

Lecture Series – Children’s Environmental Health in Urban Context

Children’s health is significantly shaped by the environment they grow up in. Ensuring a healthy living environment to prevent childhood diseases is one of the essential tasks of our society. Currently, we observe dramatic changes in social and physical dispositions of our children and adolescents, often later affecting their adult life. From December 2018 to April 2019 monthly lectures with international guests, all leaders in the field, aim for a variety of scientific perspectives and lively discussions, to open up and nourish an important debate.



Prof. Dr. Roderick J. Lawrence
Geneva School of Social Sciences, University of Geneva

Urban Health Challenges: Inter- and Transdisciplinary Responses

Date: 13 February 2019, 13:00-15:00

Location: UFZ Leipzig, KUBUS, Lecture hall 1 A, first floor

Abstract

In 2006, the World Health Organization confirmed that the burden of illness, disease and mortality from environmental causes was about 25 percent of all causes. However this estimation did not include the effects of global environmental change. A decade later we better understand the web of relationships between climate change, biodiversity loss and health, owing to systems thinking applied to research on e.g. indoor air quality, ambient air pollution in cities and exposure to toxic substances including households. The related health risks have significant impacts on children. Recent trends in urbanization, population health and global environmental change create a need for inter-sectoral action based, inter- and transdisciplinary research. Some creative and innovative responses have been implemented by cities, especially when these contributions are compared with the inertia of national governments and the deadlock at the international level. This talk will present selected research results that address human behaviour change to promote health, given that access to data and information is crucial but not sufficient. Public policies can make a difference, e.g. through new regulatory and fiscal measures that replace unjust subsidies and biased taxes. The health sector might contribute to creative mass media campaigns as well as targeting specific population groups.

Topic related publications

Lawrence, R. (2017). Constancy and change: Key issues in housing and health research, 1987-2017. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.

Lawrence, R. and Gatzweiler, F. (2017). Wanted: A Transdisciplinary Knowledge Domain for Urban Health. *Journal of Urban Health*.

Lawrence, R. (2016). Interdisciplinary science: A coming of age? *New York Academies of Sciences Magazine*.

Short Vita

Prof. Dr. Roderick Lawrence graduated from the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning at the University of Adelaide (Australia), holds a Master Degree from the University of Cambridge (England) and a Doctorate of Science from the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale, Lausanne, (Switzerland). In 1999 he was nominated Professor in the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences at the University of Geneva. He was promoted to Honorary Professor in October 2015. He currently is also Honorary Adjunct Professor at the University of Adelaide (2017-2020), and Adjunct Professor at the Institute for Environment and Development (LESTARI) at the National University of Malaysia (UKM). From 2014 to 2016 he was Visiting Professor at the Institute for Global Health at the United Nations University (UNU-IIGH).

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