

Group Targets Latin Heart Disease

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In Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, one-third of all chronic disease deaths is from cardiovascular disease, but a group of universities including Tulane has launched an international initiative to alleviate the problem.



Cardiovascular health research and education is the focus of a new initiative in South America by Tulane, which is partnering with universities in that region. (Photo illustration by Tracey O'Donnell)

Cardiovascular disease researchers at Tulane are partnering with faculty at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, to establish the South American Center of Excellence in Cardiovascular Health. The center has received a five-year, \$2.3 million dollar grant from the U.S. government's National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health.

The focus of the center's activities will be on research and education into cardiovascular disease (CVD).

Heart disease and stroke are already the leading causes of deaths in South America and that is projected to increase in the near future, says Dr. Jiang He, the project's principal investigator at Tulane. "Therefore, the prevention of CVD has to become a public health priority in South America."

To address these trends, the new center will focus on research, training and health education for the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease. It will carry out research in four communities in the region: Bariloche, Argentina; Marcos Paz, Argentina; Temuco, Chile; and Canelones, Uruguay.

Equally important, He says, Tulane and its partners will carry out the training of medical and research professionals, who are much needed in the region.

Tulane is partnering in the South American Center of Excellence in Cardiovascular Health with the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina; Universidad de La Frontera, Temuco, Chile; and Universidad de la República, Canelones, Uruguay.

[He](#), chair of the Tulane Department of Epidemiology, holds the Joseph Copes Chair of Epidemiology at the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.