

# COHORT STUDIES

**to exchange experiences, know-how, ideas and expertise on the set-up and maintenance of population-based cohort in Belgium**

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# Population-based cohort

- Longitudinal assessment of multiple exposure-outcome relations
- Representative of general population

| Scientific value  | Political value   |
|---|---|
| Multipurpose: wide range of research questions                                    | Support & innovate public health policies                       |
| Determine causes of diseases: causality as well as alternative explanations       | Improving epidemiological surveillance & public health practice |
| Opportunities for nested studies (deep phenotyping / specific research questions) | Maximize use of administrative data                             |

# Context

Many initiatives abroad

- 'Classical cohorts'
  - Longitudinal data collection: surveys, clinical examinations
- Biobanking
  - Biological samples
- Data linkage and data warehousing

In Belgium:

- Some cohort-like initiatives are limited to specific population groups
- Large databases related to public health are cross-sectional (.e.g. Health Interview Survey)



# The project

This workshop is part of a study on the feasibility of a population-based cohort in Belgium

The overall objective is to provide to the Belgian policy makers, at the federal, regional and community level, evidence on how a population-based cohort in Belgium could contribute:

- To increase the quality of scientific research in public health in Belgium;
- To improve the health of the population; and
- To provide a roadmap with possible scenarios for public health policy in the future.

# The project

2016: First explorative meeting with stakeholders (policy, administration, researchers)  
→ sufficient motivation to explore the possibilities

2018/2019: Start feasibility study: explorative phase  
→ Review cohort-initiatives abroad  
→ Identification of knowledge gaps in Belgium  
→ Inventarisation stakeholders and setting up collaborations  
→ **Workshop experts and stakeholders**

2019/2020: Shaping phase:  
→ Structural work groups  
→ Mapping possibilities  
→ Presentation roadmap and business case

# Program:

## Part I:

09:40 – 10:20 Lifelines (The Netherlands)

10:20 – 11:00 Swiss National Cohort (Switzerland)

11:00 – 11:30 Break

11:30 – 12:10 Microdata.no (Norway)

12:10 – 12:50 German National Cohort (Germany)

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

## Part II:

14:00 – 15:40 Presentations and panel discussion Belgian stakeholders

15:40 – 15:45 Wrap up

## Part III:

Drinks & network opportunities

# This workshop

- Today's questions
  - What can we learn from the cohort and cohort-like initiatives in other European countries?
    - Which steps need to be taken to establish such a cohort?
    - How is such an infrastructure maintained?
    - What is the added value of such a cohort in Belgium?
  - How can such a platform be constructed in Belgium?
    - What could be the precise objectives of the cohort?
    - What infrastructures and governance structures are needed?
    - Do the purpose and objectives of a cohort justify the costs of a cohort
  - How can we guarantee the sustainability of a cohort?
    - In terms of cost-efficiency
    - In terms of engagement of participants and end-users of the data obtained
  - What recommendations should be made to Belgian (health) policy makers with respect to the set up of a population-based cohort in Belgium?