

## **Evidence Aid meets for the first time in Oxford: health care research to improve outcomes after disasters**

A tragic reality of our world is that disasters will continue to strike, affecting more and more people, causing more and more pain, suffering and death. So far this year we have seen the Japanese earthquake and tsunami, a return of the floods in Pakistan and several hurricanes and typhoons. On September 26, in the first conference of its kind, senior people from a wide range of organisations involved in disaster risk reduction, planning and response will gather in Oxford, to meet with researchers who prepare and maintain systematic reviews, publishers who publish this research, and practitioners and academics with expertise in evidence based health care and decision making. They will discuss how to harness the power of evidence to reduce the impact of natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies; to improve outcomes for affected people and their communities. This is part of Evidence Aid, an international initiative which arose within The Cochrane Collaboration following the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004 as a means of highlighting the findings of relevant Cochrane systematic reviews. Evidence Aid is now expanding, working with new partners and tackling a broader area.

The inaugural Evidence Aid Conference at St Hugh's College has been organised in partnership with the Centre for Evidence Based Medicine at the University of Oxford. More than 60 delegates will attend, including representatives from the Belgian Red Cross, Centre for Disease Control (USA), The Cochrane Collaboration, Department for International Development (UK), International Committee for Red Cross, Lancet, Médecins Sans Frontières, OXFAM, Research4Life, Save the Children, UNHCR and WHO. And, in a effort to facilitate communication and subsequent discussions, sessions from the Conference will be broadcast live on the internet.

Professor Mike Clarke, from Queen's University Belfast, one of the founders of Evidence Aid said "We need to make it easier for people making difficult decisions to find and use reliable evidence on what works, doesn't work and is unproven. Evidence Aid will do this". Dr Carl Hengehan, Director of the Centre for Evidence Based Medicine at the University of Oxford, added "We are delighted to be working with Evidence Aid to overcome the challenges to getting evidence into practice in disasters. It can make a difference to the lives of tens of millions of people around the world".

Key sessions from the Conference will be broadcast on the internet from 10am on September 26, and can be watched live at

<http://oxforddigital.tv/streaming/evidence11.htm>