DESCRIPTION OF THEIR HOST ORGANIZATION

The Institute for Clinical Effectiveness and Health Policy (IECS)

IECS BACKGROUND

IECS is an independent, non-profit organization created by professionals from the medical and social sciences devoted to research, education and technical cooperation with the main goal of improving the efficiency, equity, quality and sustainability of health care systems and policies.

IECS aims to develop, conduct and promote research and evaluation projects to generate scientific and epidemiological knowledge based on scientifically grounded criteria of efficacy, safety, effectiveness and efficiency. One of its main aims is to promote the development of research and the use of scientific recommendations at local and international level mainly in low-and-middle income countries, working together with health care professionals and other decision makers, to narrow the gap between clinical and health services research and the decision making process.

IECS has a multidisciplinary professional staff including physicians, statisticians, epidemiologists, nutritionists, health economists, policy experts and social scientists. They conduct clinical, epidemiological and health services research studies, economic evaluations, systematic reviews, qualitative research studies and validation of instruments and cross-cultural adaptation of questionnaires in non-communicable diseases and maternal and health area that are priorities in low-and-middle income countries. IECS has strong professional links with local, regional and international institutions and participates in various regional and international networks and has developed an important experience in the administration of research and development grants from national and international organizations during the last years.

IECS activities are centered in three general areas:

- Research
- Education
- Technical Cooperation

Research Activities: IECS conducts clinical, epidemiological, qualitative, health services research studies, economic evaluations, and systematic reviews on non-communicable diseases (especially smoking and other cardiovascular risk factors), mother and child health, implementation science and health care quality improvement. Investigators have experience in using different applied research methods and designs, such as individual and cluster randomized clinical trials, observational studies, epidemiologic surveillance, qualitative research and evaluation of the effectiveness of health care interventions. In addition, investigators are specialized in data management, including the design of input templates and data entry, database preparation, management of clinical research forms, multiple validations and administration of queries.

Mother and Child Health Research (MCHR):

The Department of Mother and Child Health Research aims to improve the health of mothers and their children by engaging in global research. The research team, led by Dr
José Belizán and Dr Fernando Althabe, has extensive experience in conducting research in developing countries. They have led or participated in the design and conduct of 11 multi-centric randomized controlled trials in maternal and perinatal issues since 1990. These trials have involved more than 190,000 women giving birth in more than 40 hospitals in six Latin American countries and have addressed major health problems like the prevention and treatment of postpartum hemorrhage, preeclampsia and eclampsia, preterm birth and low birth weight, antenatal care, and delivery care (cesarean section and episiotomy), change of professional behavior toward the adoption of evidence-based practices, smoking cessation during pregnancy, maternal psycho-social support, and neonatal resuscitation. Results of these studies have been published in major medical journals. Also, many publications of the group deal with the use of evidence based practices, advocacy to a better maternal care, consumer participation on their care, inequities in maternal and child health, and factors associated to poor maternal outcome in low-and-middle income countries. The research group is part of the Global Network for Women’s and Children’s Health Research (http://gn.rti.org/) of the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) (U01HD40477), together with the Center for Evidence-Based Global Health of the Tulane SPHTM. Research and capacity building activities in this Network in 9 countries from Latin America, Asia and Africa have been conducted since 2000. The SPHTM and the Department for Mother and Child Health are also jointly participating in an active Fogarty International Center Training Grant (ICOHRTA, International Clinical, Operational and Health Services Research and Training Award) (D43TW007784).

Other information about IECS:

During the last five years, IECS staff has published more than 70 papers in peer-reviewed journals, 18 Cochrane Systematic Reviews and have produced more than 232 health technology assessments reports and economic evaluations. Additionally, investigators have given more than 60 presentations at international meetings and conferences over the last three years.

IECS is an Argentine Coordinating Centre of the Ibero American Cochrane Network, Cochrane Collaboration (http://www.cochrane.org/) and is a Clinical Epidemiology Research and Training Centre (CERTC) of the International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLEN; http://www.inclentrust.org/). IECS is also a member of the Latin American Network for Health Economic Evaluations (NEVALAT; http://www.nevalat.org/) and the Initiative for Cardiovascular Health Research in the Developing Countries (IC HEALTH; http://www.ichealth.org/).

Education and Training: Our main educational activity is the Master’s degree program in Clinical Effectiveness (PCE) of the University of Buenos Aires. The PCE is focused on the training of health professionals in quantitative methods and analytical skills for clinical and health service research and evaluation. It is mainly targeted to professionals and policy makers with leadership positions within their institutions (medical doctors, nurses, managers or health officials from public or private bodies such as ministries, hospitals, universities, etc.) who will have the chance to apply this knowledge in their own positions at the end of the program. More than 250 health professionals from Argentina and many other countries of the Region have graduated from the PCE over the last 10 years.

Other educational activities we offer in the academic year are courses, workshops, and distant learning courses through our virtual campus in the field of clinical epidemiology, health services research, evidence based medicine, systematic reviews and meta-analysis.
Technical Cooperation at National, Regional and International level: IECS has technical cooperation agreements with health care organizations from different health sectors of the government (Ministry of Health), health secretariats of provinces and municipalities, social security and private health insurances. To date, almost 40 different government health secretariats and agencies, social security funds, hospitals, and private health care organizations are members of this consortium which commission IECS to make research projects and health policy reports and assessments. Since 2005, IECS is a member of INAHTA, the international network of Health Technology Assessment (HTA) agencies and also provides technical cooperation and training to the governments of Brazil, Uruguay and Chile. These activities are focused on providing support to these countries to develop capacity building programs in evidence-based public health.

### MCHR’s Publications in Peer Review Journals 2007 - 2010

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Authors</th>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Wendland EM, Duncan BB, Belizán JM, Vigo A, Schmidt ML.</td>
<td>Gestational</td>
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