

European Commission launches the European network for modelling infectious diseases

The European Commission's Directorates General Joint Research Centre (DG JRC) and Health and Consumer Protection (DG SANCO) have announced the creation of a new European network on modelling control strategies for infectious diseases and other health threats.

The European Network on Mathematical Modelling (NEMO) will be supported through the Commission's Public Health Action Programme.

The aim of the Network will be to develop and improve mathematical models, which would help to predict and simulate the spread and development of infectious diseases, their effect on society and to analyse intervention scenarios. This would help governments to be better prepared to respond in the event of a flu pandemic, for instance.

The current outbreak of avian influenza and its potential for the development of a human pandemic has raised major concerns regarding the assessment of the associated public health risk and preparedness. In an effort to better understand the transmission characteristics of infectious diseases, mathematical models will be employed as an additional tool for the public health decision making process. Models can contribute to this process by comparing, suggesting and evaluating various community-based programmes for the control of infection and disease.

The Network will be composed mainly of national experts in the Member States in the field of mathematical modelling of the dynamics and control of diseases. The NEMO Network is part of a more general activity that DG JRC is performing in support of crisis management by DG SANCO, which includes the Health Emergency & Diseases Information System (HEDIS) and the Medical Intelligence System (Medisys).

This includes the Health Emergency & Diseases Information System (HEDIS) <http://hedis.jrc.it>, which is a central hub to exchange health-related information between European health authorities, international organisations and international media. Also, the Medical Intelligence System (MedISys) <https://medisys.jrc.it> is a web portal supporting DG SANCO and Member States, which monitors health related web sites and media every 20 minutes, and analyses the information to rapidly identify potential threats to public health.

Further information:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/index.html>

<http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int/>