

SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION FOR A GLOBALIZED AWARENESS ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH RISKS AND POLICIES: DEVELOPING NECOBELAC NETWORK TO PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

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Background and Aims: An increasing burden of environmental risks is affecting population's health worldwide. Scientific evidence on health effects of hazardous exposures and local knowledge of public health issues do not necessarily meet to address mitigation policies. Economic and cultural barriers limit access to research results globally and the widest diffusion of health information for promoting a shared awareness and empowerment for healthy working and living environments. NECOBELAC is an ongoing collaboration network of European and Latin American-Caribbean (LAC) countries to spread know-how in scientific writing and to provide the best tools for exploiting open access information for public health. We propose to implement the NECOBELAC network to face specific environmental health issues through a well-established and high-impact training and dissemination methodology.

Methods: NECOBELAC training methodology relies on two training levels: training for trainers and training at local level. To maximize the training impact a core group of European and LAC institutions performed courses for trainers; these trainers replicate training activities at local level utilizing NECOBELAC online contents addressing local needs and priorities.

Results: NECOBELAC mid-term results are corroborated by the effectiveness of the adopted training methodology. Training for trainers were performed in Europe (Italy, Spain) and Latin America (Brazil, Colombia) for a total of 120 participants who are performing numerous training activities at local level in their countries. In this framework, scientific collaborations are developed among institutions of involved countries operating in public health, such as the national health Institutes in Italy and Colombia that collaborate on environmental health issues (asbestos, hazardous waste disposal, polluted sites).

Conclusions: The existence of the NECOBELAC network and the excellent achieved results encourage and motivate this implementation plan. The environmental health issues selected within by this Italian-Colombian cooperation rely on both matured experiences on public health and currently scientific debates and are of broad impact for society.