

Michael Marmot

2004 Balzan Prize for Epidemiology

Sir Michael Marmot has made seminal contributions to epidemiology by establishing hitherto unsuspected links between social status and differences in health and life expectancy. He has initiated the era of social epidemiology and paved the way for the development of a wholly new concept of preventive medicine.

UCL Balzan International Fellowship program

University College London

Adviser for the General Balzan Committee: Werner Stauffacher

As initiator of the era of social epidemiology and a pioneer in the development of a wholly new concept of preventive medicine, Marmot is using half of his Balzan Prize for a new programme of international fellowships at University College London's International Institute for Society and Health. The Institute was founded in 2007 to bring together strong individual research programmes on the determinants of health and well-being in society.

Multidisciplinary and international in scope, the Institute is unequalled in offering opportunities for research and interdisciplinary research experience for young scholars. The international fellowships have two key objectives in Marmot's field of scientific interest: research experience in the social determinants of health and well-being, and the fostering of international networks of research and policy development. The aim is to develop the next cadre of researchers for the future and to benefit from the clear advantages that international collaboration brings.

- Dr. Kavita Sivaramakrishnan (Public Health Foundation of India) and Dr. Rama Baru (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India) have been jointly working on a paper for "The National Medical Journal of India" on "The Commission on Social Determinants of Health: Mainstreaming Social Inequalities in Public Health Education in India". They presented a version of this paper at a UCL conference "The World Health Organization and the Social Determinants of Health: Assessing Theory, Policy and Practice" in November 2008.

- Dr. Kristina László (Semmelweis University, Budapest, Hungary) has successfully published her work on "Job insecurity and health: A study of 16 European countries" in *Social Science and Medicine* (with Hynek Pikhart, Mária S. Kopp, Martin Bobak, Andrzej Pajak, Sofia Malyutina, Ruzena Kubinova, Gyöngyvér Salavec, Michael

Marmot; *Soc Sci Med.* 2010 March; 70(6-3): 867-874). She presented results from this study to the American Psychosomatic Society Conference in Chicago in March 2009.

- Dr. Nelly Salgado (National Institute of Public Health, Cuernavaca, Mexico) has developed a short course on the Social Determinants of Health (with Tarani Chandola and Roberto De Vogli) for her Institute. The course took place in August 10-15, 2009 in Cuernavaca, Mexico with over 40 public health academics and practitioners from all over Latin America.
- Dr. Alex Gaina (University of Toyama, Japan) has submitted several papers on the social determinants of child obesity and development using data from the Toyama Birth Cohort Study. He participated in the International conference on Health and the Changing World in November 2008 in Bangkok, with a presentation on SES and health among Japanese schoolchildren. His work on maternal employment and child obesity in Japan has been published in *The International Journal of Obesity*.
- Dr. Sergio Luiz Bassanesi (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul – UFRGS, Brazil), UFRGS Brazil, joined the department in January 2009 for 12 months. He is a medical doctor, with residency medical training in cardiology. Dr Bassanesi was also trained in public health (Fundacao Oswaldo Cruz, Brazil), got his Master of Public Health degree from Johns Hopkins University, USA, and received his PhD in Medicine from UFRGS, Brazil. Dr Bassanesi's research area for the Balzan fellowship is related to socioeconomic urban segregation and its impact on health. He also has been working on the measurements of socioeconomic health disparities, especially in relation to cardiovascular mortality. He has also collaborated on epidemiological and clinical studies on tuberculosis. During his stay at UCL, Dr Bassanesi was a co-applicant on a successful application to the Economic and Social Research Council on spatial and social inequalities in health in Brazil and India.
- Dr. Adrienne Stauder (Semmelweis University, Budapest, Hungary) joined the Department for a period of three months (April 2009-July 2009). A senior researcher, psychiatrist and psychotherapist, her residency was proposed to explore opportunities for increased data analysis of extant Central and Eastern European data on inequalities, the potential to develop collaborative database analysis and collaborative data collection, and the opportunities for new research questions on protective factors.
- Dr. Eleonor Fransson (Jonkoping University, Sweden) resided at UCL for five months (September 2009-February 2010). A Postdoctoral Fellow, Dr Fransson earned her PhD from the Karolinska Institute and an MSc in Statistics from Stockholm University. Her period at UCL allowed her to work on Whitehall II data, and more specifically, on the relationship between BMI/WHR and inflammatory markers, thereby developing her skills and increasing her international contacts

- Ms. Gyongyver Salavecz (Semmelweis University, Budapest, Hungary) spent September 2009, February 2010 and May 2010 in the Department. Working on the cross-cultural consistency of associations between positive affect and cortisol and heart rate variability, her periodic residency has both provided a training opportunity for her as well as supported increased collaboration between UCL, Princeton and Semmelweis University. She also completed a paper “Work Stress and Poor Health in Western European and in Post-communist Countries: an East-West Comparison Study” (co-authored by Chandola T, Pikhart H, Dragano N, Siegrist J, Jockel KH, Erbel R, Malyutina S, Pajak A, Kubinova R, Marmot M, Bobak M, Kopp M.; *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 2010;64:57–62.) during her stay at UCL

- Professor Philippa Howden-Chapman (University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand) joined the Department in January 2010 for a period of five months. Her expertise on the effect of housing conditions on health has resulted in discussions of housing as a neglected but crucial social determinant of healthy ageing and possibilities of housing conditions data collection in the ageing cohort studies at UCL.

Publications:

- Gaina, A., Sekine, M., Chandola, T., Marmot, M., Kagamimori, S., *Mother employment status and nutritional patterns in Japanese junior high schoolchildren*. “*International Journal of Obesity*”, 33(7):753-7, 2009.

- László, K.D., Pikhart, H., Kopp, M.S., Bobak, M., Pajak, A., Malyutina, S., Salavecz, G., Marmot, M., *Job insecurity and health: a study of 16 European countries*. “*Social Science & Medicine*”. Mar. 70(6):867-74, 2010.

- Szalavecz, G., Chandola, T., Pikhart, H., Dragano, N., Siegrist, J., Jockel, K.H., Erbel, R., Malyutina, S., Pajak, A., Kubinova, R., Marmot, M., Bobak, M., Kopp, M., *Work Stress and Poor Health in Western European and in Post-communist countries: an East-West Comparison Study*. “*Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*”, 64:57-62, 2010.

Statement by the Prizewinner: *I am grateful to Balzan for celebrating the values of scholarship. Grateful for recognising that different disciplines have their own way to the truth. And grateful for the opportunity the Prize gives to enjoy supporting the research leaders of the future.* Michael Marmot (Rome, 18.11.2004)