

## News

### EGPRN: EUROPEAN GENERAL PRACTICE RESEARCH NETWORK

## The EGPRN Research Course in Palermo (Italy)

The European General Practice Research Network in collaboration with the National Society of Medical Education in General Practice (SNAMID, Italy), and the Mediterranean Institute of Primary Care (Malta), organized a three-day 'International course on research in primary health care in Palermo', Italy, 23–25 March 2012. Locally, this course was organized by EGPRN members Nicola Buono and Ferdinando Petrazzuoli. The target group were Italian primary health care workers interested in local research projects and who wanted to dedicate some time to research. 23 GPs attended the meeting. The language spoken was Italian, but knowledge of English was required.

The aim of the course was to provide primary health care professionals with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for undertaking research. Objectives of the course were:

1. To help participants formulating ideas that can be tested in a scientific manner.
2. To give participants a basic understanding of epidemiological methods and biostatistics.
3. To develop the critical faculties of participants for evaluation of their own and other people's work.
4. To practice developing study protocols and applications for research funding.
5. To practice using software for word processing, database manipulation, use of spreadsheets, statistical analysis, preparation of slides and overheads, internet communication and video conferencing.

The teaching staff was composed of international and Italian teachers: Professor Jean Karl Soler, Mediterranean Institute of Primary Care, Malta; Dr

Anthony Mifsud, Mediterranean Institute of Primary Care, Malta; Professor Salvatore Corrao, Associate Professor, Palermo University; Professor Marco Cambielli, Clinical Pharmacology Advisor; Dr Ferdinando Petrazzuoli, family doctor, researcher; and Dr Nicola Buono, family doctor, researcher.

The course was designed to achieve a balance between theoretical and practical learning, and between conceptual and factual materials. There were regular breaks and adequate discussion time after each didactic session. Participants were divided into four smaller work groups. Enough time was spent on designing the participants' own research proposals, which were presented on the last day of the course. All presenters received feedback from teachers and other participants. This resulted in good discussions about research questions and methodology. For many of the participants, qualitative research was rather unknown. They now have more insight in qualitative research, especially in the research questions that can be answered and the way data are collected.

After the course, the youngest of researchers achieved success by being one of the three winners of the Vasco da Gama Movement Junior Researcher Award 2012.

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