Risk Factor Surveillance to Support Health Promotion and Public Health Action: Present and Future Challenges

STEFANO CAMPOSTRINI
Professor of Social Statistics and Dean of the Graduate School, Ca' Foscari of Venice (Italy). Chair of the World Alliance for Risk Factor Surveillance (WARFS)

Risk factor surveillance has now been running for quite a few years in several countries. If the international experiences can allow to set clearly a role for surveillance in public health, and, more specifically, in supporting health promotion, several are still the challenges (present and future) to address.

Discussing few country cases, and particularly, given its peculiarities, the Italian PASSI surveillance system, this lecture will try to address how surveillance can be really useful and used to support decision making processes. Both theoretical and practical aspects will be discussed, starting from real examples, to detect potentialities and limitations.

Public health in general, but much more specifically health promotion today call for evidence. The capability to show the effectiveness of interventions and programs is today crucial for the development of health promotion in any country. Surveillance is potentially a great tool for this, but what are the conditions for which surveillance can really help? Is all in methodology? And then, is surveillance capable also of offering some answers to the big questions posed by social determinants and health inequalities? The lecture will not offer final answers to all these questions, still will try to discuss few possible ones.