Evaluation of Research in Medicine (3): clinical medicine (3.3), public health (3.4), stomatology (3.5), environmental health, behavior nutrition, occupational therapy, rehabilitation (3.7) in Estonia

Institutes evaluated

**Faculty of Medicine, University of Tartu**
- Department of Pediatrics
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Dermatology
- Department of Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation
- Department of Psychiatry
- Department of Internal Medicine
- Clinic of Traumatology and Orthopaedics
- Eye Clinic
- Ear Clinic
- Department of Polyclinic and Family Medicine

**National Institute for Health Development**
- Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics
- Department of Pulmonology

Evaluation dates
November 2-9, 2003

Expert team:

Profs. Timo Vesikari, University of Tampere
Profs. Osmo Hänninen, University of Kuopio
Profs. Stephen Sutton, University of Cambridge, Institute of Public Health
Profs. Barbro Johansson, Wallenberg Neuroscience Center
On a first evaluation point, the **quality of the research activities** was considered. This assessment is largely based on the records of scientific publications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>The majority of the submitted works are at a high international level and virtually all others at a good international level.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent to good</td>
<td>At least one third of the submitted works are at a high international level and many others at a good international level, these together comprise a clear majority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>The majority of the submitted works are at least at a good international level and virtually all others at a fair international level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good to satisfactory</td>
<td>At least one third of the submitted works are at a good international level and many others at a fair international level, these together comprise a clear majority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>The majority of the submitted works are at least at a fair international level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory to unsatisfactory</td>
<td>A minority of the submitted works are at a fair international level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>None, or virtually none, of the submitted works are at a fair international level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the grading of the research activities, the evaluation team was instructed by the EHEAC to reserve the term **excellent** for groups, which were found to be among the best 10% of the European groups in the corresponding field. Similarly, the term **excellent to good** should be used if the evaluated group was found to be among the best 25% of corresponding European groups. The full scale comprised 7 levels, in addition to the highest ones the grades are **good,** **good to satisfactory,** **satisfactory,** **satisfactory to unsatisfactory,** and **unsatisfactory.**

Secondly, the **over-all capability** of a research unit was evaluated based on a the combined assessment of the following criteria (each graded in three levels):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade 0</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Originality/novelty of past and ongoing research activity</td>
<td>descriptive, no novelty</td>
<td>some novelty/originality</td>
<td>original/novel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The strategy and perspective of research</td>
<td>no or bad strategy, no or unclear perspective for further research</td>
<td>fair strategy and perspective for further research</td>
<td>clear strategy and very perspective for further research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidisciplinarity and relevance for other research areas</td>
<td>no multidisciplinarity, no relevant for other research areas</td>
<td>some multidisciplinarity, some relevance</td>
<td>good multidisciplinarity, good relevance for other research areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The competence of research groups and their capability for development</td>
<td>low competence</td>
<td>there is competence, but no young postgraduate and postdoctoral students</td>
<td>there is competence and postgraduate and postdoctoral students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National and international co-operation</td>
<td>no particular national and international co-operation</td>
<td>some national/international co-operation</td>
<td>good or tight national/international co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success in applying for funds and grants</td>
<td>no particular success</td>
<td>fair success</td>
<td>applying successfully for grants and funds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Excellent** - 12-10 (total grade), **Good** - 9-7 (total grade), **Satisfactory** - 6-4 (total grade) and **Unsatisfactory** - 3-0 (total grade). As the result of this assessment one of the four grades **excellent,** **good,** **satisfactory** or **unsatisfactory** was given for the group.
1.2. Department of Public Health (*Head: Prof. Raul-Allan Kiivet*)

**Main research fields**
- Longitudinal development of risky behaviour and risk factors for non-communicable and communicable diseases in children and youth;
- causal association between personality, biological markers and risky behaviour;
- epidemiology and prevention of injuries;
- epidemiology of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases in Estonia;
- indoor air quality and its health consequences;
- drinking water quality and its impact on health;
- data quality of disease registers;
- methodology for analysis of medical data;
- public health aspects of pharmacoepidemiology and pharmacoconomics;
- patient satisfaction and quality of treatment in health care institutions;
- needs assessment for health care services;
- economic evaluation of medical services and health programmes.

**Structure of the Department**
- Chair of Epidemiology and Biostatistics (Prof. Mati Rahu)
- Chair of Environmental and Occupational Health (Docent Eda Merisalu)
- Chair of Health Promotion (Docent Maarike Harro)
- Chair of Health Care Management (Prof. Raul-Allan Kiivet)
- Chair of Health Economics (Docent Kersti Meiesaar)

**Target financed projects**


**General comments**
This is an active department with many enthusiastic young researchers. Output of CC publications (a total of 41 in the assessment period) was quite impressive, although only two doctoral theses were completed during the assessment period. Although it was not possible to meet all the members of the Department, the Team was particularly impressed by Maarike Harro and Krista Fischer.
Evaluation of Research Activities
The Evaluation Team judged the overall quality of the research to be Good

Evaluation of Overall Capability
The team of evaluators judged the overall capability of the research group to be Good

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Originality/novelty of past and ongoing research activity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The strategy and perspective of research</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidisciplinarity and relevance for other research areas</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The competence of research groups and their capability for development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National and international co-operation</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Success in applying for funds and grants</td>
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The implementation opportunities for the research results and their importance for the Estonian society
The work of this Department is of great importance to the nation's health. A good example is the work on prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

Recommendations
1. The Department is attempting to cover a very wide range of diverse topics. This is partly because it is under pressure to accept external contracts. Additional funding would allow the Department to concentrate on fewer topics of strategic importance and to study them in more depth. To the same end, the projects conducted by Masters students should be linked in a more strategic way.

2. The appointment of Maarike Harro as the new director of the National Institute of Health Development should help to facilitate further collaboration between this Department and the Institute. However, this may mean that Dr. Harro will have less time for direct involvement in the Department's research. We therefore recommend that the health promotion unit be strengthened by the appointment of one additional researcher.

3. We understand that the head of the Biostatistics section, Krista Fischer, is the only senior biostatistician in the whole of Estonia. We recommend that funding is given to the Department for an additional postdoctoral biostatistician to support Dr. Fischer's research and to provide statistical advice to other groups in the Department.