

# The International Primary Care Research Training Curriculum



## Introduction

In many countries family doctors have an increasingly important role as gatekeepers in the healthcare system. It is more and more appreciated that effective family medicine is crucial to control healthcare costs in societies that are being challenged by chronic diseases and an ageing population. Despite the fact that primary care is being recognized, limited healthcare budgets constantly force primary care to prove its relevance and effectiveness. Where evidence based medicine previously

could be considered a 'good thing', nowadays it is more and more a must. National and local policy makers urge healthcare organizations to provide evidence for the things they do. However, healthcare professionals are usually not specifically trained to set up evaluations, to manage and analyze databases, and to write scientific papers. The International Primary Care Research Training Curriculum guides (primary) healthcare professionals to perform evaluations in their own setting.

[www.familymedicinemaastricht.nl](http://www.familymedicinemaastricht.nl)

geertjan.dinant@maastrichtuniversity.nl | karin.aretz@maastrichtuniversity.nl

## Background

The International Primary Care Research Training Curriculum was launched in 1993, as a joint initiative of the Departments of Family Medicine of the universities of Maastricht (The Netherlands), Leuven, Antwerp and Ghent (Flanders - Belgium). More recently, the universities of Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Rostock (initially Düsseldorf) and Marburg (Germany), and Brussels (Belgium) joined. Over the years, a large number of (junior) researchers from all over Europe, successfully participated in the different modules. Many participants stayed actively, mostly part-time, involved in research relevant for their (clinical) domain. Some of them even became (an associate) professor. The teaching staff members are mostly primary care clinicians and are all involved in teaching and research at an international level for many years.



## Curriculum structure

The curriculum consists of a two year program. Year 1 (Start class) includes one full course week. Year 2 (Advanced course) is also one full course week.

## Objectives of the curriculum

### The Start class participant knows

- how to select a relevant research topic
- how to formulate a problem definition and a research question
- how to search for and critically appraise relevant literature
- the fundamentals of qualitative and quantitative research
- how to select the proper research design and outcome measures
- how to perform interviews and an observational study
- how to deal with reliability, validity, bias and confounding
- how to apply basis statistics using SPSS
- how to write an abstract and give an oral presentation to an audience

## Course leaders

- Professor Geert-Jan Dinant
- Professor Paul van Royen
- Professor Norbert Donner-Banzhoff
- Assistant Professor Eric Moll van Charante
- Professor Attila Altiner
- Professor Samuel Coenen

Maastricht University, The Netherlands  
University of Antwerp, Belgium  
University of Marburg, Germany  
University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
University of Rostock, Germany  
University of Antwerp, Belgium



## Aims of the training

To learn, understand and obtain skills to perform original scientific research in primary care, in particular Family Medicine while supervised. On top of that, to analyze and to report this research in a peer reviewed journal.

## Target groups

**Start class (year 1):** Family Doctors, Family Physicians and Primary Health care workers interested in learning basic skills for performing small scale research relevant for their (clinical) work.

**Advanced course (year 2):** those who successfully passed (an equivalent of) year 1 and wish to proceed to larger research projects, including PhD studies.

## The Advanced course participant knows

- how to do a systematic review
- how to set up diagnostic and prognostic research
- how to set up cost-effectiveness research
- how to set up an intervention study
- how to use mixed, complex and exotic designs
- how to apply randomization and blinding
- how to deal with power and to do a sample size calculation
- how to collect and manage data
- how to perform focus group research
- how to analyze qualitative research data
- how to do multivariate and multi-level analyses
- how to deal with ethical issues and committees
- how to write and submit a full manuscript
- how to become a journal reviewer

- how to set up a journal club
- how to construct a research network
- how to apply for research funding

*Course language: English*

## Course manager

Mrs. Karin Aretz ([karin.aretz@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:karin.aretz@maastrichtuniversity.nl)), MSc, Department of Family Medicine, Maastricht University, The Netherlands is the central course manager, assisted by a local course manager per site.

## Course fee

Both the Start class (year 1) as the advanced course (year 2) costs €1000 each (accommodation not included)

## Method

Lectures and problem-based learning are the teaching methods. Participants provide input with the research project they are currently working on (Advanced course) or have in mind to start with (Start class). Every participant leaves the course (Start class and Advanced course) with a plan for further elaboration on his/her research project. It is expected that participants find further supervision in their own setting. During the course, participants are challenged to identify and bring in problems and challenges they face with regard to their research project, and discuss these in small tutorial groups. In addition, the course leaders are available for individual consultations on the research projects. Every course is completed with live presentations by all participants of their scientific work.

## Accreditation

- For Family Doctors in The Netherlands, the *NHG Kaderopleiding Wetenschappelijk onderzoek* is accredited for 40 hours per year.
- In Belgium the research course can be part of the doctoral study program.

## Courses on demand and tailor made

On demand our courses can be adjusted to (local) wishes and given anywhere else inside or outside Europe.

[www.familymedicinemaastricht.nl](http://www.familymedicinemaastricht.nl)