

Urban health in Italy: health outcomes and sustainable living

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The 37% of the population in Italy lives in the 14 Metropolitan cities and the urban health issue is becoming a priority for local policy design. Urban areas are often unhealthy places to live, characterized by heavy traffic, pollution, noise, violence and social isolation. To give a civic response to the urgent need to study the health in cities, an independent think tank named Health City Institute was created with the aim of coordinating the work of professionals with different backgrounds, targeted on the promotion of urban health in Italy. The action of the Institute is based on 10 priorities included in a Manifesto with the patronage of the Italian Municipalities Association, the National Institute of Health and Federsanità ANCI. The main ongoing project is the creation of a permanent observatory on health in cities, operating in partnership with Mayors and local health managers to collect local expertise and produce urban analysis, enabling the local decision-makers to implement solutions for improving the health of densely populated urban areas. As a first step towards the development of this project a macroeconomic analysis of the 14 Metropolitan cities in Italy has been carried out to photograph the state of the art in terms of urban context sustainability and urban health related

outcomes. Starting from the Manifesto, 13 indicators were selected using public available data: 6 related to urban health and 8 related to urban sustainability. The indicators were then collapsed in a synthetic “health and wellbeing” index to obtain a ranking of the cities according to the union of the two dimensions. Results have allowed to sort the 14 cities into three segments. Unexpected outcomes arise in particular for some cities of southern Italy. The analysis of the index along its dimension allowed to individuate bottle – necks and strength factors of the analysed cities to be a starting point for the future development of local policy proposals.

Key messages:

- The urban health issue should become a policy priority based on evidence.
- Urban sustainability is a challenge to improve the population quality of life and reduce social costs.