

## Bridging Theory and Practice: My Research Exchange in Oslo

My recent research exchange at the Centre for Epidemic Interventions Research at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (May 4 to 8) was a masterclass in balancing theory and practice, made even better by sharing the experience with another founding Evidence-Informed Fellow (Oyungerel Byambasuren). Having spent months collaborating remotely, navigating the city and its culture together in person was a true highlight.

Stepping into the office, I was immediately struck by the atmosphere. While the Norwegian weather was crisp, the reception was anything but. The office was consistently filled with laughter, and the team's warmth made integrating into their workflow seamless. My research project for the Pandemic EVIDENCE Collaboration is a scoping review – primarily theoretical and aimed at refining the methodological conduct of future evidence generation; however, this team is among the few globally putting theory into practice by conducting randomized trials of non-pharmacological interventions. Witnessing this transition was invaluable.

Other professional highlights included participating in a brainstorm session evaluating the pros and cons of two distinct health research methodologies for non-randomized data and attending a weekly team meeting, along with a check in call about an ongoing randomized trial evaluating air purifiers in schools. Together, these activities provided a front-row seat to seeing theory implemented in practice, highlighted the team's rigorous project management and outlined their strategic priorities for epidemic interventions research. Finally, this exchange provided dedicated, focused time to advance my own research project while surrounded by the team's practical expertise.

Oslo offered a stunning backdrop for professional growth. Outside of the office, I explored the serene Oslo fjords by boat and trekked up Vettakollen – a hike recommended by a local colleague – for a panoramic view of the city. Oyungerel and I immersed ourselves in Norwegian culture, from the elegance of the ballet at the Oslo Opera House to the unique taste of brown cheese (*brunost*). Perhaps most surprising was learning that Norway's most-eaten food is actually tacos!

This exchange was more than just a site visit – it was a reaffirmation of why we collaborate. Seeing the team's practical excellence has provided me with fresh momentum for my own research. I am incredibly grateful to my hosts for their hospitality and to our funders for making this bridge between institutions possible. I already look forward to reconnecting with these wonderful colleagues at EBM Live in Oxford to see how our shared efforts have evolved.

