

WORLD HEART DAY 2013

On the occasion of the #worldheartday 2013, read about two ERC newly awarded projects. One of them seeks to understand the impact of urban environment on the health of Madrid inhabitants whereas the second one explores the possibilities offered by research on zebrafish capacity to regenerate heart tissues to treat myocardial infarctions.

A multifaceted approach to cardiovascular diseases in European Cities

Cardiovascular (CV) diseases are the first cause of death in the EU. Given the treatment costs and the high prevalence of risk factors (smoking, physical inactivity, diabetes and hypertension), they account for the largest social and economic burden amongst all diseases. ERC grantee Manuel Franco proposes to measure the food, physical activity, alcohol and tobacco environments of 90 neighbourhoods in Madrid, a city with similar historical and demographic profile as many other European cities, and to correlate the results with cardiovascular primary care health records. A pilot study has already measured the characteristics of the urban areas; the 'Heart Healthy Hoods' project will be able to assess factors such as the location and accessibility of fast food restaurants or green spaces in relation to cardiovascular risk. By combining a rigorous epidemiological design with a social science perspective, the research team hopes to offer a complete portrait of the CV health of a sample of around 2.2 million inhabitants and to also compare it with the situation in the US.

ERC grantee: Manuel Franco

Host institution: University of Alcala, Spain

ERC project: Social and Physical Urban Environment and Cardiovascular Health: The Much Needed Population Approach (HEARTHEALTHYHOODS)

ERC call: ERC Starting grant 2013

ERC funding: €1.5 million for five years



Pilot Study of the Heart Healthy Hoods Project in the neighbourhood of Ciudad Lineal, Madrid

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Photo 1: "Las Ventas" Food Market

Photo 2: "El Calero" Park.

Map A: Location of food stores and its related Healthy Food Availability Index and Primary Health Care Center.

Map B: Tobacco points of sale