INFACT
Joint Action on Health Information

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FACT SHEET on
CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES UNDER EUROPEAN HEALTH EXAMINATION SURVEY (EHES)
WP6 "Strengthen EU countries' health information capacity"

Key outputs

1. Health examination surveys provide valuable information for health monitoring which cannot be obtained from other data sources such as population prevalence of hypertension, functional capacity of elderly population or vitamin D level of the population.

2. European Health Examination Survey (EHES) has prepared standardized survey protocols and guidelines and established an extensive capacity building system to support national HES organizers.

3. Information obtained through health examination surveys will support national and EU-level public health policies and development of required prevention programmes.

Background and Rationale

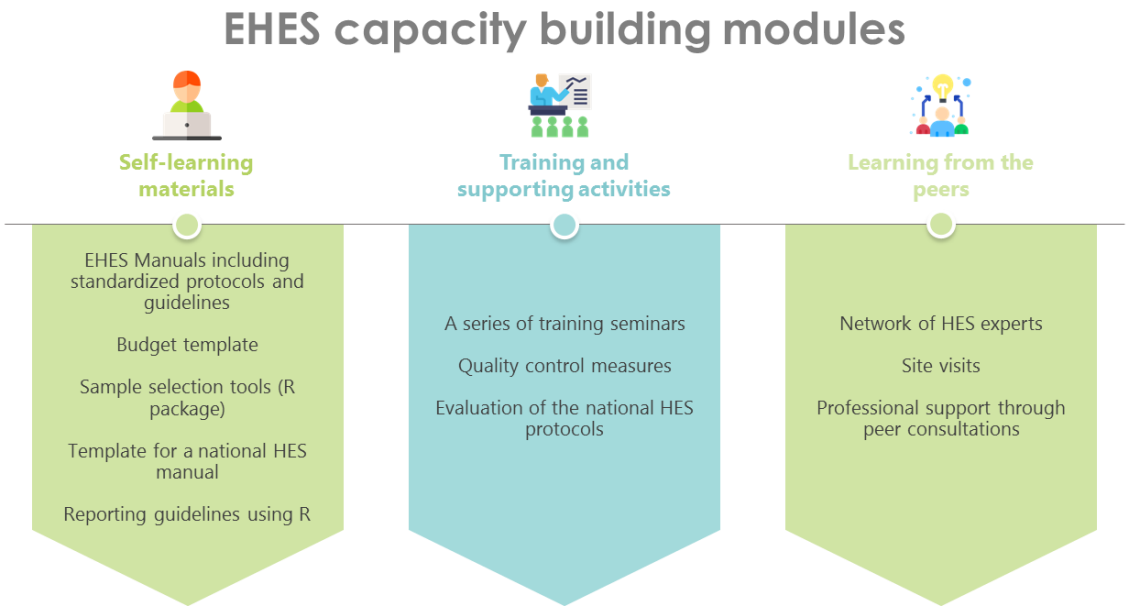
Health Examination Surveys (HES) are population based surveys collecting information about health and determinants of health on general population. They include questionnaires (interviewed or self-administered), physical measurements, and collection and analysis of biological samples. National HESs are an important data source for many health indicators which are not available through routine data collection (hospitalization, deaths etc.) or health interview surveys such as European Health Interview Survey (EHIS). For example, population prevalence of hypertension, functional capacity of elderly population or vitamin D level of the population is difficult to obtain from any other data source than a HES.

To ensure comparability of the results from these national HESs between countries and overtime within country, it is essential to use standardized protocols. To enhance the use of standardized protocols for HESs conducted in Europe, the European Health Examination Survey (EHES) initiative was established in 2009 (http://www.ehes.info/). EHES has prepared standardized survey protocols and guidelines, and set up a series of capacity building activities to support use of these standardized.

Capacity building tools in EHES

EHES capacity building activities are targeted mainly for national survey organizers following the idea 'train the trainers' and peer-support.

The EHES capacity building activities can be classified in three categories: 1) material for self-learning, 2) training and supporting activities and 3) learn from your peers.



Recommendations for sustainability

For cross-country comparisons, knowledge to use standardized protocols is essential. Currently, EHES network is exists but without sustainable funding. Therefore many capacity building activities have been run down or are functioning based on good will of the network members. To revive these activities, a small sustainable funding for the coordination activities would be needed.