ICH

Report 2006-2009
Overview

The second annual report for the Institute of Communication and Health (ICH) at the Università della Svizzera Italiana presents some basic information about the Institute’s research and teaching activities since the last report in 2005-06. As the number and size of research projects significantly increased in 2006, the ICH split into two units within the same institute. A part from the HCC Lab that already existed, a second unit, the ARCHE (Center for Applied Research in Communication and Health) was created. ARCHE, which deals with the discipline’s fundamental theoretical themes and projects for health promotion in the community and greater Switzerland.

Current research projects within the Institute focus on one of the following subject areas:

- **Health Professionals – Patient Communication** explores the theory and practice of health communication in medical encounters with an attention for the doctor – patient relationship, communication and argumentation as well as informed consent and decision-making, health literacy, self – management of chronic diseases, cancer and genetic counseling.

- **Health and the Media** focuses on effective message dissemination for health promotion, disease prevention and health-related messages transmitted through mediated channels. Within this area, we perform activities including content analysis of media messages, development and analysis of health promotion campaigns, risk communication and management and health advertising (in particular, Direct-to-Consumer-Advertising).

- **New Communication Technologies** includes theoretical and empirical investigations through the use and impact of the internet as an instrument for health communication. In particular, we focus on e-Health for patient education, online instruments for risk-assessment and health information tailoring as well as e-Learning for health professionals and students.

The following are some highlights of our activities in research and teaching:

**Research grants**

Between the summer of 2006 and 2009, approximately 2'430,000 CHF have been awarded to the ICH for research projects. 1'034.000 CHF were provided to the Institute in the forms of grants by institutions, such as the Swiss National Science Foundation and KTI (fill in name). Together with past research grants (2,770,000) that had been awarded to the HCC Lab between 2003 and 2006, all grant money of the ICH amounts to 5'202.000 CHF. Currently, 30 people in the ICH are working on various projects, three of which are financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

**Doctoral School ProDoc Communication & Health**

In order to address the growing need for experts in the field of communication and health, we created a doctoral school, Pro*Doc Communication & Health (www.comhealth.ch), that is focused on communication and health research. Beside the ICH (which is the leading house), three Swiss research groups are involved
in the program: the Institut de Psychologie du Travail et des Organisations at the University Neuchatel, the Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research at the University Zurich, and the unit of personnel and organizational psychology at the University of Fribourg. The doctoral school is also associated with the Center for Marketing and Consumer Health, Virginia Tech, USA.

**International Collaboration**

Currently, we are fostering a permanent collaboration with the Marketing Department at Virginia Tech University. Each year, a number of Master and PhD students in the ICH Program have the opportunity to study in the US for 1-2 semesters. Furthermore, beginning in 2009 an official exchange program was initiated with the Communication Department at the University of Munich (LMU). In addition, two research colloquia with colleagues from Munich had been conducted between 2008 and 2009.

In adjunct to the already existing collaborations with the Health Communication Research Centre at Cardiff University, the Speech Communication Argumentation Theory and Rhetoric Center at the University of Amsterdam, the University College London, the Gorsebrook Research Institute at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, Canada and the Research Centre at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Brescia, a new collaboration was formed with the Health Communication Center at the University of Nottingham.

**Master’s degree in Communication, Management and Health**

In the fall of 2009, the ICH at the University of Lugano (USI) and the Marketing Department at Virginia Tech University (VT) will start offering a dual Master’s degree in Communication Management and Health (MCMH). This unique program seeks to convey the knowledge and skills necessary to appreciate the complexity of the health sector and meet the challenges that arise within it.

The MCMH program combines theoretical and practical knowledge and creates a solid link between concepts and their use in business by illustrating how theory can inform business analysis and decisions. It offers the unique opportunity to acquire a focused and in-depth set of knowledge and skills related to the health sector, analytical skills and a broad understanding of how business and marketing functions operate.

We are much obliged to several institutions and funding bodies for their support. In particular, I wish to thank USI president, Piero Martinoli, as well as to the USI administration staff, namely the administrative director, Albino Zgraggen. Through their continuous support the ICH has had the opportunity – and the means – to become a strong research centre. Over the coming years, our goal is to further develop the Institute into a premier research centre in Switzerland.
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Current Research Projects

Pro*Doc Communication & Health

Short description
In order to address the growing need for experts in the field of communication and health, we created a doctoral school, Pro*Doc Communication & Health (www.comhealth.ch), that is focused on communication and health research. Five Swiss research groups are involved in the program: University Lugano, Institute of Communication & Health of the Faculty of Communication Sciences and the Center for Organizational Research of the Faculty of Economics, University Neuchatel, Institut de Psychologie du Travail et des Organisations, University Zurich, Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, and the unit of personnel and organizational psychology at the University of Fribourg. The doctoral school is also associated with the Center for Marketing and Consumer Health, Virginia Tech, USA. Together, these groups seek to integrate communication, psychological, social marketing and organizational research to better understand communication and health issues and to maximize health outcomes. 14 PhD students take part in the doctoral school which started with the first 6 seminars in 2008.

People: Peter J. Schulz, Nadia Galli
Funding institution: Swiss National Science Foundation
Duration: April 2008 – March 2011

Effectiveness of tailored promotional messages in the areas of organ donation

Short description
Public information campaigns have played an important role in increasing awareness of organ donation and the need for more organ donors. However, in a recent study, we found that awareness and knowledge regarding organ donation represented only one of several factors in people’s decisions to engage in organ donation-related behaviors (Schulz et al., 2006). In addition, we noted that the three language groups in Switzerland differ substantially with respect to the factors influential in their organ donation decisions. Few studies, however, have examined cultural differences in health-related prosocial behavior. Existing studies tend to examine wide cultural differences, e.g., China or Japan versus the United States or racial subcultures in the United States. We seek to examine the role of cultural micro-variation (cultural differences within a nationally and racially homogeneous population) building on our previous study of organ donation in Switzerland. More specifically, the proposed research seeks to test the implications of these cultural differences as they relate to the design of tailored promotional campaigns for prosocial behavior. The proposed study applies communication theory concepts to the design of effective tailored communication strategies to promote organ donation as an important example of health-related prosocial behavior.

People: Peter J. Schulz, Kent Nakamoto, Anke Dunkel
Funding institution: Swiss National Science Foundation
Duration: March 2008 – March 2011
SCIRA - Structure and effects of societal communication on Non-Ionizing Radiation

Short description
The major aim of the proposed research is to assess the functionality of efforts to socially communicate the risk posed by Non-Ionizing Radiation. The focus is on describing and analyzing the achievements as well as the shortcomings of these efforts, taking the circumstances of their origin into account. This is done with the ultimate goal of giving recommendations for future endeavors in this area.

People: Peter, J. Schulz, Simone Keller, Kent Nakamoto
Funding institution: Swiss National Science Foundation, NRP 57 “Non-Ionizing Radiation-Health and Environment”
Duration: March 2007 – March 2010

Improving the work of medical residents. Logics of action and of judgement at the Hospital Beata Vergine of Mendrisio (VALMEDAS)

Short description
After having completed a rigorous and competitive basic education, medical residents have to face difficult working conditions: they are confronted to the moratorium of the medical practices, the increasing volume of administrative work, the pressures from health insurance companies, the reduction of salaries, and the decrease in importance of the role of general practitioner. At the same time, in the last years there has been increased attention to the practical working conditions of medical residents in hospitals. This attention has flown into the introduction, since January 1st 2005, of a law that limits the working time of medical residents in the hospitals to 50 hours per week. The present study is financed by the Hospital Beata Vergine of Mendrisio and it aims to explore the impact of these changes on the quality of the work of medical residents, starting from the point of view of the actors implicated, that is, the medical residents themselves, the senior doctors, and the nurses.

People: Maria Caiata Zufferey, Maddalena Fiordelli
Funding institution: Ospedale Beata Vergine Mendrisio
Duration: April 2009 – June 2009

Living with a chronic and genetic illness: the case of the Gitelman’s Syndrome (MACROGEN)

Short description
The syndrome of Gitelman is a rare renal pathology. Once diagnosed, it can be efficiently treated through appropriate medicines. Therefore, this illness is generally considered a benign and an asymptomatic one. However, the clinical experience suggests that daily living with the Gitelman’s syndrome is far from easy. This study aims to explore the strategies patients affected by Gitelman’s syndrome use to manage their illness in their daily life.

People: Maddalena Fiordelli, Maria Caiata Zufferey
Funding institution: Ente Ospedaliero Cantonale (EOC)
Duration: June 2009 – June 2010
Cancer and health literacy: establishing a concept of cancer literacy

Short description
Health literacy is an often overlooked problem in preventing, diagnosing and treating all kinds of cancer. Many people are shown to have low literacy skills and health competences. As patients, such individuals are at a disadvantage in their capacity to obtain, process, and understand cancer information and preventive services needed to make appropriate decisions. Patients with poor health literacy have a complex array of difficulties with written and oral communication that may limit their understanding of cancer screening and of symptoms of cancer, adversely affecting their stage at diagnosis. Studies have shown that an individual's health literacy may be an important predictor of increased cancer risk and poor participation in cancer control programs. While the concept of health literacy has gained widespread acceptance in the field of health communication over the last fifteen years, there is an increasing need to specify the concept of health literacy within the area of cancer prevention. The proposed research seeks to do both, to operationalize a usable and defined concept of health literacy, and to specify it with regard to one of the major health threats, cancer.

People: Peter J. Schulz, Nicola Diviani
Funding institution: Oncosuisse
Duration: March 2008 – March 2010

ONESELF III: Using online strategies to enhance self-management of chronic low back pain and fibromyalgia syndrome

Short description:
The project aims to analyze and evaluate online strategies to promote and enhance self-management of chronically ill patients. In particular, it is addressed to chronic low back pain and fibromyalgia patients. Moving from previous findings in the field (projects ONESELF I+II), the web application "www.oneself.ch" has been restructured, and an new section dedicated to fibromyalgia syndrome has been introduced. Alongside the implementation of new technologies to support patients' self-management, a randomized controlled trial will be conducted, so to find out the general effects of this application on the population affected by chronic conditions.

People: Peter J. Schulz, Sara Rubinelli, Luca Camerini, Marco Boneschi, Michele Giacobazzi, Guido Mariotti, Nicola Keller.
Funding institution: Lega Ticinese contro il Rheumatismo
Duration: September 2008 – September 2010

Health Survey Ticino

Short description: A survey among Ticino population regarding attitudes, behavior, knowledge and risk perception in the health domain.

People: Peter J. Schulz, Uwe Hartung, Maddalena Fiordelli
Funding institution: Dipartimento della sanità e della socialità
Duration: Fall 2008
DIA-Pain - ARCHE

Short description
Monitoring of pain perception of patients in haemodialysis treatment Method: Structured personal interviews with patients

People: Simone Eh mig, Nadia Galli
Funding institution: Promozione Bär
Duration: April 2008 – July 2009

Health Promotion Switzerland – School Monitoring - ARCHE

Short description
Overview of conditions concerning nutrition, physical activity and (over-)weight in schools in Switzerland Method: Online survey among school directors in Switzerland

People: Simone Eh mig, Cristina Furrer, Janine Lenares
Funding institution: Health Promotion Switzerland
Duration: April 2008 – July 2010

Tailoring Physical activity communication: A test of the theory of planned behavior and persuasive communication strategies

Short description
The purpose of this study is to test the Theory of Planned Behavior and persuasive communication strategies in health communication designed to increase physical activity levels among a worksite population.

People: Suzanne Suggs, Marco Bardus, Joel Lehmann
Funding institution: Fondazione ricerca e sviluppo dell’USI
Duration: November 2008 – November 2010

Health Promotion Switzerland – Evaluation of cantonal programs – ARCHE -

Funding institution: Health Promotion Switzerland
Duration: April 2007 – November 2009
Health Promotion Switzerland – Evaluation of cantonal programs I: Training of midwives and parents’ consultants – ARCHE -

Short description
Evaluation of cantonal programs focusing on nutrition and physical activity of new born children in the canton of St. Gallen Method: Participating observations combined with surveys

People: Simone Ehmig, Cristina Furrer, Janine Lenares

Health Promotion Switzerland – Evaluation of cantonal programs II: Lectures for parents of children in nurseries – ARCHE -

Short description
Evaluation of cantonal programs focusing on nutrition of infants in the canton of Neuchâtel Method: Participating observations combined with surveys

People: Simone Ehmig, Michel Schneider

Health Promotion Switzerland – Evaluation of cantonal programs III: “Kidz-Box” - ARCHE -

Short description

People: Simone Ehmig, Anke Dunkel, Janine Lenares

Health Promotion Switzerland – Evaluation of cantonal programs IV: “rundum fit” - ARCHE -

Short description
Evaluation of nutrition and physical activity of children in primary schools in the canton of Luzern. Method: Participating observations combined with surveys.

People: Simone Ehmig, Anne-Linda Frisch

Funding institution: Health Promotion Switzerland

Health Promotion Switzerland – Media Monitoring – ARCHE -

Short description
Focusing press coverage in all parts of Switzerland on nutrition, physical activity and (over-)weight Method: quantitative content analysis of more than 20 newspapers and magazines

People: Simone Ehmig, Michel Schneider

Funding institution: Health Promotion Switzerland

Duration: October 2006 – October 2009
Health Promotion Switzerland – Public Surveys – ARCHE -
Short description
Focusing people's knowledge, experience and attitudes towards nutrition, physical activity and over-weight.
Method: Representative telephone surveys

People: Simone Ehmig, Anne-Linda Frisch
Funding institution: Health Promotion Switzerland
Duration: November 2006 – November 2009

EKAS II – ARCHE
Short description
Evaluation of an advertisement campaign and film spots of the Federal coordination commission for safety of worksites.
Method: Telephone survey among employers combined with content analysis and focus group of employers and trainers.

People: Simone Ehmig, Nadia Galli
Funding institution: Eidgenössische Koordinationskommision für Arbeitssicherheit (EKAS)
Duration: May 2009 – December 2009

Health literacy Luzern
Short description
Survey among children, parents, care takers, consultants and doctors concerning literacy in nutrition, physical activity and healthy weight.

People: Simone Ehmig, Anne-Linda Frisch, Uwe Hartung
Funding institution: Kantonsärztliche Dienste Luzern
Duration: January 2009 – July 2009

Health Promotion Switzerland – Evaluation of Poster Campaigns – ARCHE-
Short description
Evaluation of poster campaigns focusing (over-)weight and obesity.
Method: Representative telephone surveys

People: Simone Ehmig, Anne-Linda Frisch
Funding institution: Health Promotion Switzerland
Duration: April 2007 – June 2009
DTCA (“Direct-to-Consumer-Advertising”, Pilot-study)

Short description

There is an ongoing global debate over the potential benefits and risks of allowing direct- to-consumer advertising of pharmaceutical products. Such advertising is legal in the United States and New Zealand but remains illegal for example in all the countries of the Western world. It has been argued that the risks derive both from potential misinformation of consumers and inappropriate demands for prescription of these drugs. By joining together perspectives from argumentation theory, pragmatics and marketing research, we are conducting empirical investigations to assess the way readers process these ads, and to individuate explicit and implicit elements that provide groundings for their inference. The ultimate aim of analysis is to understand whether these ads contain potentially misleading information and, if it is so, how it impacts the persuasiveness of the ads themselves.

People: Dr. Sara Rubinelli, Prof. Dr. Kent Nakamoto, Ola Himmat, Anne-Linda Frisch, Schneider Michel

Funding institution: Own funding

Duration: January 2006 – October 2009
Concluded Projects

Reception and Processing of Health Communication Messages Delivered via an Online Virtual World

Short description

The purpose of this study is to examine the use of the online virtual world Second Life (SL) as a vehicle for the delivery of health communication messages designed to encourage individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices regarding physical activity and nutrition.

People: Suzanne Suggs
Funding institution: Eastern Michigan University
Duration: January 2008 – January 2009

EKAS I

Short description

Evaluation of an advertisement campaign of the Federal coordination commission for safety of worksites
Method: Telephone survey among employers combined with content analysis

People: Nadia Galli
Funding institution: Eidgenössische Koordinationskommisions für Arbeitssicherheit (EKAS)
Duration: April 2008 – September 2008

KINSPOT - Evaluation of the awareness campaign from AT

Short description

The Swiss Association for Smoking Prevention has created an awareness campaign to motivate smokers to give up this habit. Four messages, with the slogan “Ogni sigaetta fa male”, have been transmitted in the Ticino’s cinemas, showing the negative consequences of cigarette smoke on people’s health. Ticino is the first Swiss Canton where the spots are transmitted. This evaluation will investigate the impact of the campaign in the perspective of understanding its possible implementation on a national level.

People: Nadia Galli
Funding institution: Associazione svizzera per la prevenzione del Tabagismo
Duration: September 2008 – October 2008
DIFUVA - Health and economic impact assessment of the smoking ban in the canton of Ticino

Short description
The project evaluates the health and economic consequences of the new smoking ban in public buildings in the canton of Ticino, Switzerland. The project involves panel studies on shopkeepers and employees (both smokers and non-smokers). Opinions before and after the smoking ban will be compared. The research aims to identify main changes in smoking behaviour and attitude towards the ban.

People: Peter J. Schulz, Angelo Tomada

Funding institution: Cantone Ticino, Dipartimento della Sanità e della Socialità
Duration: March 2007 – May 2008

SENACA - An integrated e-learning, information and collaboration platform for Continuing Education on Health and Diseases of the Elderly

Short description
This project consists in the creation of an integrated e-learning information and collaboration online platform on health and diseases of the elderly (55+), targeting specialists/clinicians, primary care providers, registered nurses, informal caregivers as well as senior citizens to whom the same evidence-based, up-to-date and accredited content will be made accessible in level-adjusted formats. The implementation is planned initially in Switzerland and subsequently in 5 European key regions as well as an outreach to China. A parallel scientific research study will demonstrate the use and value of an integrated platform that successfully addresses the informational needs of health professionals and the senior population in tandem.

People: Uwe Hartung, Debora Zgraggen
Funding institution: CTI, Switzerland
Duration: July 2007 – January 2008

ECHO (“E-course in Communication for Health Operators”)

Short description
ECHO exploits new media to develop learning methods which are best suited to health communication. ECHO is structured in 9 10 hour modules playing around a combination of face-to-face lectures (20% of total student work), autonomous work at home (40%) and group work (in class, laboratory and online, 40%). The modules' topics include theories and methods for the analysis and design applications of health communication at the personal and media levels utilizing traditional and new technological communication channels. ECHO will be tested at the Faculty of Communication sciences of the University of Lugano, the Department of Psychosomatic Medicine/Internal Medicine of Basel UNISPITAL, the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales (HEC) of the University of Lausanne, and the Scuola Superiore per le Formazioni Sanitarie of Stabio, for a total of approx. 620 students per year.

People: Dr. Sara Rubinelli, Dr. med. Silvia Rinaldi, Prof. Dr. med. Wolfgang Langewitz, Prof. Dr. Gianfranco Domenighetti, Ivan Cinesi, Dr. Stefano Tardini.
Funding institution: Swiss Virtual Campus  

**KIWI** (“Kinderwerbung im Fernsehen”)  
Short description  
Because of the rising incidence of childhood obesity, this project analyses the extent and nature of food promotion in television directed at children. Over a period of 6 months (1.3.2006-31.8.2006), the study is systematically investigating the advertising of six Swiss TV channels under public law (SF1, SF2, TSR 1, TSR 2, TSI 1, TSI 2), and two private European channels with substantial children’s programming (SuperRTL and Italia 1). Using Content Analysis, the study will emphasize the frequency and the context of food advertising as well as the range of the promoted products and their nutrient composition.

People: Simone Keller  
Funding institution: Bundesamt für Gesundheit (Swiss Federal Office for Public Health).  
Duration: March 2006 – August 2006

**PARIS** (“Patients’ Rights Study”)  
Short description  
This intervention study aims to detect the best medium to help patients fully understand their rights. After giving a leaflet about patients’ rights to almost one hundred of patients in an EOC hospital, we will analyze the readability and comprehension level of the document, evaluating the effects of its delivery on patients. We will give a leaflet without any explication to a few patients (control group), while the rest will receive a leaflet with an active exposition of health professionals (experimental group).

People: Benedetta Colombo  
Funding institution: Ente Ospedaliero  
Duration: January 2006 – July 2006

**Health Literacy – development of an implementation plan for health literacy**  
Short description  
The project aims to develop an implementation plan for health literacy in the contemporary society of Switzerland.

People: Yvonne Eckert  
Funding institution: Bundesamt für Gesundheit, Bern (Swiss Federal Office for Public Health).  
Duration: April 2006 – March 2007
Compact: An Online Communication Platform for Cancer Patients at the Hospital of Locarno

Short description
The purpose of this project is to design and implement an informative online platform on cancer issues. People know that the internet is used more and more to research health information, but often this information is neither reliable nor easy to understand. In collaboration with Centro Triangolo in Locarno, we want to build an online tool which could be useful for patients and their families to find understandable information and answer the most frequently asked questions on that topic. In order to give reliable information we will develop the content on the basis of Evidence Based Medicine translated into more comprehensible terms. It would also provide suggestions of how to face up to all the additional problems that cancer brings.

People: Chiara Maniscalco, Nadia Galli
Funding institution: Fondazione San Salvatore
Duration: July 2006 – January 2008

HELA (“Health Literacy Argumentarium”)

Short description
The “Argumentarium” brings together the 40 most important reasons why Health Literacy has become an important issue in contemporary society. It answers basic questions such as why Health Literacy matters, etc. in a comprehensive form.

People: Kent Nakamoto, Uwe Hartung, etc.
Funding institution: Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz
Duration: July 2006 – November 2006

HELENA (“Health Literacy – Nutrition, Physical exercises, and Weight for the target group of Adolescents”)

Short description
Based on the Health Literacy framework of the HCC Lab (Schulz & Nakamoto 2006), this project aims to develop its implication for the target group of adolescents.

People: Daniela Maag
Funding institution: Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz
Duration: June 2006 – November 2006
HELMS (“Health Literacy in the area of Mental Health & Stress”)  
Short description  
The project aims to develop a conceptual framework on Health Literacy in the area of Mental Health & Stress, based on the text of Schulz & Nakamoto 2006.

People: Carmen Faustinelli  
Funding institution: Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz  
Duration: July 2006 – May 2007

Centre for Competence in Health Literacy  
Short description  
The center will be studying different aspects of health literacy in the Swiss population. Firstly, it will first conduct regular surveys on the health literacy of the population. Secondly it will evaluate the effectiveness of media campaigns in Switzerland targeting the topics of nutrition, physical exercise, and weight. Thirdly they will be developing an intervention study with parents of obese children. And lastly, it will monitor media coverage of issues concerning nutrition, physical exercise, and weight.

People: Uwe Hartung, Daniela Maag, Benedetta Waldburger, et al.  
Funding institution: Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz  
Duration: October 2006 – September 2009

OPERA (“Online Personal Education and Risk Assessment”)  
Short description  
This project is based on the creation of an online risk assessment tool in relation to genetic breast cancer risk. The HCC-Lab is responsible for handling the structuring, refining, and presenting the information. The main objective is to structure information within an effective argumentative setting which meets the needs of individual users. The HCC Lab will also coordinate in-house testing of the tool by three pilot trials. In the first pilot 30 patients will be invited into a clinical facility in central London, and will use the programme under simulated live conditions. In the second pilot, 100 patients living in London, will be invited to try out the programme in their own homes, with a back-up telephone consultation with the project manager within 24 hours of the on-line assessment. In the third phase 300 patients across England will be invited to use the programme in their own homes, with telephone support, and consultation with a local cancer genetics team.

People: Dr. Sara Rubinelli, Prof. Dr. Kent Nakamoto, Prof. Dr. Paolo Paolini, Tec-Lab, Dr. Davide Bolchini, Tec-Lab, Dr. Andrea Pithers, CancerBackup, Dr. James Mackey, UCL  
Funding institution: King’s fund, London, CancerBackup  
Duration: December 2006 - November 2008
**Breakthrough genetic breast cancer trial: a randomized phase II pilot trial of docetaxel versus carboplatin for patients with relapsed genetic breast cancer.**

**Short description**

The project developed communication strategies for a randomized trial for the treatment of relapsed genetic breast cancer. The HCC Lab, in collaboration with the TEC (Technology Enhanced Communication) Lab of the University of Lugano, was responsible for the development of a website for the recruitment of about 150 European patients to be involved in the trial. The website applied communication strategies, such as a content intensive website, virtual meetings in 3D and discussion forums in order to support patients' decision to provide "informed consent" for the trial. We were attempting to minimize the need for face to face encounters between health professionals and patients during the recruitment phase, as well as assisting patients during their actual participation in the trial.

People: Sara Rubinelli, Fausto Vago, Sheena Flannery, James Mackay, UCL, Mahesh Parmar, Cancer Division, MRC Clinical Trials Unit London, Andrew Tutt, Consultant Clinical Genetic Oncologist/ Clinician Scientist Fellow, Institute of Cancer Research London.

Funding institution: University College London & the Institute of Cancer Research UK

Duration: January 2005 – May 2006

**Information and Knowledge Management among Physicians**

**Short description**

This project explored information management practices of Swiss and German doctors by surveying 1000 physicians as well as interviewing key representatives of the Swiss and German health care systems. Analysis revealed the information that physicians require, the channels through which this information is retrieved, and how it is processed and passed on to colleagues and patients. The final aim was to develop recommendations for better information management both for individual physicians and for decision makers in Germany and Switzerland.

People: Gerhard, Dr. Julia (St. Gallen), Glotz, Prof. Dr. Peter (St. Gallen), Haes, Dr. Joachim (HCC Lab), Hermann, Dr. Ulrich (Medical Tribune)

Funding Institution: Pfizer; GlaxoSmithKline; MSD

Duration: January 2005 – March 2006

**Health Literacy – a review of current research issues**

**Short description**

This project involved a literature review on health literacy as well as an overview about important institutions working in this field.

People: Daniela Maag, Prof. Dr. Kent Nakamoto

Funding institution: Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz

Duration: January 2005 – April 2005
Tailoring Health Messages – Conference Monte Verità 2005

Short description
The conference provided a unique interdisciplinary forum to address the development of tailored health messages by bringing together key scholars from different disciplines. The conference created a comprehensive investigation of tailored health messages, with a strong focus both on the empirical and theoretical aspect concerning their creation, delivery and evaluation.

People: Dr. Sara Rubinelli, Dr. Joachim Haes, Prof. Dr. David Brinberg
Funding institution: Centro Franscini (Swiss National Science Foundation)
Duration: September 2005

DIFU (“Divieto di fumare”)

Short description
In the past few years, as European countries have become more aware of the problem of tobacco, the discussion of the topic has intensified on a national and international level. Ireland and Italy have already passed very restrictive non-smoking laws and Ticino, perhaps due to its geographic location, has been the first canton to insist on a ban on smoking. Our research monitors changes in public opinion with respect to the introduction of the absolute non-smoking law in public buildings in Ticino. The monitoring of three distinct panel studies – Ticino population (1000), Ticino hotel and restaurant employees (150) and tourists (500) – was funded by the Swiss Federal Office for Public Health (BAG) and has lasted two years.

People: Maddalena Fiordelli, Carmen Faustinelli, Dr. Uwe Hartung, Cristina Furrer, Prof. Dr. Giuseppe Arbia
Funding institution: Tabakpräventionsfonds, Bundesamt für Gesundheit (Swiss Federal Office for Public Health).
Duration: June 2005 – September 2007

DIFU II (“Divieto di fumare”)

Short description
Within the panel study of the introduction of the smoking ban in Ticino have been conducted two additional waves testing the long term effect on public opinion.

People: Maddalena Fiordelli, Carmen Faustinelli, Dr. Uwe Hartung, Prof. Dr. Giuseppe Arbia
Funding institution: Tabakpräventionsfonds, Bundesamt für Gesundheit (Swiss Federal Office for Public Health).
Duration: October 2006 – September 2007
HELEN ("Health Literacy in the area of nutrition – physical exercises – weight")

Short description

This project studies health literacy in Switzerland with respect to nutrition, physical exercises, and weight. From advertising for diet programs, exercise videos and equipment, and nutritional supplements to health promotion and social marketing campaigns launched by nonprofit and government organizations, people are inundated with information related to health and wellness. How do people cope with this avalanche of information, particularly in the before mentioned area? On a basis of one hundred qualitative interviews in the three main linguistic areas of Switzerland we elaborate standards for measuring health literacy in the Swiss population in order to provide indications on how to enhance health literacy by communicative strategies.

People: Daniela Maag, Simona Waldburger, Dr. Uwe Hartung

Funding institution: Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz

Duration: June 2005 – June 2006

PANDORA ("Doctor-patient relationships in the information age")

Short description

This project seeks to examine the ways in which patients identify information, whether they present that information to their physicians, how they value the information presented by physicians and, ultimately, how these various processes shape their behaviour. The research described in this application is intended as a preliminary exploratory project that will provide a basis for a large-scale quantitative survey study to cover similar questions which, in turn, will provide critical information for any future intervention regarding patient's use of information sources.

People: Dr. Maria Caiata, Maria Regina Setola, Prof. Dr. Thomas Abel, Andrea Jaeggi, Katrin Sommerhalder, Prof. Dr. Peter Twohig, Canada Research Chair, c/o Gorsebrook Research Institute, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Ca.

Funding institution: Swiss National Science Foundation, Division I.

Duration: October 2005 – November 2007

ONESELF I + II ("Using On-Line Strategies to Enhance Information and Social Support for Self-Management of Chronic Low Back Pain")

Short description

The project focuses on the effectiveness of the internet both as a source of information on low back pain (cLBP), and as way to enhance patients’ self management of the disease. The project has three main purposes: 1. To assess the factors that influence self-management in the field of cLPB; 2. To elicit and compare patients’ and health care providers’ current perceptions of the management of cLBP; 3. To verify the efficacy of an online platform in informing, supporting and generally improving the health status of a group of 20 patients from Tessin affected by cLBP.

People: Dr. Sara Rubinelli, Dr. Maria Caiata, Dr. med. Guido Mariotti, Fausto Vago, Maria Regina Setola, Lega ticinese per la Lotta contro il Reumatismo, Associazione dei Reumatologi Ticinesi.
Markets for Health Information

Short description

Western societies spend more and more on health. In the US alone health spending climbed from 13% of GDP in 1997 to 14.6% in 2002 equaling USD 5267 per capita (OECD 2004). While most is spent directly for diagnosis and treatment of illness, health education and information is becoming more and more popular as a field for inquiry and as a market. "Selling health information", which used to be associated with doctors or pharmacies selling patient data to drug companies for marketing purposes, now denotes a growing media market that has rarely been examined scientifically. From a media perspective, health information is everything from ads, flyers, books and TV shows to the Internet. All this content has to be created, maintained and distributed appropriately. The bills are shouldered by consumers, private companies, and the government. The project aimed at identifying actors on this market and their interests and proposed market segmentation. In addition we identified the demand for regulation and isolated underserved markets offering room for entrepreneurial activities and established players alike.

People: Dr. Joachim Haes, Prof. Eli Noam of the Columbia Institute for Tele-Information at Columbia University, New York

Funding Institution: Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF PI0I1-107346 /1)

Duration: October 2004 – March 2005

HOSPITALITAS (“Healthcare Online Shared Platform for Increasing Tessin And Lombardy Immigrants’ Treatment and Assistance”)

Short description

Within this project an online platform for continuing education towards healthcare assistance to patients who are immigrants from developing countries had been developed. The platform is addressed to the healthcare personnel working in the cross-border areas of Tessin and Lombardy. Furthermore, the project developed online courses dealing with biometric, epidemiologic, therapeutic, and linguistic issues concerning the doctor-patient interaction,, issues concerning the psychology of communication, medical anthropology and intercultural communication, demographic issues, and legal issues.

People: Dr. Lorenzo Cantoni, Dr. Stefano Tardini


Duration: January 2003 – December 2005

RADO (“Raising Awareness of Organ Donation”)

Short description

Improvements in transplant medicine have transformed transplantation from the experimental stage to being the therapy of choice for patients with organ failure. Consequently, there is a growing gap between the
number of patients needing a transplant and those receiving one. Partly this development is due to the general populations’ lack of awareness of organ transplantation. Publicity campaigns have an important role to play in raising awareness of the need for more organ donors. However, such campaigns require better insight into the informational needs of people faced with the option of donation.

People: Dr. Joachim Haes, Angelo Tomada, Carmen Faustinelli, Prof. Dr. Kent Nakamoto, Dr. Uwe Hartung, Prof. Dr. David Brinberg, Dr. Malacrida, Prof. Dr. Marco Borghi.
Funding institution: Swiss National Science Foundation, NRP 46 "Implants and Transplants"
Duration: January 2003-October 2006

**FACET - Farmacisti-clienti Ticino**

Short description

The project aims at identifying new strategies and ways to develop a long term relationship between the pharmacist and his clients, including more primary health care services and information. Objectives of the project are a Baseline study in Tessin and the development of tailored health information campaigns in pharmacies. As demands for quality health care increase in the future, the role of the pharmacist as a primary health-care provider will become more essential. He could become a primary health care provider, improving patients’ knowledge and proficiency towards health issues.

People: Chiara Maniscalco, David Brinberg
Funding institution: Ordine dei farmacisti del canton Ticino (OFCT)
Duration: November 2003 - July 2006

**JUSA ("Towards a judicious use of antibiotics by doctors and patients")**

Short description

It is generally acknowledged that the rising resistance to antibiotics is due partly to the overuse of antibiotics by doctors and patients. The project aims to determine the prerequisites for appropriate use of antibiotics. The investigation focuses primarily on the complex interactions among physicians, patients, and information sources.

People: Benedetta Waldburger, Barbara Osimani, Sarah Bigi, Dr. Uwe Hartung, Prof. Dr. David Brinberg
Funding institution: Swiss National Science Foundation, NRP 49 “Antibiotic Resistance”
Duration: May 2002 – October 2006
3. Instructional programs and initiatives

3.1 Master Degree in Communication Management and Health

The University of Lugano (USI) and Virginia Tech (VT) in fall 2009 will start offering a new dual Master degree in Communication Management and Health (MCMH) which conveys the knowledge and skills necessary to appreciate the complexity of the health sector and meet the challenges that arise in it. MCMH combines theoretical and practical knowledge and creates a solid link between concepts and their use in business by illustrating how theory can inform business analysis and decisions. It offers the unique opportunity to acquire a focused and in-depth set of knowledge and skills related to the health sector, analytical skills and a broad understanding of how business and marketing functions operate.

MCMH students benefit from studying in two international settings and becoming acquainted with two different cultures. MCMH students are taught at the University of Lugano (USI) and at Virginia Tech (VT). Lugano is located in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, a privileged geographic position at the crossroads between Northern and Southern European cultures. USI offers a professional, friendly, and personal learning environment as well as a highly innovative research spectrum. Virginia Tech (VT), situated on the east cost of the USA, is a comprehensive, innovative research university. The marketing department has been ranked in the nation’s top 20 marketing departments in research productivity.

Graduates will be awarded two Master of Science (MSc) degrees
– a VT MSc in Business with a specialization in Marketing and
– a USI MSc in Communication, Management and Health

In order to acquire the Masters degree in Communication, Management and Health students are required to complete at least 120 ECTS enrolling for a minimum of 4 semesters.

The first and third semester will take place at the University of Lugano and have a focus on health communication and management; the second semester will take place at the Virginia Tech University and will provide an overview in marketing methods. The last semester will be dedicated to writing the master thesis which can be done at the University of Lugano or at the Virginia Tech, depending on the choice of the student and the supervisor. In addition students will take a course focusing on practical examples from the health sector.

3.2 National and International Collaboration

In the past few years we have been cultivating our relationship with other Universities and Institutions. The collaboration with the Marketing Department at Virginia Tech University has been especially beneficial. Along with multiple research projects which we are currently working on with Kent Nakamoto, we have established a shared masters program with the University in Communication, Management and Health. In
addition to this program we are also fostering collaboration with multiple European Institutions, namely the University College London (Institute of Human Genetics and Health), the Health Communications Center at Cardiff University as well as the Communication Department at the University of Munich (LMU). Other ongoing collaboration include among others the Gorsebook Research Institute at Saint Mary’s University, Halifax, Ca. the Research Centre at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Brescia, the semantics and pragmatics research group, Neuchatel and the Health Communication Centre at the University of Nottingham.

4.1 Journals


Schulz, Peter J., Rubinelli S., Mariotti G., Keller N. (2009), Meeting patients’ demand for information on low back pain. Conceptual design and rationale of the interactive website ONESELF. Journal of Disability and Rehabilitation (accepted).


4.2 Refereed conference papers and proceedings


Diviani N., Schulz P. J., Hartung U. (2009). What should we include in a concept of Cancer Literacy? A Delphi study among experts in the oncology field. COMET(Communication, Medicine & Ethics), Cardiff 2009.


Fiordelli M., Schulz P. J. (2009) Argumentative effects of Ticino smoking ban on Swiss newspapers’ coverage. *CONDITION CRITICAL Health care, marketising reforms and the media*. Coventry University, UK.


Rubinelli, S. et al. (2008) “Rhetoric in interpersonal and mass media health communication” (Full Symposium), *International Conference on Communication in Healthcare* (EACH), Oslo, NO


Rubinelli, S. et al. (2008) ( “A content-analysis of websites selling prescription-only drugs”, *Communication, Medicine and Ethics* (COMET), Cape Town, ZA


Faustinelli, Carmen, Maddalena Fiordelli, Peter J. Schulz & Uwe Hartung. Inquiring values of the population about the opinion on smoking ban. Paper presented to the COMET Conference (Communication, Medicine & Ethics), Lugano, June 28-30, 2007.


Faustinelli C., Fiordelli M., Schulz P. J., Hartung U. (2007). Investigate population values concerning smoking ban. COMET (Communication, Medicine & Ethics). Lugano, CH.

Maniscalco, C. (2007), Risk communication in the area of non-ionizing radiation, COMET (Communication, Medicine & Ethics). Lugano, CH.


Boneschi M., Camerini L., Giacobazzi M. (2007). Automatic support to health information coding process. Poster COMET (Communication, Medicine & Ethics), Lugano.


Caiata Zufferey, M. (2006), Comment sort-on de la drogue quand ce n’est pas clair ce qu’est une drogue?, *Journée de formation de la Fondation Phénix*, Genève, 16.5.2006


Fiordelli M., Toti B., Schulz P.J., Hartung U. (2006), Shifting between freedom and regulation: public opinion concerning smoking ban in Tessin. *COMET (Communication, Medicine & Ethics)*. Cardiff, GB.


Schulz, P.J. & Sara Rubinelli (2006): Giving reasons while advising; involving patients through argumentative moves. *International Conference on Communication in Healthcare (EACH)*, Basel, CH.


4.3 Books & book chapters


Caiata Zufferey M. (2006), De la toxicomanie à la conventionalité. Sociologie des sorties de la drogue à l’époque de la réduction des risques, Zürich, Éditions Seismo


4.4 Reports & Working Papers


Hartung Uwe, Schulz Peter J., Ehmg Simone, Faustinelli Carmen und Keller Simone (2007):


5. Researchers

5.1 Researchers at the ICH

Marco Bardus is a doctoral student. He is involved in the project “Tailoring Physical activity communication: A test of the theory of planned behavior and persuasive communication strategies”. Marco.Bardus@lu.unisi.ch

Marco Boneschi is a research assistant and technologist at the institute of Communication and health. He is actually employed in the management and technological development of the Oneself project, a web based platform for self management of patient affected by chronic rheumatic diseases.

Maria Caiata Zufferey (Senior Researcher). Maria Caiata Zufferey holds a PhD in sociology. Her main research focuses on qualitative methods. She is currently working on the relationship between doctor and patient in the information age, as well on the design and evaluation of web-sites and virtual communities for enhancing self-management of chronic diseases. Maria.Caiata.Zufferey@lu.unisi.ch

Luca Camerini is a doctoral student working on the project ONESELF, an eHealth tool to enhance self-management of chronically-ill patients. Alongside this research activity, I am involved in assisting the teaching of the course of Semiotic Theories and Models of Communication, held by Prof. Peter J. Schulz. Luca.Camerini@lu.unisi.ch

Sara Corbino is a Master student working in the Institute of Communication and Health. Sara.Corbino@lu.unisi.ch

Nicola Diviani is a doctoral student working on the project “Cancer and health literacy: establishing a concept of cancer literacy”. Nicola.Diviani@lu.unisi.ch

Anke Dunkel is a doctoral student at the Institute of Communication and Health and scientific collaborator at the Center for Applied Research in Communication and Health (ARCHE). She is currently working on two projects: “Raising Awareness of Organ Donation (RADO II and PONDO)” and “Evaluation of the Kidz-Box project in collaboration with Health Promotion Switzerland and the health department of the canton Zug”. Anke.Dunkel@lu.unisi.ch

Simone Ehmg is the Director of ARCHE – Center for Applied Research in Communication and Health. She holds her PhD in 2000 at the University of Mainz. Her research interests are Journalism Research, Political Communication, Risk and Health Communication, Methodology. Simone.ehmg@lu.unisi.ch

Carmen Faustinelli is a doctoral student. She is involved in the project DIFU, investigating public opinion about the smoking ban in Ticino. Carmen.Faustinelli@lu.unisi.ch

Maddalena Fiordelli got her PhD in Communication Sciences in March 2009. Her PhD topic was a methodological reflection on quantitative and qualitative methods for the study of a public health issue (smoking ban) in Swiss newspapers. Her research is now focused on qualitative methods. Maddalena.Fiordelli@lu.unisi.ch

Anne-Linda Frisch is a doctoral student at the Institute of Communication and Health and scientific collaborator at the Center for Applied Research in Communication and Health. She is currently working on the projects: “Evaluation of a poster campaign by Health Promotion Switzerland focusing on the importance of healthy eating and physical activity”, “Evaluation of “rundum fit” – a cantonal program by Health Promotion Switzerland focusing on nutrition and physical activity of children in primary schools in the canton of Luzern”, “Analysis of the health literacy of children, parents and education and health providers in the canton of Luzern regarding healthy eating and physical activity”. Anne.Linda.Frisch@lu.unisi.ch

Cristina Furrer is a doctoral student. Her research is about the framing of dominant obesity discourses in the media. Cristina.Furrer@lu.unisi.ch

Nadia Galli is the Administrative manager of the Institute of Communication and Health, coordinator of the Master of Science in Communication, Management and Health and Scientific collaborator for ARCHE. Nadia.Galli@lu.unisi.ch
Michele Giacobazzi is a research assistant and maintains and updates the institute websites and works on the technical aspects of the web application ONESELF. Michele.gacobazzi@lu.unisi.ch

Uwe Hartung (Senior researcher). His research focuses on public opinion and media content. Besides the HCC Lab, Uwe Hartung is affiliated with the Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, Germany, and the Institut für Kommunikationswissenschaft of Technische Universität Dresden, Germany. He mainly works for the editorial office of the "International Journal of Public Opinion Research". Uwe.Hartung@lu.unisi.ch

Hola Himmat. Is a student assistant working on the DTCA project (Direct to Consumer Advertising), coding, reorganizing data, analyzing. Hola.Himmat@lu.unisi.ch

Simone Keller is a doctoral student working on the project SCIRA. Her PHD Thesis is about “The impact of the Swiss Cultural microdiversity in the area of health communication: The example of Non Ionising Radiation”. Main interests are Risk Communication and Health. Simone.Keller@lu.unisi.ch

Joel Lehmann is a research assistant and a doctoral student working on the project “Tailoring Physical activity communication: A test of the theory of planned behavior and persuasive communication strategies.”

Janine Lenaes is a scientific collaborator working on some projects funded by Promozione Salute Svizzera. Janine.Lenaes@lu.unisi.ch

Chiara Maniscalco holds her PhD in Communication Sciences from the University of Lugano. Her research interests are in the area of pharmacists-clients relationship as well as in the area of knowledge translation between doctors and patient, and risk communication. Chiara.Maniscalco@lu.unisi.ch

Silvia Rinaldi is a doctoral student. Her project is on decision making strategies in the context of eating disorders with a focus on anorexia nervosa. Silvia.Rinaldi@lu.unisi.ch

Sara Rubinelli (Senior Researcher) is Co-ordinator of the ICH. She holds a PhD from the University of Leeds (UK) in the areas of rhetoric and argumentation theory. She collaborates at national and international research projects in the fields of argumentation and health, direct-to-consumer advertising, communication skills in medical curricula and tailoring health messages through new technologies. Sara.Rubinelli@lu.unisi.ch

Michel Schneider is a doctoral student working on the project “Health Promotion Switzerland – Media Monitoring”. Michel.schneider@lu.unisi.ch

Peter J. Schulz is Professor and Director of the Institute of Communication and Health. His research interests are in knowledge translation in health. Peter.Schulz@lu.unisi.ch

Suzanne Suggs is Assistant Professor at the University of Lugano. Her research interest are in social marketing and tailoring health messages. Suzanne.suggs@lu.unisi.ch

Angelo Tomada. From 2003 he is research assistant at the University of Lugano in the area of Health Communication. In April 2009 he obtained a PhD with a dissertation about the role of communication in the field of organ donation. As post-doc, he is currently involved in projects concerning health policies. Angelo.Tomada@lu.unisi.ch

5.2 Associate Researchers of ICH

Gianfranco Domenighetti is a Professor of Health Economics and director of the Sezione Sanitaria del dipartimento della Sanità e della Socialità del Cantone Ticino. He collaborates on the project ECHO. Gianfranco.Domenighetti@lu.unisi.ch

Umberto Gelatti is a Professor of Epidemiology at the Medical School of the university Brescia, Italy. gelatti@med.unibs.it

James Jaccard is a Professor of Psychology at the Florida International University Park, Miami. jaccardj@fiu.edu

Wolf Langewitz is a professor of Internal Medicine and Division Chief for Psychosomatic Medicine at the University of Basel, College of Medicine, Switzerland. wlangewitz@uhbs.ch
James Mackay is a researcher at the Institute of Human Genetics and Health, University College London, he collaborates with the HCC Lab on the project OPERA. J.Mackay@ich.ucl.ac.uk $ 

Bert Meuffels is senior lecturer in the Department of Speech Communication, Argumentation Theory and Rhetoric in the University of Amsterdam. H.L.M.Meuffels@uva.nl 

Kent Nakamoto is a Professor and the head of the Marketing Department at Virginia Tech University. His research interests are in Risk communication and Marketing Research. Kent.Nakamoto@lu.unisi.ch 

Bertino Somaini is director of Health Promotion Switzerland, a national foundation cooperating with and financing health promotion projects all over Switzerland. bertino.somaini@promotionsante.ch 

Louis de Saussure is a Professor of Linguistics at the university of Neuchatel. He collaborates with the HCC Lab on a project in the area of Direct-to-Consumer-Advertising. louis.desaussure@unine.ch 

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Paul Crawford is Professor in Mental Health at the University of Nottingham. paul.crawford@nottingham.ac.uk