

New Research Challenges in the Area of Infectious Diseases

Dr Marc Sprenger, Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), spoke about the new research challenges in the area of infectious diseases at the Shanghai Expo seminar on Research for Healthy Life.

Sprenger stressed that the public health research agenda needs to be wider than just bio-medical research. Research must focus on:

- How infectious diseases are spread;
- The effectiveness of interventions to prevent infection; and
- How to motivate people to take the steps to protect themselves from being infected.

In order to achieve this Sprenger believes that more interdisciplinary research projects are needed and behavioural sciences, especially health communication science, should be integrated into public health research.

He also stressed that one of the biggest challenges in public health is "understanding how to motivate people to adopt healthy behaviours". Indeed, he went on to state that, "public health officials in Europe... need to understand why our advice is so often ignored by the public. We need to design new, more effective ways to communicate." This requires multidisciplinary research.

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