



Context

The main objective of the I2sare project is to assist European, regional and local decision makers in developing their health policy, by informing them of the state of health of the populations in the regions of Europe. To achieve this objective, one of the main outcomes of the project will be to produce a health profile for each region of Europe (member states and candidate countries) and to create a typology (classification system) for the regions of Europe.

A 'health profile' can be defined as a short document giving a quick overview of the indicators available in a defined territory and allowing a better understanding of the health status of the population.

The steps to achieve the production of the health profiles are:

- A literature review on health profiles.
- To establish a model of health profile.
- To produce the health profiles for each region of Europe.
- To validate the health profiles with the help of correspondents in each country.

This report focus on the literature review of health profiles.

Objectives

To report on good practice on the production of 'health profiles'.

Task

To conduct a review of existing literature on the topic of health profiles studying experience in different countries and identifying 'good practice' examples of health profiles.

Methodology

The following tasks were conducted simultaneously:

- Identification, gathering, and reviewing reports and other relevant documents written on the subject of health profiles.
- Sources used should include reports of: international and other organizations, mainstream journals, papers, and/or other sources of written material. Monitoring reports, analytical overviews, thematic studies, are examples of what may be included.
- Searching websites and databases of the main international organizations working in the health field (including OECD, WHO) and include their resources in the review.

The I2sare correspondents in the different countries of the EU were requested to identify to the I2sare team examples of health profiles produced in their country.

At the same time, websites of the European institutions (DG Sanco, Eurostat...) and other international institutions (WHO, OECD...) were searched.

A search was conducted through the web. Three databases were used, PubMed¹, BDSP² and the National library for Public Health in England³. A search using Google was also conducted.

The following key words were used: 'health profile', 'health status', 'health policy' and 'health indicators'. When a too large number of references were given in return, the term "country" or 'region' was added.

The search was limited to the publications between 2000 and 2008.

The search results which were identified were also examined to identify other examples of reports or relevant methodological elements.

The analysis of the documents collected focused on the following issues:

- Methodology
- Health topics
- Type of indicators developed
- Type of framework chosen
- Geographical areas concerned

Definitions

It was not possible to find a definition of a 'health profile' or a 'health report'. Consequently, it was necessary to make proposals for a definition of these two terms, in order to manage the literature review. These definitions were validated by the group of leaders of the I2sare work packages.

A Health Profile is a short document providing a concise overview of the health situation of a territory through a short number of selected indicators covering different topics and allowing comparison at the regional, national and European level. Usually, health profiles are produced on the same format for a large number of territories at the same time. The health profiles are most often designed as tools for monitoring the situation in a territory in comparison with other territories.

A Health Report is a more comprehensive document giving a detailed view of the health situation in a specific territory or on a specific topic. Health reports can present qualitative and quantitative data. In the Health reports, there is more room for comments, interpretation and recommendations. The information is more detailed and, in the process the production of a health report, there is more in depth search of information. A health report can be linked to a specific target, a specific problem or a specific territory. There are often links with the local health policy and with potential public health interventions.

Limits

The search was limited to documents written in French, English, German and Spanish.

¹ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>

² Banque de données en santé publique: a public health library managed by the French High School of Public Health (EHESP) and focused on "grey" public health literature. <http://www.bdsp.ehesp.fr/Default.asp>

³ <http://www.library.nhs.uk/publichealth/>

Results

Methodological reports

No methodological report developed specifically on health profiles was identified by the literature review.

The reports which have been identified concern the development and production of health reports, comprehensive or specialized, on a specific topic and the methodologies of production of indicators: definition of the indicators, validity, calculation and presentation.

In this specific field, the reports of the previous Isare⁴ project and the report of the Eva-PHR⁵ project were identified. Another example is the methodology developed by the European observatory on Health systems and policies for the production of the 'Health in transition country profiles'. This methodology is described in a specific report of this observatory⁶.

A user guide is available for the English local health profiles⁷. This user guide gives information on the context and background of the health profiles and the indicators used.

On the definition and method of calculation of indicators, three references can be indicated (available on the web): Eurostat, WHO-HFA database and OECD database⁸.

Examples of health profiles

We received 4 responses from the I2sare correspondents. The searches conducted by the I2sare team allow identifying a total of 60 documents.

Most of the documents we gathered were not relevant to this review:

- health report rather than health profile,
- documents too long (over 20 pages),
- national documents rather than regional or local documents

It appears that:

- at national level, comprehensive health reports are more usually published than health profiles,
- health profiles seems to be produced more at the local level;
- health profiles are intended to inform local decision makers.

Most of the health profiles are produced only in the language of the country without translation into English or into another European language.

⁴ Health Indicators in the European Regions : ISARE Project. Final Report. September 2001. Fnors, Paris, France
Health Indicators in the European Regions : ISARE 2 Project. FINAL REPORT. June 2004. Fnors, Paris, France
Health Indicators in the European Regions : Project ISARE 3. Final Report. June 2007. Fnors, Paris, France
These reports are available on www.isare.org

⁵. Evaluation of National and Regional Public Health Reports (Eva PHR). Final Report to the European Commission. June 2003. LOEGD, Bielefeld, Germany.

This report is available on [www.eva-phr.nrw.de/1_pdf/Eva Final Report.pdf](http://www.eva-phr.nrw.de/1_pdf/Eva%20Final%20Report.pdf)

⁶ Mossialos E, Allin S, Figueras J (ed). Health Systems in Transition: Template for analysis. World Health Organization 2007, on behalf of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.

This report is available on <http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E88699.pdf>

⁷ User guide to health profiles 2008: about health profiles 2008. Association of Public Health Observatories (APHO). York, England

This report is available on <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=50198>

⁸ Eurostat : <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/>

WHO-HFA Database : <http://www.euro.who.int/HFADB>

OECD database : <http://www.oecd.org> > statistics > methodology and tools

From the analysis of the available documents, the main findings are as follows:

The main topics encountered are:

- socio demography and economy
- mortality
- health status and morbidity
- health determinants
- health care resources
- health policies

The types of indicators commonly used in these reports or profiles are mainly counts and ratios. For mortality, age standardized ratios are usually presented.

The data are usually presented for the latest available year. Different ways of presentation are used. Most often, tables or graphs are used to present the situation in the territory concerned by the report or profile in comparison with the situation of other regions of the country and the national average. More rarely, reference to the European average or the value of the indicators in other European countries is presented.

Maps are also often used to present the situation of a single indicator in comparison with the situation in the neighbouring regions.

When data are available for several years, graphs are used to present trends.

In some examples of profiles, specific techniques are used to highlight some results like traffic lights.

Usually there are no comments for each of the indicators presented and often a general summary is given to point out the main characteristics of the territory concerned by the profile.

As a summary, health profiles are usually presented using the following framework:

- a first page where a map allows the reader to locate the territory, elements are given to describe the general context (usually on the socio-demographic or political aspects) and the key points are highlighted;
- the next pages present the indicators by main topics
- the last pages can give a summary table of the indicators and some methodological elements.

Conclusion

This literature review on health profiles found that it was not possible to identify methodological guidelines for the development and production of local health profiles. One additional output of the I2sare project could be to produce a specific chapter in the final report and a scientific paper on this topic.

The lack of a clear definition about 'health profiles' and 'health reports' caused difficulties in the searching for references and examples for this literature review.

It was difficult to identify 'good examples' of health profiles because most of them are produced at a local level and are usually available only in the country language.

The criteria for choosing the indicators are rarely described giving the impression that the selection of the indicators is more based on their availability than on a well-considered choice. In addition, very little information is given on the assessment of the quality of the data which is presented.

Effective dissemination of the health profiles seems to be neglected in the majority of the cases: only the English local health profiles, were easily accessible (via the web) with the facility of profiles to be downloaded.

Examples

Reports	Date*	Author	Language	Source		Country	Health topics	Type of indicators	Comments
La santé observée dans les régions de France	2000	Fnors	French	Paper report	-	France	Demography, mortality, health care resources, environmental health	Count, rates, SMR	Health report only (no profiles but the topics and indicators could be helpful)
La santé dans les 21 pays de Bretagne : synthèse	2003	ORS Bretagne	French	web site	http://www.orsb.asso.fr/PDF2003/ORSB_synthese_Pays.pdf	France	Mortality, health care resources	SMR, counts, rates	Summary document on 21 different territories
Portrait sanitaire et social	2008	ORS Alasce	French	web site	http://www.orsal.org/activites/activites.php	France	Demography, socio economy, mortality, health professionals and services, health services activity, services for elderly people	Row numbers, rates, standardized rates	Lengthy report - 26 pages. Presentation of data and information with the same framework for different territories with comments
Health Inequalities: Europe in Profile	2006	Commission Européenne	English	web site	http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/socio_economic/documents/ev_060302_rd06_en.pdf	Europe	Mortality, morbidity, health determinants	Rates	Project report
Health Profile of England 2007	2007	UK Department of Health	English	web site	http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH_079716	UK	Socio demography, health habits, mortality, morbidity	Rates, standardized rates	Health report
Local HP 2008	2008	English Public Health Observatories	English	web site and database	http://www.apho.org.uk/resources/view.aspx?RID=50213	UK (England)	Socio demography, health habits, mortality, morbidity	Rates, standardized rates, trends, maps	

Pictures of Health for Local Authorities	2006	Wales centre for Health	English	web site	http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgId=568&pid=19194	UK (Wales)	Socio demography, health habits, mortality, morbidity	Information presented through bar chart in comparison with the Welsh mean without data	
Community Health and Wellbeing Profiles in Scotland		Scottish Public Health Observatory	English	web site	http://www.scotpho.org.uk/home/Comparativehealth/Profiles/chp_profiles.asp	UK (Scotland)	Socio demography, health habits, mortality, morbidity	Rates, standardized rates, trends, maps	
Tableau de bord de la santé Région de Bruxelles-Capitale	2004	Observatoire de la Santé et du Social	French / Netherlands	web site	http://www.observatbru.be/documents/graphics/tableau-de-bord-2004-fr.pdf	Belgium	Socio demography; mortality, morbidity, life styles, environmental health	Rates	Health report
Health Systems in Transition (HIT) profiles	2007	OMS - European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies	English	web site	http://www.euro.who.int/observatory/Hits/20020525_1	Europe	N/A	N/A	Reports on the health system of each European country
Lebenserwartung & Sterblichkeit (life expectancy and mortality)	2006	Land du Bade-Wurtemberg	German	Contact : Daniela Krämer,	daniela.kraemer@rps.bwl.de State Health Office, District Government of Stuttgart	Germany	Life expectancy, mortality	Rates, standardized rates	
NRW Profile für Kreise / kreisfreie Städte	2008	Land	German	Web site	http://www.loegd.nrw.de/gesundheitberichterstattung/nrw-kreisprofile/frameset.html	Germany	Socio demography, mortality, health habits	Rates, standardized rates	Data presented through the Instant Atlas application

Regional Public Health Status and Forecast Report (Pilot)	2008	GGD West-Brabant and Hart vor Brabant	Dutch	Contact : Marja van Bon-Mar	M.J.H.vanBon@uvt.nl	The Netherlands	N/A	N/A	Health reports
Profils locaux de santé - Mouscron	2007	Observatoire de la Santé du Hainaut	French	Contact: Veronique Tellier	cellule.communication@hainaut.be Observatoire de la Santé du Hainaut	Belgium	Mortality		
La Salud de la Población Española : Indicadores de salud (short version)	2006	Ministerio de Sanidad y Consumo	Spanish	Contact: Idoia de Gaminde	igamindi@cfnavarra.es Servicio de Docencia, Investigación y Desarrollo Sanitarios Departamento de Salud Gobierno de Navarra	Spain	Life expectancy, mortality, morbidity, disability and health subjective, maternal and child health, habits and lifestyles	Maps and graphs, no tables.	Long (26 pages) National only and comparison with the other EU countries
Perfil de Saúde da região Norte	2008	Administração Regional de Saúde do Norte	Portuguese	web site	http://portal.arsnorte.min-saude.pt/portal/page/portal/ARSNorte/Conte%C3%BAAdos/Sa%C3%BAde%20P%C3%BAblica%20Conteudos/Perfil%20de%20Sa%C3%BAde%20da%20Regi%C3%A3o%20Norte%202008	Portugal	Socio demography, health habits, mortality	Raw numbers, rates	
Regional indicators in Czech Republic (Excel file)	2006	Institute of Health Information and Statistics of Czech Republic	English (translated from Czech)	Contact: Jiri Holub	holub@uzis.cz Department of Analyses, Publications and External Collaboration, Institute of Health Information and Statistics of Czech Republic	Czech Republic	Demographics, health care structures, health care professionals, health status		Not descriptive, only data
Highlights on Health	2005	WHO Regional	English	Web site	http://www.euro.who.int/highlights	Each country of	Health status (life expectancy,	Summary and trends	- Comparison with other EU countries

		Office for Europe				the WHO European region	mortality, morbidity), lifestyles, environment and health, health care system		
Example of indicators used in Latvia	2006		English	Work document	?	Latvia	Socio- economic and demographics, mortality, health status, health care resources	- counts and ratios, tables and graphs, period comparison	Origin of the document?
State Profiles and County Profiles	2008	US Health Resources and Services Administration	English	web site and database	State = http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/HGDWReports/RT_App.aspx?rpt=SP County = http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/HGDWReports/RT_App.aspx?rpt=CP	USA	Socio demography, health services, health grants	Raw numbers and rates	
New York State County Health Indicator Profiles	2005	NY State - Department of Health	English	Web site	http://www.health.state.ny.us/statistics/chip/index.htm	USA	Socio demography, perinatal health, mortality, hospitalization, morbidity	Row number, rates, time series	
NYC Community Health Profiles.	2006	New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	English	web site	http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/data/data.shtml	USA	Socio demography, access to care, perceived health, mortality, morbidity, health habits, prevention	Rates, trends	Related to health targets

* Date of publication