

Restructuring research: Medical Faculty opens Graduate School KISH

On May 7th Prof. Siegfried, the Dean of the Medical Faculty, opened the Graduate School KISH. The Kosice Institute for Society and Health (KISH) has been in existence since 2004 and in May 2010 it was transformed into a Graduate School. In a Western type of Graduate School some research programmes and an educational programme are concentrated into one organisation.

Reasons for a Graduate School

Graduate Schools are established to increase the number of high-ranking papers. Universities as a whole are compared in terms of their quality in all types of reports created by governments, research foundations and other institutions. In the coming years these international university comparisons will become increasingly important; this is an unavoidable development for all universities. The subsequent rankings will have an important impact on the possibilities for successful applications for grants, and we already know that a group's track record matters in all kinds of applications. Furthermore, the quantity of a university's research output will certainly become an indicator for the purpose of allocating money from the government model, or from government-related institutions.

Is it possible to achieve such a position with more and higher-ranked outputs through policy measures? Four related issues might contribute to qualitatively higher production. The first step is focusing on certain research topics, no matter what field one is working in. It is very important to collaborate with colleagues on one or two issues. Second, findings should be published internationally, and the term 'international' means publishing in (Social) Science Citation Journals. Only such output counts and can be traced by search engines. Output in national languages will remain unnoticed by the rest of the world and will not help your university or group get a higher position in the rankings. Next, what will also improve a Faculty's ranking is having all of the Faculty's researchers publishing internationally. At the end of the day this has an important consequence for the current organisation of the PhD thesis. If their output is made up of (Social) Science Citation Journals publications and not from monographs, their work will contribute to the Faculty getting a higher position in the rankings.

Finally, PhD students and Medical Doctors doing their PhD should be educated in the research skills needed for international publications. Such a 'Graduate School' offers an educational programme, mostly competence-based, of the research skills needed by PhD students, and this is usually compulsory, at least in part. Perhaps this was once not as necessary, when the professor-PhD student relationship closely resembled the master-pupil relationship. But in the competitive scientific world UPJS is now living in, it should support our researchers with the knowledge and skills necessary for success on this battlefield. It is impossible for them to succeed without proper education in, for example, the research techniques necessary for their study. Between brackets, it should be highlighted that PhD students and MD researchers are the most precious material and human capital the university has. At the Medical Faculty in Groningen it is they who are responsible for more than 70% of the Faculty's output. They need good support and a very good education in the skills required to do their job.

Aim and research policy of GS KISH and its performance

With a clear view on the long term perspective, an aim is therefore essential. GS KISH's aim is that it wants to be the best in Central Europe and to be significant in Europe with its research. Furthermore, it is vital to have a rather sharp focus: to study just a few areas intensively. This is the path to international success. For the GS KISH these areas lie in the study of vulnerable groups in society, more specifically Youth & Health and Chronic Disease.

A short overview of KISH's performance in the years 2008 and 2009 is necessary. The current situation is now showing an increase in the most important indicators. The GS KISH now has 27 PhD students active in two research fields. In 2008 two of them defended, and one did so in 2009. The GS KISH's output went from 17 to 14 (S)SCI papers, but its (S)SCI citations increased over the last two years from 48 to 72. The number of the (S)SCI citations per paper within a five-year window (2004-2008; 2005-2009) increased from 3.39 to 4.17, and the H-index for all KISH researchers together increased from 7 to 8. The amount of grant money on average over the last two years was 216,000 € per year.

Youth & Health Research programme

The Youth & Health research programme group is focused on the social determinants of health, a very broad and important field in public health. The target group is adolescents. The reasons for this choice are that during adolescence, the potential for health is still present, and adolescence is the period when important social determinants of health—such as health-related behaviour, inclusion in social networks, development of coping styles and formation of future socioeconomic position through success or failure in the educational system—take place. The conceptual framework of the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health is used. This framework aims to describe pathways through which social determinants contribute to the distribution of health and well-being in the population.

In 2008, the Y&H team took responsibility for the coordination of the international project "Health Behaviour of School-aged Children" (HBSC), and in 2009, the group was already participating in the preparation of the national report from HBSC survey performed in 2005/2006, which was distributed to policy makers and to all elementary schools in Slovakia. Furthermore, the group participated in several international and national projects (2x DG SANCO, 1x APVV, 1x VEGA). Since 2010, the Youth & Health RP has been involved in CEMIO - a Centre of excellence under the call of the Slovak Ministry of Education Agency for EU Structural Funds. The group has collaborated with the University of Groningen, but also with the Jessenius Medical Faculty in Martin and the Faculty of Art at Palacky University in Olomouc, and there has been an intensive collaboration with the WHO Regional Office in Venice for investment in health development. The people who participate in the Youth & Health research programme are also members of several international boards, such as the WHO Scientific Research Group on Equity Analysis and Research, the editorial board of the International Journal of Public Health, the European Health Psychology Society and the Regional Roma Health Intelligence Centre in Budapest. Moreover, the Y&H group took part in organising the Public Health section of the International Student Medical Congress in Kosice (ISMCK 2009- 2010) and the October Multicountry Event in Kosice (OMEK 2009). Within this framework, a research-capacity building programme was organized for OMEK, and a delegation from the Public Health Authorities and Ministry of Health from Lithuania was hosted. Furthermore, a workshop for policy makers in Slovakia on Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was held in Bratislava; the Y&H group also participated in a workshop on HBSC within the Slovak Public

Health Association (SAVEZ) conference and in the Scientific Board of the International Conference on Roma Health, which took place in Kosice. One member of team successfully finished the habilitation process in Social Psychology and two defenses of PhD theses are expected in December 2010. Since 2010, the group plans to contribute to the educational offer of Medical Faculty with two elective subjects: (1) Developmental Psychology and (2) Health Psychology.

In the future, the Youth & Health research programme will keep its focus on the social determinants of health among adolescents as well as on marginalised groups of the population. To realize its aims, the Y&H group will continue its collaboration with international partners like the HBSC study, will continue to participate in EU studies, and will aim for a position as a WHO Collaborative Center.

Table 1 Output of the Youth & Health Research Programme over 2008, 2009 (full) and 2010 (six months)

	2008	2009	2010
Number of PhD students	8	9	9
PhD studies defended			(2)
Research papers published in SSCI journals	5	11	9+
Monographs, chapters in monograph	1	1	
Lecture books, chapters in lecture books		1	
Abstracts published SSCI journals	11	8	(5)
Scopus Citations, excl. self-citations	37	38	15

Chronic Disease Research programme

The overall aim of the Chronic Disease research programme, which involves researchers from relevant fields of medicine and social sciences, is to provide better insight into the management of chronic disease. The objective is to examine the biomedical, psychological and social determinants of poor functional status and quality of life. The researchers try to identify personal resources mediating the effect of a chronic condition on a patient's quality of life, such as self-management activities, coping, self-efficacy or self-esteem. Also, the role of socioeconomic resources, such as socioeconomic status, ethnic background, social support and social participation, is studied, since it has been found to determine significantly the development and further progression of a chronic disease. These research topics are of high importance due to the increasing burden of chronic disease worldwide on the one hand, and the lack of adequate models for chronic disease care on the other hand, since prevailing healthcare systems are built largely on acute, episodic models of care that are ill equipped to meet the long-term and fluctuating needs of persons with chronic illness.

The KISH RP Chronic Disease currently lists 16 PhD students, out of which 9 are medical doctors and 7 are behavioural scientists. These students come from 6 different institutions, namely: the UPJS Faculty of Medicine (7), the UPJS Faculty of Arts (1), University Hospital in Kosice (2), the Fresenius Medical Centre Kosice (1), the East Slovakian Institute for Cardiac and Vascular Diseases (3) and the University of Presov (1).

Over the past 2 years the CD programme has been involved in several research projects: 3 national (1x ASFEU/CEMIO, 1x APVV, 1x VEGA) and 6 international (1x DG SANCO, 5 in cooperation

with SAVEZ: 2x FP7, 3x DG SANCO). The national projects dealt with a multilevel integrative approach to chronic disease. The international projects focused on indicators for monitoring chronic disease (IMCA II), urban health indicators (URHIS and URHIS II), strengthening of public health research (SPHERE), public health innovation and research in Europe (PHIRE) and health promotion activities among the elderly (HP-elderly).

The most significant international partner for the Chronic Disease RP is the European Public Health Association (EUPHA). One member of KISH is the president of the EUPHA section on Chronic Diseases (ESCD), another is a member of the EUPHA Governing Council. The greatest contribution of KISH researchers to EUPHA is their help in co-organizing 2-3 thematic workshops during the annual EUPHA conference held under the EUPHA section on Chronic Diseases.

The most important national partner is the Slovak Public Health Association (SAVEZ). In the past KISH was one of the 3 funders of SAVEZ. Present activities mainly involve cooperation on EU projects. In addition, the Chronic Disease RP is regularly involved in the biennial SAVEZ conference, where it organises workshops on up-to-date chronic disease topics as well as methodology courses on scientific writing and publishing.

With regard to teaching activities, in the forthcoming academic year the Chronic Disease RP would like to transfer the scientific knowledge gained in its research to students of the Faculty of Medicine within one compulsory subject (Social Medicine) and three elective subjects: Methodology of Biomedical Research and Statistics, Science Communication Skills and Behavioural Epidemiology of Chronic Disease.

Table 2 Output of the Chronic Disease Research Programme over 2008, 2009 (full) and 2010 (six months)

	2008	2009	2010
Number of PhD students	14	18	17
PhD studies defended	2	1	(1)
Research papers published in SSCI journals	8	5	4+
Monographs, chapters in monograph	1	1	
Lecture books, chapters in lecture books			
Abstracts published SSCI journals	10	9	(7)
Scopus Citations, excl. self-citations	22	31	24+



Educational Programme

It is commonly noted: Slovak universities are not as competitive in publishing in SSCI journals or in attracting EU grants as they should be. In part the lack of research competencies or methodological and epidemiological skills can be blamed for this. However, the world of publications and grants has dramatically changed during the last 10 to 15 years. From this perspective, the Graduate School KISH is strongly convinced that PhD students and Medical Doctors doing their PhD should be educated in the research skills they need for international publications – these

skills do not come ‘naturally’. In the competitive scientific world UPJS is now living in, it should support its researchers with the knowledge and skills necessary for success on the battlefield that contemporary science is today. It is impossible for researchers to succeed without proper education in, for example, the research techniques necessary for doing their research.

During the last few years KISH has tried to educate its own researchers and also broadened its scope to include other researchers. Table 3 provides an overview of such educational activities:

Table 3 Educational activities of KISH over 2008, 2009 (full) and 2010 (six months)

Date	Topic & Teacher	Lecture/workshop	Audience
Feb 2008	Design and analysis of public health interventions - accounting for clustered effects Prof. S.A. Reijneveld MD PhD, U Groningen	1 IL	UPJS
Mar 2008	Introduction to STROBE P. Kolarcik, MSc., UPJS	1 L	KISH
May 2008	Management of your PhD project Prof. J.W. Groothoff PhD, U Groningen	1 day W	KISH
Feb 2009	(1) How to write an introduction, (2) Life style of adolescents Prof. S.A. Reijneveld MD PhD, U Groningen	2 IL	Pre-conference of ISMCK 2009
Feb 2009	How to write an abstract for a scientific conference Assoc. prof. J.P. van Dijk MD PhD, U Groningen / UPJS	1 IL	Pre-conference of ISMCK 2009
Apr 2009	Linear regression in biomedical research Assoc. prof. I. Zezula, PhD, UPJS	1 IL	UPJS
May 2009	How to create a poster? Assoc. prof. J.P. van Dijk MD PhD, U Groningen / UPJS	1 IL	Pre-conference of ISMCK 2009
May 2009	Management of your PhD project Prof. J.W. Groothoff PhD, U Groningen	1 day W	KISH
June 2009	Inequality in Health Assoc. prof. A. Madarasova Geckova PhD, UPJS	1 W	ISMCK 2009
June 2009	Quality of life and chronic disease J. Rosenberger MD PhD, UPJS	1 W	ISMCK 2009
June 2009	How to write a scientific paper J. Rosenberger MD PhD, Assoc. prof. A. Madarasova Geckova	1 W	ISMCK 2009
Oct-Dec 2009	Methodology and Biostatistics in Internal Medicine Garant: prof. MUDr. I. Tkac, PhD, UPJS J. Rosenberger MD PhD, Assoc. prof. A. Madarasova Geckova, Dr. D. Klein, UPJS	10 L	PhD students - Internal Medicine/ Public Health/ KISH
Mar 2010	Mediation, moderation, interaction, and confounding in statistical models used in biomedical research Prof. S.A. Reijneveld MD PhD, U Groningen	1 IL	UPJS FM
April 2010	Statistical mediation and moderation Dr I. Rajnicova Nagyova, UPJS	1 L	UPJS FM IPH
May 2010	Linear regression Mgr. B. Silarova, UPJS	1 L	UPJS FM IPH
June 2010	Ordinal regression R. Sufliarska, UPJS	1 L	UPJS FM IPH
June 2010	Introduction to research Garant: Assoc. prof. R. Beňáčka, PhD J. Rosenberger MD PhD, Assoc. prof. A. Madarasova Geckova PhD	3 L	PhD students at MF
June 2010	How to publish a scientific paper J. Rosenberger MD PhD, Assoc. prof. A. Madarasova Geckova PhD	1 W	ISMCK 2010
June 2010	Migration and health Assoc. prof. A. Madarasova Geckova PhD	1 L	ISMCK 2010

L = Lecture; IL = Invited Lecture; W = Workshop

With the aim of increasing the quantity and quality of the Faculty's research output, KISH will develop a competence-based curriculum for PhD students and researchers. KISH's main idea is that educating people in the research skills they need will contribute to the quantity and quality of the faculty's output, and thus to the University's position as a whole.



Conclusion

The research infrastructure of a university or faculty should more or less naturally produce a sufficient number of high quality papers. Organising research in Graduate Schools might contribute to this aim. In a Graduate School all organisational changes necessary for teaching higher quality output more or less go together: a focus on certain research topics, a drive to publish internationally, a PhD thesis based on articles instead of a monograph, and the systematic education of young researchers. The magic words in western societies are 'focus and mass' to increase 'quantity, quality, and consequently competitiveness'. This can only be achieved by a certain new organisational infrastructure of the research process inside the UPJS. A Graduate Schools is an organisational instrument for increasing the quality of a research organisation!

On May 7th a permanent and structural solution was found for KISH's organisational needs: a Graduate School, in which it can carry out both of its research programmes and develop its educational programme. In such a Graduate School the elements for success are more or less organised: interdisciplinary input, the focus on a limited number of domains and education for the researcher—these all are necessary to achieve scientific success in terms of a sufficient number of high quality papers, which will contribute to the position of the UPJS.



Jitse P van Dijk is Scientific Director of the Graduate School KISH and appointed at the Dept of Social Medicine, University Medical Center Groningen, University of Groningen, The Netherlands; Andrea Madarasova Geckova is Vice-Director for



the Youth & Health Research Programme and appointed at the Dept of Health Psychology – Institute of Public Health, Medical Faculty UPJS; Iveta Rajnicova Nagyova is Vice-Director for the Chronic Disease Research Programme and appointed at the Dept of Social Medicine – Institute of Public Health, Medical Faculty UPJS; Jaroslav Rosenberger is Vice-Director of the Educational Programme of the GS KISH and appointed at the Fresenius Dialysis Centre; during the opening session Zuzana Katreniakova gave a speech on his behalf.

Assoc. Prof. Jitse P. van Dijk MD PhD
Assoc. Prof. Andrea Madarasova Geckova PhD
Iveta Rajnicova Nagyova PhD
Jaroslav Rosenberger MD PhD
Zuzana Katreniakova MD PhD

Ekonomické aspekty v územnej samospráve

Katedra ekonomiky a riadenia verejnej správy na Fakulte verejnej správy UPJŠ v Košiciach usporiadala v októbri 2010 korešpondenčnú konferenciu „Ekonomické aspekty v územnej samospráve“. Konferencia bola realizovaná v rámci riešenia projektu VEGA č. 1/0288/10 Progresívne trendy posudzovania finančnej situácie a merania výkonnosti v územnej samospráve.

Cieľom korešpondenčnej konferencie bola prezentácia práce a vedecko-výskumnej činnosti z oblasti ekonomie a manažmentu v teórii a praxi so zámerom vytvoriť priestor pre zmapovanie stavu a perspektív pri posudzovaní finančnej situácie a v procese merania a riadenia výkonnosti v organizáciách verejnej správy. V rámci konferencie bolo vytvorených 5 tematických okruhov: Ekonomika verejnej správy, Riadenie procesov vo verejnej správe, Finančné toky v samospráve, Inovácie – základ prosperity, Uspokojovanie potrieb zákazníkov – občanov.

Bolo prijatých 26 príspevkov a podieľali sa na nich okrem

zástupcov FVS UPJŠ v Košiciach, aj prispievatelia z iných slovenských univerzít: Ekonomickej univerzity v Bratislave – Národohospodárskej fakulty, Fakulty hospodárskej informatiky, Prešovskej univerzity v Prešove – Fakulty manažmentu, Univerzity Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici – Ekonomickej fakulty, Technickej univerzity v Košiciach – Fakulty BERG, zahraničných univerzít: Univerzity Pardubice – Fakulty ekonomicko-správni, Rzeszow University of Technology – Poland, The St.-Petersburg Institute of Humanitarian Education – Russia, ale aj iných organizácií: Mestského úradu – Snina, Dubnického technologického inštitútu – v Dubnici nad Váhom.

V rámci korešpondenčnej konferencie bol vytvorený priestor na vyjadrenie stanovísk prispievateľov, t. j. ich podnetov, pripomienok, názorov k zatiaľ prijatým, nerecenzovaným príspevkom. Sumarizácia stanovísk a závery z korešpondenčnej konferencie budú prezentované na besede ku konferencii, ktorá sa bude konať 2. 12. 2010 na Katedre ekonomiky a riadenia verejnej správy, Fakulty verejnej správy UPJŠ v Košiciach.

Ing. Eva Mihaliková, PhD.