European researchers join forces to study dietary and physical activity behaviours

Diet and physical activity are of crucial importance for our health. But why do people engage in unhealthy dietary habits and lack sufficient physical activity? We need more insight in these “causes of the causes” to prevent the most important chronic disease across Europe and beyond. This is what the DEDIPAC (Determinants of Diet and Physical Activity) Knowledge Hub has provided. DEDIPAC is the first Joint Action of the Joint Programming Initiative ‘a Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life’ (JPI HDHL), and hosts its final symposium in October in Bonn, Germany.

DEDIPAC brings together approximately 300 researchers from 70 research institutes in 13 European countries, representing the necessary disciplines for investigating the causes of the causes of chronic disease: biomedical, behavioural, social, economical. DEDIPAC was specifically created to align this research across Europe so that resources and infrastructures are aligned and used more efficiently.

The Knowledge Hub is coordinated by Prof. Johannes Brug and a team of the VU University Medical Center in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Brug: “With DEDIPAC we have build a virtual pan European research institute for expertise and further investigations into the causes of the causes of chronic disease across Europe and beyond. This will help policy makers to make informed decisions to promote health and prevent disease across Europe, and provides a solid basis for further research in this important and under-researched topic.”

The scientific work conducted in these three years provides an overview of the state of the art regarding what is needed to motivate, enable and empower Europeans to adopt and maintain healthy diets and physical activity, and provides a research agenda for the years to come.

DEDIPAC advocates and provides important input for better surveillance of diet, physical activity and sedentary behaviour; for the establishment for a pan-European cohort study on the ‘causes of the causes’ of chronic disease; and for better evaluations and benchmarking of nutrition and physical activity policies across Europe.
Notes:

1. Further details of the DEDIPAC Knowledge Hub are available at [http://www.dedipac.eu/](http://www.dedipac.eu/)

2. The DEDIPAC Knowledge Hub is supported by the Joint Programming Initiative 'Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life'. The funding agencies supporting this work are (in alphabetical order of participating Member States): Austria: Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research; Belgium: Research Foundation - Flanders; Finland: Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation (Tekes); France: Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA); Germany: Federal Ministry of Education and Research; Italy: Ministry of Education, University and Research/ Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies; Ireland: The Health Research Board (HRB); The Netherlands: The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw); Norway: The Research Council of Norway, Division for Society and Health; Poland: The National Centre for Research and Development; Spain: Carlos III Institute of Health (ISCIII); The United Kingdom: The Medical Research Council (MRC).

3. Contact the VUmc communication department by telephone (+3120 444 3444) or by e-mail (press@vumc.nl) for more information.