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HEALTHY-POLIS NEWS, FEBRUARY 2019

EDITORIAL

The human health burden associated with urban noise is significant - the WHO estimates that “At least one million healthy life years are lost every year from traffic-related noise in the western part of Europe.” ([WHO, 2011](#)). A challenge in studying the health effects of noise is that individuals all respond differently to the soundscapes to which they are exposed (either positively or negatively), in part due to differences in noise sensitivities but also due to the nature of the sound and how it is perceived. People tend to evaluate nature noise more positively than mechanical noise, with people noise rated as somewhere in between. Negative soundscapes can induce annoyance and disrupt sleep while positive soundscapes can be restorative. There is strong evidence that the source and characteristics of sounds are as important as the sound level in terms of whether it is perceived positively or negatively and what emotions the noise evokes. Thus, much work has been done in finding ways of improving urban soundscapes through the provision of urban parks and green infrastructure. In dense urban centres, water features are often used to ‘mask out’ the mechanical noise in favour of the more natural sounds, even if this means an increase in noise level.

Colleagues and I have recently published in *Frontiers in Psychology* in which we have developed a short questionnaire for assessing soundscapes based on terms generated by creative writers as they listened to recordings of natural, traffic and human sound environments from which themes were extracted. The questionnaire was administered to 228 people around Auckland in a range of different settings with factor analysis revealing patterns of responses with five dimensions: calming, protecting, hectic, belonging and stability. Based on the results, the park soundscape rated highly on all dimensions, and streets with less traffic were found to be more calming, more protecting and less hectic. We are currently administering the questionnaire to people in more varied environments and will be assessing the response.

If this work is of interest to you, check out the full paper at [Welch, D., Shepherd, D., Dirks, K.N., Tan, M.Y., Coad, G. Use of creative writing to develop semantic differential tool for assessing soundscapes. *Frontiers in Psychology*, December 2018, DOI:10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02698.](#)

Kim Dirks, Secretary for Healthy-Polis

HEALTHY-POLIS WORKSHOPS

This year's **Healthy-Polis Workshop** took place on the 27th of November 2018 as part of the 15th International Conference on Urban Health in Kampala, Uganda. The theme of the workshop was “**A Global Initiative to Instigate a Clean Air, Low Carbon Transition Towards Healthier and More Sustainable Cities**”. The organisers were Sotiris Vardoulakis, Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM), UK, Stuart Piketh, School of Geo- and Spatial Science, North-West University (NWU), South Africa, and Lynn Atuyambe, Samuel Etajak, and Esther Buregyeya from Makerere University School of Public Health, Uganda. The workshop was well attended, with strong representation from Kampala Capital City Authority, and provided a forum for discussions between policy-makers and researchers. The focus of the discussion was on low carbon development in low and medium income countries and air quality.



Delegates at Healthy-Polis annual workshop at Speke Resort, Kampala, Uganda (27 November 2018)

Healthy-Polis was also involved in a symposium “**Healthy Climate Solutions: What is the Evidence for Health Benefits of Climate Change Mitigation Strategies?**” held in Ottawa, Canada, on the 28th August 2018. This was organised by Patrick Kinney (Boston University) as part of the ISES-ISEE 2018 Joint Annual Meeting. The session began with an overview talk by Patrick, outlining the multiple pathways by which low carbon interventions in cities can translate into improved health outcomes. Next was David Rojas-Rueda, representing the ISGlobal group in Barcelona, who discussed transportation interventions in cities. Alistair Woodward then presented findings from a case study involving a controlled trial of improved biking infrastructure in New Zealand. Finally, Natalie Mueller, also from ISGlobal, presented new results on the potential health benefits of a multi-pronged environmental health intervention in Bradford, UK.

FUNDING AND GRANTS

LOOKING FOR RESEARCH PARTNERS

We encourage calls from consortium members for opportunities for collaboration and grant opportunities. To contribute to this section, please email details to k.dirks@auckland.ac.nz.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), Spain, is looking for a (pre-doc or junior post-doc) researcher (initially, a 2-year position) to work in the scope of the LIFE VEG-GAP (Vegetation for Urban Green Air Quality Plans) project. For further information, please contact Beatriz Gatóo at b.gatoo@upm.es

University of Liverpool, UK, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Institute of Psychology, Health Sciences, Public Health and Policy is looking for a Post-Doctoral Research Associate or Fellow. In April 2018, a UK National Institutes of Health Research (NIHR) Global Health Research Group (GHRG) was formed to address this public health priority - Clean Energy Access for the prevention of Non-communicable disease in Africa through clean Air - CLEAN-AIR(Africa). The current post is an exciting opportunity for an enthusiastic and experienced post-doctoral researcher to join the CLEAN-Air(Africa) team as the quantitative research lead. The post is at research associate or *fellow for an initial period of 2 years*. For informal enquiries please contact Professor Daniel Pope, email: danpope@liverpool.ac.uk. To apply online visit <https://recruit.liverpool.ac.uk>

*If you would like to advertise an opportunity in this section, please email details to k.dirks@auckland.ac.nz
Job and career opportunities are regularly updated on the Healthy-Polis website*

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

The [Transportation, Air Quality and Health Symposium](#) will take place in Austin, Texas, USA, 18-20 February, 2019.

The [12th Occupational & Environmental Epidemiology Meeting](#) will be held on 1 April, 2019 and the [7th Occupational & Environmental Exposure Science Meeting](#) on 2 April, 2019, both in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The [International Conference on Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change](#) will take place in Osaka, Japan, 22-23 April, 2019.

The [27th International Epidemiology in Occupational Health \(EPICOH\) Conference 2019](#) will be held in Wellington, New Zealand, 29 April – 2 May, 2019.

The [Healthy Cities 2019 Conference](#) will be held in Manchester, UK, 1-3 May 2019.

The [European International Conference on Transforming Urban Systems \(EICTUS-2019\)](#) will take place in Strasbourg, France, 26-28 June, 2019. The deadline for abstracts is 15 March, 2019.

The [31st International Society for Environmental Epidemiology Conference](#) will take place in Utrecht, The Netherlands, 25-28 August, 2019. The deadline for abstracts is 8 March, 2019.

The [16th International Conference on Urban Health: People Oriented Urbanisation: Transforming Cities for Health and Well-Being](#) will take place in Xiamen, China, 4-8 November, 2019. The deadline for abstract is 19th April, 2019.

RECENT EVENTS

The [International Conference on global Warming and Pollution](#) took place in Singapore, 21-22 January 2019.

The [2nd International Conference on Sustainable Development of Water and Environment](#) took place in Hong Kong 22-23 January, 2019.

The [2nd International Forum on Climate Change and Health Response](#) under the "Belt & Road" Initiative, took place in Guangzhou, China, 2-4 December 2018, organised by the School of Public Health, Sun Yat-sen University, China.

[TAPHIA project](#) workshop on Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of Air Pollution took place at the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand, on the 14th December 2018.

The [15th International Conference on Urban Health: Managing Urbanization for Health – a Priority for All Nations](#), took place in Kampala, Uganda, 26-30 November 2018.

The [Urban Transitions conference](#), focusing on urban and transport planning, environment and health, took place in Sitges, Spain from 25-27 November 2018, organised by ISGlobal.

The [1st WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health: Improving air quality, combatting climate change – saving lives](#), took place in Geneva, Switzerland, 29 October – 1 November 2018, organised by the World Health Organization.

[International Symposium on Health and Wellbeing in the Changing Urban Environment](#), took place in Xiamen, China, 16-18 October 2018, organised by the Institute of Urban Environment (IUE), Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The closing [TECNAIRE-CM project](#) workshop took place in Madrid, Spain, on 23 November 2018. The presentations are available on the project website (in Spanish).

The symposium [Urban Health: State of the Science](#), co-hosted with Boston University Initiative on Cities and Yale Institute for Global Health, took place on 6th December 2018. The event brought together scholars from around the world to discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with creating health in urban contexts.

The final project report and video for the [UPSTREAM project](#) have been published. The final conference of the project took place at the Royal Society of Medicine in London on 13 December 2018. Speakers included: Sir Malcolm Grant, former Chair of the NHS, Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Howard Frumkin, Head of Wellcome Trust's Our Planet Our Health, Victoria Hills, CEO of the Royal Town Planning Institute, and Richard Meier, former Partner at Argent, developer of King's Cross. Further details can be found [here](#).

The [Healthy City Design](#) International Conference took place at the Royal College of Physicians, London, UK, on 15-16 October 2018.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS FROM HEALTHY-POLIS

Books:

[Compendium of Inspiring Practices: Health Edition](#). Publisher: UN-HABITAT. This collection of 20 case studies gives practical information to those involved in city planning on how to address the issues encountered with an approach that puts peoples' health at the centre of design.

[Integrating Human Health into Urban and Transport Planning - A Framework](#). Editors: Nieuwenhuijsen, Mark, Khries, Haneen (Eds.) Springer, 2019. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-74983-9.

Journal Articles:

Bauer, K., Bosker, T., Dirks, K.N., Behrens, P. 2018. The impact of seating location on black carbon exposure in public buses: implications for vulnerable groups. *Transportation Research, Part D: Transport and Environment*, 62, 577-583. DOI: 10.1016/j.trd.2018.04.009.

Vicedo-Cabrera, A.M. et al. 2018. Temperature-related mortality impacts under and beyond Paris Agreement climate change scenarios. *Climatic Change*, 150(3-4), 391-402. DOI:10.1007/s10584-018-2274-3.

Dirks, K.N., Salmond, J.A., Talbot, N. 2018. Air pollution exposure in Walking School Bus routes: a New Zealand case study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 15, 2802. DOI:10.3390/ijerph15122802.

Dirks, K.N., Talbot, N., Salmond, J.A., Costello, S.B. 2018. In-cabin vehicle carbon monoxide concentrations under different ventilation settings. *Atmosphere*, 9, 223.9,338, DOI:10.3390/atmos9090338.

Gómez-Moreno et al., 2019. Urban vegetation and particle air pollution: Experimental campaigns in a traffic hotspot. *Environmental Pollution* 247, 195-205. DOI:10.1016/j.envpol.2019.01.016.

Mitsakou C., Dimitroulopoulou S., Heaviside C., Katsouyanni K., Samoli E., Rodopoulou S., Costa C., Almendra R., Santana P., Dell'Olmo M.M., Borell C., Corman D., Zengarini N., Deboosere P., Franke C., Schweikart J., Lustigova M., Spyrou C., De Hoogh K., Fecht D., Gulliver J., Vardoulakis S., 2019. Environmental public health risks in European metropolitan areas within the EURO-HEALTHY study. *Science of the Total Environment* 658, 1630-1639. DOI:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.12.130.

Picornell, M., Ruiz, T., Borge, R., García-Albertos, P., de la Paz, D., Lumbreras, J., 2018. Population dynamics based on mobile phone data to improve air pollution exposure assessments. *J. Expo. Sci. Environ. Epidemiol.* <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41370-018-0058-5>.

Wang, J.Y.T., Dirks, K.N., Ehrgott, M., Pearce, J., Cheung, A.K.L. 2018. Supporting healthy route choice for commuter cyclists: The trade-off between travel time and pollutant uptake. *Operations Research for Healthcare*, DOI:10.1016/j.orhc.2018.04.001.

MEMBERS NEWS

One of our members, Daniela Morgheni has published an article on indoor climate. The article can be found at: <https://blive.consulting/why-is-a-sustainable-indoor-climate-crucial-for-our-health-wellbeing-comfort-and-productivity/>

UPDATE ON CONSORTIUM MEMBERSHIP

We now have approximately 1,600 members from countries all around the world!

LINKED-IN WEBSITE

We have a Healthy Polis Linked-In account, which can be accessed at <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/HealthyPolis-7472785>. We hope that members will use this as an opportunity to connect and share ideas. The usual [Healthy Polis website](https://sites.google.com/site/healthypolisnetwork/) (<https://sites.google.com/site/healthypolisnetwork/>) will continue to provide updates and materials relevant to the consortium.

FUTURE BULLETIN CONTENT

If you would like to contribute an article or information regarding upcoming conferences, jobs or grant opportunities it would be great to hear from you. Please email k.dirks@auckland.ac.nz

Lastly, we are keen to make this newsletter more visually appealing. We would welcome photos you have taken on the theme “urban problems and urban solutions”. If you have any you would like to share, please send them through to k.dirks@auckland.ac.nz. Please provide details of the photo, including who took it, where it was taken, when it was taken and any other information of interest.



This photo was taken by Kim Dirks in 2008 during her first visit to Hong Kong.

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