260 KB)
- [Swiss National AIDS Commission \(EKAF\) statement, French version](#) (pdf, 270 KB)

30.07.2008 11:47

Programme of ISPM seminars 2008/2009 published

The first seminar will be given by Professor Robin Wood from the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre in Cape Town, South Africa.



The 2008/2009 seminar programme, which has been released this week, includes 11 talks by eminent speakers from Switzerland, South Africa and four other countries. Robin Wood from the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre of University of Cape Town will open the series with a presentation on his groundbreaking studies of the interaction between HIV and tuberculosis in the Masiphumele township. Stress and cardiovascular disease, and the importance of a daily siesta, will be addressed by two speakers. In December, Peter M. Suter, president of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences, will reflect on research integrity, using the example of what has become known as the Rylander affair. The seminar by Ben Goldacre, on "Teaching epidemiology through errors in the media" will be satirical and amusing, and very thought-provoking. He is the author of the The Guardian newspaper's weekly Bad Science column and describes himself as "a junior doctor in London, and a shameless geek". Click below for the detailed programme and other relevant links. All welcome!

Photo: Archbishop Desmond Tutu on stage with Freshlyground at the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation benefit concert, 2005. (Photograph by Stephan A. Engländer)

Links:

- [Seminarprogramm 2008/2009](#) (PDF, 45KB)
- [Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation](#)
- [Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences](#)
- [Bad Science](#)

23.07.2008 08:00

Young Scientist Award of the International Society of Behavioral Medicine

Scientific Distinction Award of the International Society of Behavioral Medicine for Jürgen Barth.



The 2008 Scientific Distinction Award of the International Society of Behavioral Medicine (ISBM) will be given to Jürgen Barth. He will receive this award based on his competitive evaluated abstract at the conference of the society in Japan and his curriculum vitae. For further information about the International Society of Behavioural Medicine please click [here](#).

Comparison of antiretroviral therapy in township South Africa and Switzerland published in PLOS Medicine

HIV has two different faces in South Africa and Switzerland: in Switzerland the prevalence of HIV is below 1%, everybody has access to treatment through the compulsory health insurance and care is highly individualised and delivered by specialists in HIV medicine. In South Africa approximately 30% of the population is HIV positive, treatment and care is often provided by health care workers and of the 1,000,000 people in need of treatment only 325,000 were receiving it by the end of 2006.



Olivia Keiser, Matthias Egger and Martin Brinkhof from the ISPM Bern, together with colleagues from the Swiss HIV Cohort Study and the International epidemiological Databases to Evaluate AIDS (IeDEA) in Southern Africa compared the individualized care of HIV in Switzerland with the public health approach in South Africa. The patients in South Africa, who had a higher degree of immunodeficiency, started treatment with one of four regimens, and about a quarter changed therapy during the study. By contrast, 36 different regimens were used in Switzerland and half the patients changed. Despite these differences, the viral load was greatly reduced within a year in virtually all patients. However, more patients died in South Africa than in Switzerland, particularly during the first 3 months of therapy.

These findings suggest that the public health approach practiced in South Africa is as effective in terms of virologic outcomes as the individualized approach in Switzerland. Thus, these findings support the continued rollout of the public-health approach to therapy in resource-poor countries. Conversely, they also suggest that a more standardized approach could be taken in industrialized countries. Finally, the higher mortality in South Africa suggests that many HIV-infected patients in South Africa and in other resource-limited countries would benefit from earlier initiation of therapy.

Photo: Celebration of the first 400 people on antiretroviral therapy in Khayelitsha, South Africa, May 2003. Photo by Pep Bonnet.

Links:

- [Article in PLoS Medicine](#)
- [Swiss HIV Cohort Study](#)
- [IeDEA Southern Africa](#)

.05.2008 08:00

Visit of Dr J.A. Shoveller, University of British Columbia

Dr. Shoveller is a leading researcher focusing on the social and institutional contexts of youth health, with a particular emphasis on investigating the impact of gender, culture and place on sexual health disparities amongst young people.



She is currently the PI on a 5-year, CIHR Interdisciplinary Capacity Enhancement Team Grant to investigate sexual health disparities amongst rural and northern youth. She also is the PI on two addition CIHR-funded studies: (a) an investigation of the impact of sex, gender and place on youth's experiences with STI testing; and (b) a participatory action research project to develop new approaches to engage rural and northern youth in social determinants analyses of sexual health outcomes. She will be visiting our institute as a visiting professor from June, 9th to 13th an will give several presentations. The detailed program will be on line shortly.

08.05.2008 15:30

Receipt of a 2008 ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship

Congratulations to Suzanna Attia on her recent receipt of a 2008 ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship through the Swiss Embassy of the United States of America.



The ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship provides support to highly motivated and qualified U.S. undergraduate and graduate students to live in Switzerland and to do research at a Swiss research institution in 2008. The ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship is an initiative within the scope of ThinkSwiss. [“ThinkSwiss – Brainstorm the future”](#) is a U.S.-wide program on Education, Research and Innovation for 2008. The program presents Switzerland as a global, knowledge-based country full of talent, high-tech opportunities and creativity. The program is administered by the Swiss representations in the U.S. under the auspices of the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER), the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), and Presence Switzerland.

17.04.2008 15:00

Seminar by Prof. Paul Garner

Seminar by Prof. Paul Garner on Tuesday 22 April 2008, 12:30 at ISPM



Translating research into policy in tropical health: winning away games Prof. Paul Garner (Co-ordinating Editor, Cochrane Infections Diseases Group, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine)

Paul Garner has helped TO build an international team of individuals and groups committed to preparing and updating systematic reviews relevant to middle and low income countries. At the seminar, Paul will tell us about his work on developing research CAPACITY with collaborators and acting as broker with policy makers to promote evidence-based health policy and practice.

07.03.2008 16:04

STROBE Initiative receives 1st David-Sackett-Award

The STROBE Initiative has received the 1st David-Sackett-Award by the German Network for Evidence-based Medicine, a non-profit professional organisation for the advancement of health care.



The prize is awarded each year for “outstanding and sustainable work in the field of evidence-based medicine and health care”. Erik von Elm accepted the award, which is worth 2.000 EUR, at the 2008 annual meeting of the network at the University of Witten-Herdecke / Germany.

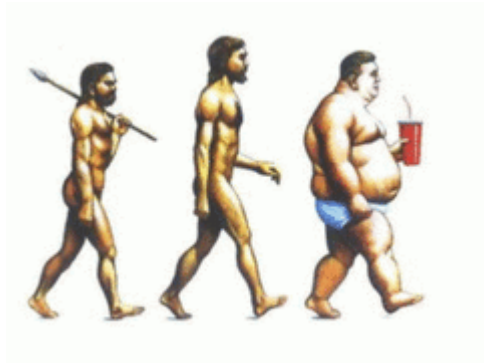
[STROBE website](#)

[Pressemitteilung](#)

[German Network for Evidence-based Medicine](#)

Lancet article on body mass index (BMI) and incidence of cancer

Increased body mass index (BMI) increases the risk of common and less common cancers, and the level of risk can vary between the sexes and different ethnic groups depending on the type of cancer. These are the conclusions of a systematic review and meta-analysis in this week's edition of The Lancet co-authored by Matthias Egger, Marcel Zwahlen and colleagues from Manchester, UK.



Excess bodyweight, whether in people who are overweight (BMI of 25-29.9kg/m²) or obese (BMI of 30kg/m²) is increasingly recognised as an important risk factor for some common cancers. The published study is a systematic review and meta-analysis including 221 datasets incorporating 282137 incident cases to determine the risk of cancer associated with a 5kg/m² increase in BMI.

The researchers found in men, a 5kg/m² increase in BMI raised the risk of oesophageal adenocarcinoma by 52%, thyroid cancer by 33%, and colon and kidney cancers each by 24%. In women, a BMI increase of 5kg/m² increased the risk of endometrial (59%), gallbladder (59%), oesophageal adenocarcinoma (51%) and kidney (34%) cancers. They also noted weaker, but nonetheless significant, positive associations between increased BMI and rectal cancer and malignant melanoma in men; postmenopausal breast, pancreatic, thyroid, and colon cancers in women; and leukaemia, multiple myeloma, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma in both sexes.

They also found associations were stronger in men than in women for colon cancer (24% versus 9%). And while associations were generally similar in studies from North America, Europe and Australia, and the Asia-Pacific region, a stronger association between increased BMI and both premenopausal and postmenopausal breast cancers was recorded in Asia-Pacific populations.

[Lancet article \(PDF, 219KB\)](#)

[Medienmitteilung Universität Bern](#)