

## About the project financing

Equity-LA II is financed by the European Commission as a collaborative project for the Specific International Cooperation Action (SICA) of the 7th Framework Programme (FP7): Cooperation and Health.

Equity-LA II belongs to the work programme HEALTH.2012.3.4-1 which addresses the following topic: Research on health systems and services in low- and middle-income countries (small or medium-scale focused research project).

## About the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)

The broad objectives of FP7 of the European Commission have been grouped into four areas: Cooperation, Ideas, People and Capacities. Specific programmes are assigned to each area, and which correspond to the main research strategies of the European Commission.

For more information visit: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7>

## How to get more information about the project?

We invite you to learn more about Equity-LA II and its results by visiting our website or contacting us:

[www.equity-la.eu](http://www.equity-la.eu)  
[equity2@consorci.org](mailto:equity2@consorci.org)

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## Participants of Equity-LA II

The project is coordinated by the Consorci de Salut i Social de Catalunya and its Health Policy Research Unit (SEPPS)



and counts with the participation of the following institutions:

Prince Leopold Instituut Voor Tropische Geneeskunde (Belgium)



Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario (Colombia)



Instituto de Medicina Integral Prof. Fernando Figueira (Brazil)



Universidade de Pernambuco (Brazil)



Universidad de Chile (Chile)



Universidad Veracruzana (Mexico)



Universidad Nacional de Rosario (Argentina)



Universidad de la República (Uruguay)



**The impact of care integration strategies on health care network's performance in Latin American**



[www.equity-la.eu](http://www.equity-la.eu)

## What is the Equity-LA II project?

**Equity-LA II** is a research project whose objective is to evaluate the effectiveness of different care integration strategies in improving coordination and quality of care in Health Care Networks (HCN) in Latin America.

**Equity-LA II** builds upon the results of Equity-LA ([www.equity-la.eu](http://www.equity-la.eu)), which explored access to the care continuum and care coordination in IHN in Colombia and Brazil. Equity-LA II incorporates four additional countries with different types of health care systems: Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay.

## Why is this research important?

Lack of care coordination across different levels of care is considered to be one of the main obstacles to attain effective health care outcomes in Latin America. Consequences are a decrease in quality of care, duplications and an inadequate use of health services.

In response to these challenges, the introduction of IHN has been widely promoted by governments and international organizations. Evidence of their impact, however, is still lacking and important difficulties in IHN policy implementation have been found. The challenge is therefore to provide evidence on best practices for improving care coordination that could be translated into effective policies for varied socioeconomic contexts and different health systems.

### *What is an integrated health care network (IHN)?*

It is a network of organisations that provides or arranges to provide a coordinated continuum of services to a defined population and is willing to be held clinically and fiscally accountable for the health status and outcomes of the population served.

## What are the objectives of Equity-LA II?

- ★ To analyse the HCN performance with respect to coordination and quality of care and associated factors in each particular context
- ★ To design, implement and benchmark a set of organisational interventions aimed at improving care coordination and quality, with a focus on health workers and chronic care management
- ★ To test the effectiveness and limitations of the various interventions in improving coordination and quality of care and to identify the factors that determine their applicability in different contexts
- ★ To develop tools that translate evidence on best practice of care integration into innovative and effective policies for a better organisation of HCN in Latin America

## How is the project carried out?

**Equity-LA II** adopts an innovative action-research approach with a quasi-experimental design for the evaluation of complex interventions in HCN. The research consists of four phases (August 2013 – July 2018):

**Phase 1.** Base-line study on HCN performance in the six Latin-American countries using qualitative and quantitative research methods

**Phase 2.** Design and implementation of interventions in one HCN in each country to improve coordination and quality of care, and based upon the results of the base-line study

**Phase 3.** Evaluation of the efficacy and limitations of the interventions, as well as associated contextual factors

**Phase 4.** Cross-country comparative analysis

A national steering committee will be set up in each country consisting of health professionals, users, managers, local policy makers and researchers and will be in charge of the design and the implementation of the interventions.

## How will the project contribute to the current knowledge?

- ★ generate evidence for the formulation of policies that improve care integration in the Latin American countries
- ★ strengthen research capacity of all involved institutions to generate and share knowledge on care integration in their respective country
- ★ contribute to enhance health professionals' skills and motivation by means of specific training programmes that aim to improve coordination and quality of care

## How will the research results be disseminated?

From the very beginning on special attention will be paid to the dissemination of the results by means of:

- ★ Organization of round tables, workshops and seminars with the participation of health care users, managers, policy makers and researchers
- ★ Dissemination in relevant organizations of the participating countries and international agencies (academia, governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society, etc.)
- ★ Participation at conferences and elaboration and technical reports and scientific open-access articles
- ★ Integration of the results in the health professionals' development by means of in-service training

## About the ethical aspects of the project

**Equity-LA II** is carried out with full adherence to current EU legislation, international conventions and regulations on research ethics, data protection and professional codes of conduct of each of the involved country.