



Webinar: 25th March, 2021 from 14.00 -16.00 (CET)

COVID-19 Vaccination Uptake among Migrants & Ethnic Minorities: Challenges & Opportunities

Thursday, 25th March, 2021 from 14.00 -16.00 (CET)

The social inequalities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic are stark. Migrants and ethnic minorities have been disproportionately affected. The rates of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization and death in these groups have exceeded those of the majority populations in Europe and North America. The pandemic has turned the lives of millions of migrants upside-down, due to lockdowns, stringent border controls, unemployment and increasing social isolation. The recent approval of several safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and their subsequent roll-out in many countries offer real hope that the pandemic and its many adverse consequences, particularly for vulnerable populations, can be brought under control. However, with huge demand for the vaccines and limited supplies, there is a risk that the social inequalities already evident in COVID-19 rates will be mirrored in vaccine programmes, with migrants and ethnic minorities disadvantaged once more. Data from the UK and US already show that the initial uptake of the COVID-19 vaccines is lower in ethnic minorities than the majority White population. This could be due to many factors including reduced access, poor official communications and low confidence in the vaccine because of mistrust and misinformation. It is surely essential to prioritise vaccination of those who are at highest risk of severe COVID-19, regardless of their status or background. Additional efforts are thus needed to ensure the vaccines reach migrants and ethnic minorities equitably.

This Webinar is organised by the **Global Society on Migration, Ethnicity, Race and Health (GSMERH) COVID-19 Working Group in collaboration with Amsterdam University Medical Centres, Global Health Section**. It will bring together leading experts to discuss these key questions: what can be done to achieve equitable vaccine accessibility and maximise uptake among migrants and ethnic minorities across the world? The meeting will be chaired by **Prof Charles Agyemang & Prof Bernadette Kumar**. Presentations by four eminent speakers will be followed by a panel discussion with the speakers and questions from the audience.

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- 14.00-14.05: **Welcome and scene setting.** Prof Charles Agyemang (Scientific Chair of GSMERH, Amsterdam University Medical Centres, The Netherlands)
- 14.05-14.25: **COVID-19 Vaccine uptake in migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.**
Prof Esperanza Diaz Perez (Pandemic Center, University of Bergen, Norway)
- 14.25-14.45: **World Health Organization Recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination in the context of migrants, refugees & asylum seekers.** Prof Kevin Pottie (Dept of Family Medicine, University of Ottawa, Canada)
- 14.45-15.05: **Real life challenges and opportunities for COVID-19 vaccination - insights from Canada.**
Dr Annalee Coakley (Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic Calgary, Alberta, Canada)
- 15.05-15.25: **Policy measures to improve COVID-19 vaccination uptake among migrants and ethnic minority groups.**
Dr Jozef Bartovic (WHO EURO Migration Health Programme)
- 15.25-15.55: **Panel discussion with speakers.** Facilitated by Prof Bernadette Kumar (Chair of GSMERH, University of Oslo, Norway) & Prof Laurence Gruer (Secretary of GSMERH, University of Edinburgh, Scotland)
- 15.55-16.00: **Closing remarks.** Prof Charles Agyemang (Scientific Chair of GSMERH, University of Amsterdam)

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYofuiprj4uE9d9ALWxh5v5d4cSEoNIIA_r

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Planning Committee: GSMERH Working Group on COVID-19 in Migrants

About the Chairs & Speakers

Prof Charles Agyemang



Prof. Charles Agyemang is a Professor of Global Migration, Ethnicity and Health and Principal Investigator at Amsterdam University Medical Centres, University of Amsterdam. He received his PhD from Erasmus Medical Centre, University of Rotterdam, and a Master's degree from Edinburgh University Medical School. His research is focused on ethnic inequalities in cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) and NCDs in low- and middle-income countries. Prof Agyemang has about 20 years research experience and has authored/co-authored over 280 published papers and edited several books. He is the PI of the RODAM study – European Commission funded project on gene-environmental interaction on obesity & diabetes among African migrants. He is a fellow of the prestigious European Research Council (ERC) under the Consolidation Award programme. He is currently the Vice President of the Migrant Health section of the European Public Health Association and Scientific Chair. He is an Associate Editor for Internal and Emergency Medicine and serves as an Editorial Board member for several journals. He was member of the WHO taskforce on NCDs in Migrant and was a member and a rapporteur of the Planning Committee for WHO Global Consultation on Migrant Health the Global Society on Migration, Ethnicity, Race and Health.

Prof Bernadette Nirmal Kumar



Prof. Bernadette Kumar is a medical graduate with a doctorate in Epidemiology and Public Health from the University of Oslo, Norway and post-doctoral research fellowship at the Institute for Psychiatry, University of Oslo. She has several years' international experience working for UNICEF, WHO, WFP, World Bank and NORAD in Southern Sudan, Somalia, North West Kenya, West Bank and Gaza, North Korea, China and Bhutan (1989-2000). Migration and Health has been the focus of her research since 1999 and she is the co-editor and author of a Textbook on Immigrant Health in Norway: Flerkulturelt folkehelsearbeid (Fagbokforlaget 2009) and Migrant Health - A Primary Care Perspective (Taylor and Francis, 2019). She was appointed Director of NAKMI (Norwegian Center for Migration and Minority Health now part of the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, 2010) and Associate Professor, Global Health at the Institute for Health and Society, University of Oslo (2013). She is Professor at the Empower School of Health, India and Kathmandu University, Nepal. She has been a commissioner of the Lancet Commission on Migration and Health (2018) now co-chair of Lancet Migration. She leads the Migration Health work package of the EU Joint Action on Health Inequalities. She is President of the EUPHA section of Migration and Ethnic Minority Health (2018-) and Chair of the Global Society on Migration, Ethnicity, Race and Health (2019-).

Prof Esperanza Diaz Perez



Prof. Esperanza Diaz Perez studied medicine and became specialist in family medicine in Madrid, Spain. In 1999 she moved to Norway, where she was certified as a Norwegian specialist in family medicine and took her PhD at the University of Bergen. She worked until 2018 as a general practitioner with a hugely diverse population. She is Professor at the Institute for Global Public Health and Primary Care, University of Bergen, and currently leads the newly established Pandemic Center at the same University. She also works as senior researcher at the Unit for Migration and Health at the Norwegian Institute for Public Health. She has more than 100 publications in the field of immigrant health and several research projects within the field, including Inncovid.Norge, addressing the situation of migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic. She volunteers for a local non-profit organization providing care for undocumented migrants and works closely with NGOs and municipalities under the current vaccination campaign for COVID-19.

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Prof Kevin Pottie



Dr. Kevin Pottie is Professor of Family Medicine and Epidemiology and Community Medicine, Bruyere Research Institute, University of Ottawa. He is also an Investigator at the Bruyère Research Institute and a Senior Clinical Researcher at the Institut de Savoir Montfort, as well as a Senior Global Health Editor for the International Journal of Environmental Reports and Global Health (Basel, Switzerland). He is a leader in refugee health and equity implementation, spearheading CSIH's Pathways to Global Health, serving on the Canadian College of Family Practitioner's global health committee and leading the globally successful community refugee health service learning programs that began in a refugee shelter in Ottawa and which he and co-lead Doug Gruner have scaled up to over 18 medical schools in the USA, Ireland and Lebanon with funding support from MSF and the Canadian Medical Association. He leads a highly productive research program that revolves around three axes: refugee health, health equity implementation and guideline methods. His research has inspired refugee guidelines in Ireland (2015), Australia (2018), USA (2020) and DYNAMED App. His research is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Immigrant Refugee Citizenship Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada and the Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada.

Dr Annalee Coakley



Dr Coakley is the Physician Lead at Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and an Assistant Professor at the University of Calgary Cumming School of Medicine. She completed her medical training and residency at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada and her Diploma of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene at the London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. She has dedicated her medical career to caring for marginalized and vulnerable patients, including refugees. As the Physician Lead of the Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic, she not only provides compassionate care to new Canadians, but also advocates for her patients locally, nationally and internationally. She is the co-founder and co-lead of Refugee Health YYC, a research, innovation and education platform that is housed at the O'Brien Institute for Public Health at the University of Calgary. Her goal is to work herself out of a job once the mainstream health system is able to meet the needs of Canada's most vulnerable newcomers.

Dr Jozef Bartovic



Dr Bartovic is Technical Officer, Migration and Health Programme, at the WHO Regional Office for Europe. He previously worked for the Regional Commission for Western Asia of the UN Secretariat in Beirut, Lebanon where he was covering migration issues in the Arab region. He is originally from Slovakia. After completing his studies in Politics, he lived in the UK, working for the Ministry of Health, Public Health England (Health Protection Agency) and the National Health Service. At the WHO, he works, primarily on evidence generation and dissemination, including the EC funded MiHKMa project and the Knowledge Hub on Health and Migration.

Prof Laurence Gruer



Prof. Gruer is Honorary Professor of Public Health at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow and the former Director of Public Health Science for NHS Health Scotland. His 35yr career in public health has spanned research; policy; service design, management and evaluation; and health promotion. He has addressed a wide range of topics at regional, national and international level including HIV/AIDS, drug, alcohol and tobacco use, mental health, obesity and health inequalities. He has had a particular interest in migration, ethnicity and health since 2006. He directs a small community health NGO in northern Ghana which he founded in 2015 (drnanaghana.com). He is Secretary of the Global Society on Migration, Ethnicity, Race and Health.