The World Health Organization's Department of Human Resources for Health (WHO/HRH), in collaboration with the International Statistical Institute (ISI), solicits high-quality submissions of original statistical research results and/or experience focusing on the topic of "Measuring health workforce inequalities: methods and applications". Selected submissions are to be presented at a Special Topic Meeting of the 57th Session of the ISI which will be held in Durban, South Africa in August 2009.

Overview and objectives

On 16-22 August 2009, Durban will play host to the 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute, the first in Sub-Saharan Africa. An ISI Session, held biennially, provides a platform for the gathering of over 5000 of the world's statisticians from public, private, research and educational institutions to share experience in a diverse range of statistical issues. The theme of this Session is aptly titled "Statistics: our past, present and future", as South Africa and the African continent celebrate a revitalization of statistics and statistical development.

The goal of the Special Topic Meeting at the ISI 2009 Session is to promote statistical discourse on measuring health workforce inequalities and the implications for policy and planning. Submissions should focus on methodological developments and applications for measuring health workforce inequalities, with special attention to monitoring trends (over time and/or areas) and evaluating their impacts on health systems performance and population health outcomes.

The health workforce is broadly defined to include all those who promote and preserve health as well as those who diagnose and treat disease. Also included are health management and support workers – those who help make the health system function but who do not provide health services directly. Inequalities in the health labour market may refer to, for example, workforce imbalances by occupation, geographical typology, place of work or gender.

Research may be from a country-specific, regional or global perspective. Submissions focusing on low and middle income countries are highly encouraged.

Papers must not have been published or submitted for publication before the ISI Session. Reviewed papers presented at the Special Topic Meeting will be published in a forthcoming WHO publication on health workforce inequalities.

Submission procedures

Abstract proposals should specify request for consideration for the Special Topic Contributed Paper Meeting on health workforce inequalities (STCPM #44), and must be submitted directly via the ISI Session website http://www.statssa.gov.za/isi2009 until the close-off date, which is 13 April 2009. Full papers must be submitted by 15 May 2009 according to the format prescribed in the instructions provided on the website (suggested maximum 4 pages for special topic contributions). Copies of all submissions on this particular topic must also be sent to hrhstatistics@who.int.

Abstracts and papers may be written in either of the working languages of the conference, i.e. English or French. Authors unable to submit papers via the website should contact isi2009abstracts@globalconf.co.za, so that assistance can be provided or alternative arrangements made.
Travel awards

The WHO Department of Human Resources for Health will consider covering the costs of up to four researchers to present their papers at the Special Topic Meeting. This includes travel by full-fare economy class by the most direct route and a daily allowance to cover accommodation, meals and other related expenses. Registration fees (at the lowest rate) may also be covered by WHO. It is the presenting author's responsibility to obtain any necessary travel visas and personal medical insurance well in advance of the event. Priority will be given to researchers from low and middle income countries who do not receive financial support from an international source.

Funding will only be considered for presenters of papers that have been submitted and accepted through the ISI Session submission procedures. There is no special form for funding requests. To apply, contact hrhstatistics@who.int by 13 April 2009 and indicate your full name, gender, position, institutional affiliation, country of residence, contact details and source(s) of research funding, along with a copy of your abstract and/or full paper and a brief statement on the reason for the request.

Important dates

13 April 2009:   Deadline for submission of abstracts
                 Deadline for submission of funding requests
30 April 2009:   Authors notification for inclusion of research papers in the Special Topic Meeting
                 Authors notification for funding
15 May 2009:    Deadline for submission of full papers
                 Deadline for early registration for the Session (lowest rate)
16-22 August 2009:  57th Session of the International Statistical Institute

About the organizations

The mission of the WHO Department of Human Resources for Health is to provide equitable access for all people to an adequately trained, skilled and supported health workforce to contribute towards the attainment of the highest possible level of health. The Department works to strengthen the global knowledge base on the health workforce through the collection, analysis and use of statistical information to support policy and planning.

The International Statistical Institute is one of the oldest international scientific associations active today. With a membership comprised of the world’s leading statisticians representing roughly 130 countries, the ISI seeks to develop and improve statistical methods and their application through the promotion of international activities and cooperation covering official, applied and theoretical statistics.

The WHO/HRH and ISI share a vision and strategy for promoting statistical data utilization for evidence-based policy-making and creating fora for sharing best practice.

For more information:
- About the WHO Department of Human Resources for Health: http://www.who.int/hrh
- About the International Statistical Institute: http://isi.cbs.nl

Special Topic Meeting organizers

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