



Beyond the COVID-19 Syndemic: Lessons Learned for Migrant and Ethnic Minority Health

Wednesday 10th November, 2021 from 09.00 -12.40 (CET)

A syndemic is when two or more epidemics interact in time and place and share common underlying societal drivers. The COVID-19 syndemic is the devastating worldwide consequence of a virulent new infection interacting with non-communicable diseases such as obesity and diabetes, and exacerbated by poverty, overcrowding, inadequate health care and other factors. Migrant and ethnic minority communities have been among the hardest hit, typically experiencing both higher hospitalisation and death rates and greater economic hardship. National and local responses have varied greatly: from inclusion and generosity to xenophobia and meanness. While a lack of reliable data and relevant research has impeded understanding, there have been some success stories in Europe and elsewhere. One thing is clear: the syndemic is far from over. New variants, long COVID and huge inequities in vaccination rates are adding to the wider social and economic damage.

This On-line Pre-conference is organised by the EUPHA Migrant and Ethnic Minority Health section and the Global Society on Migration, Ethnicity, Race and Health. It will address three key themes for migrant and ethnic minority health. How can we improve data collection and research; identify and promote effective policies and services; and mitigate the long-term impact of the syndemic? Each theme will be addressed through a series of presentations by eminent speakers followed by a panel discussion and Q&A.

Programme Wednesday 10th November, 2021 from 09.00 -12.40 (CET)

09.00 –09.05: *Welcome and scene setting* – Prof. Charles Agyemang, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

09.05-10.05: Theme 1: What have we learned from the pandemic regarding the need for data and research? Chairs: Prof. Allan Krasnik & Prof Bernadette Kumar

09.05- 09.20: Making invisible populations visible by using data to understand the health needs of migrants – Prof. Rob Aldridge, UCL, Institute of Health Informatics, Faculty of Pop Health Sciences, UCL, UK

09.20-09.35: Migrant status, ethnicity and COVID-19: more accurate data are greatly needed - Dr Maria Melchior, Sorbonne Universite, INSERM, Institut Pierre Louis d'Epidemiologie et de Sante Publique:

09.35-09.50: Collection and integration of data on refugee and migrant health in the WHO European Region – Dr Soorej Jose Puthooppambal , Uppsala University, Dept of Women's and Children's Health

09.50-10.05: Panel discussion – Q &A and conclusion - Chairs: Prof. Allan Krasnik & Prof Bernadette Kumar

10.05-10.10: Theme 2: What have we learned from successful approaches and interventions during the pandemic?

Chairs: Dr Sally Hargreaves, St George's, University of London & Dr Santino Severoni, WHO, Geneva

10.10-10.25: How do we make COVID-19 interventions more equitable and inclusive for ethnic minority groups? –

Keynote: Prof. Tushna Vandrevala, Kingston University & St George's University, London, UK.

10.25-10.35: Grassroot approaches and participatory research methods to reduce COVID-19 disparities in immigrant populations: Examples from the U.S. - Prof. Ana Martinez-Donate, Drexel University, USA.

10.35-10.45: Designing and delivering services to marginalised migrants during the pandemic: the NGO perspective - Dr Yusuf Ciftci, Medecins Du Monde

10.45-10.55: Public responses to irregular migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic: health and social initiatives of national and local authorities in Europe. Dr. Marie L. Mallet, University of Oxford, UK.

10.55-11.05: Panel conclusions - Chairs: Dr Sally Hargreaves, & Dr Santino Severoni

11.05-11.20: Break

11.20-11.25: Theme 3: Lessons learnt from the long-term consequences of COVID-19 pandemic – Chairs: Prof. Charles Agyemang & Prof. Marie Norredam

11.25-11.40: Long COVID in migrants and ethnic minorities – Prof. Marie Norredam, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

11.40-11.55: Long-term impact of COVID-19 in migrant/ethnic minority patients and families - Dr Mohammad Razai, St George's, University of London

11.55-12.10: Policies to address the long-term impact of COVID-19 in migrants – Dr Elisabeth Waagensen, WHO

12.10-12.25: Panel conclusions - Chairs: Prof. Charles Agyemang & Prof. Marie Norredam

12.25-12.40: Closing Remarks & Section updates: Prof. Bernadette Kumar, Prof. Charles Agyemang & Dr María L. Vázquez

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About Chairs & Keynote Speakers

Professor 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 Master degree at 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. Prof. Agyemang is currently the Vice President of the Migrant Health section of the European Public Health Association. 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.

Professor Allan Krasnik



Prof. Allan Krasnik is an MD, specialized in Public Health, he is a Master of Public Health from Hebrew University and has a PhD degree from the University of Copenhagen. He is Professor of Health Services Research at this university and works as a senior researcher at the Danish Research Center for Migration, Ethnicity and Health in the Department of Public Health. He has been President of the Section of Migrant and Ethnic Minority Health in the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) and he is a member of a number of international committees related to projects and programs within migrant health and health services research. His research has since 1972 been focusing on health care reforms, migrant and ethnic minority health, healthy ageing and equity in access and use of health services and he has been involved in a number of international, comparative studies as well as Danish research. He has published more than 200 scientific articles on these subjects and is now leading a large Nordic project on health and welfare among children and adolescents with a migrant background.

Professor Bernadette Nirmal Kumar



Prof. Bernadette Nirmal Kumar, a medical graduate has 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. Kumar 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 Text Book 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. Kumar 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-).

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Professor Rob Aldridge



Rob is a Professor of Public Health Data Science and Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Career Development Fellow at the Institute of Health Informatics. He qualified in medicine from University College London in 2007, gained an MSc in Epidemiology at The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 2010 and completed his PhD in infectious disease epidemiology at University College London in 2015. Rob's research aims to equitably improve the health of the public through the application of data science and public health research. The research group he leads in Public Health Data Science works towards this aim by using complex health data and digital interventions to equitably improve health. Recently, Rob has been working on Coronavirus. He is the Chief Investigator for the Virus Watch health equity study, and has undertaken a range of analyses to inform the public health response to the pandemic.

Dr Maria Melchior



Dr Maria Melchior is Research Director at the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM) (ScD in Social Epidemiology at Harvard University). Her research focuses on social inequalities in mental health, with a particular emphasis on developmental trajectories from childhood to adulthood and the intergenerational transmission of psychiatric disorders. Most projects have relied on data collected in longitudinal cohort studies of children set up in France (EDEN, ELFE, TEMPO) or other countries (Dunedin study set in New Zealand, ELDEQ in Canada). Maria Melchior received the Research Prize of the European Psychiatric Association (2012) and the Early Career Award of the International Society of Behavioral Medicine (2004). She is the author or co-author of over one hundred publications in international peer-reviewed journals. Since 2018, she's head of the Department of Health at the Convergences Institute on Migrations in Paris.

Dr Soorej Jose Puthooppambal



Dr Soorej Jose Puthooppambal is a senior lecturer in global health and migration and programme coordinator for the master's programme in Global health at the Dept. of Women's and Children's Health at Uppsala University, Sweden. In addition to leading courses on migration & health and public health in humanitarian action, his research focuses on health in immigration detention centers, challenges connected to healthcare provision and differences in values and norms between migrants and host society, and healthcare utilization and social inclusion in displacement settings. He has worked at the WHO Regional office for Europe where he oversaw the research and evidence generation agenda of the Migration and Health Programme. He continues to provide technical assistance for WHO Europe, WHO HQ and other national and international agencies on questions related to migration and health.

Dr Sally Hargreaves



Dr Hargreaves is an Associate Professor in Global Health at the Institute for Infection and Immunity at St George's, University of London. She leads the Migrant Health Research Group, a multi-disciplinary team with a research focus on strengthening service delivery and improving health outcomes in migrant populations, with a specific focus on vaccination and COVID-19. She is on the Taskforce for The Lancet Migration European regional hub, which aims to make a positive impact on the lives of migrants through multidisciplinary research, as well as leadership and engagement. She is a Consultant for the World Health Organization and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, and Chair of the ESCMID Study Group for Infections in Travellers and Migrants (ESGITM).

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Dr Santino Severoni



Dr Severoni is Director of the Global Health and Migration Programme, Office of the Deputy Director-General, at the WHO Headquarters in Geneva. He is a medical doctor, health economist, epidemiologist, and experienced systems management. He has over 24 years of experience as an international senior technical advisor and executive, worked for WHO, governments, NGOs, and foundations in Eastern Africa, the Balkans, Central Asia, and Europe. He has dedicated his work to global health, focusing on health sector reforms, health systems strengthening, health diplomacy, aid coordination/effectiveness, management of complex emergencies, and a WHO Representative in Albania and Tajikistan. Since 2011 have been leading the WHO EURO work on health and migration. In 2019 he was appointed EURO Special Representative on health & migration and Director a.i. on health systems and public health. In June 2020, he was appointed Director of the Global Health and Migration Programme at the WHO Headquarters in Geneva to lead the WHO global work on health and migration.

Professor Tushna Vandrevala



Tushna Vandrevala is Professor of Health Psychology at Kingston University and St. George's University, London, her current research focused on health promotion, including screening behaviours and risk prevention with a special interest in minoritised communities. She has a track record of designing and evaluating complex interventions for diverse ethnic groups and currently is Co-PI a UKRI/NIHR funded project on "Developing and Delivering targeted COVID-19 health interventions to Black and Asian communities living in the UK". She is a participant of Independent Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours (SPI-B), sub-group of SAGE, with specific expertise on the impact of COVID-19 on minority ethnic communities.

Professor Ana Martinez-Donate



Prof. Ana Martinez-Donate, PhD, is a Professor of Community Health and Prevention at Drexel University. Her research applies a socio-ecological framework and participatory methods to identify socio-behavioral determinants of health and to develop community-based health interventions for Latino populations in the U.S. and abroad. She leads a binational observatory of health and healthcare access in Mexican migrants traveling through the U.S.-Mexico border. She is also the lead researcher in a study testing a community-based intervention to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on Latino communities in Philadelphia.

Dr. Marie L. Mallet



Dr. Marie L. Mallet (Ph.D., Paris-Sorbonne, 2013) is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Researcher at the Centre on Migration, Policy, and Society (COMPAS) of the University of Oxford. She is part of the City Initiative on Migrants with Irregular Status in Europe (C-MISE), where she guides cities on exchanging knowledge on local practices and policies responding to the presence of irregular migrants. She was previously a Fulbright Scholar at the Department of Sociology at Harvard, a Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND fellow at Freie Universität Berlin, and a EURIAS fellow at the Madrid Institute for Advanced Studies. She is an expert on the inclusion of undocumented migrants and has led research projects at the University of California at Berkeley and Stanford University to comparatively analyze transatlantic migration policies affecting undocumented migrants. Most recently, she has investigated the effects of COVID-19 on undocumented immigrants in Europe and the United States. Her current focus aims to identify and alleviate obstacles faced by non-EU migrants in accessing basic services, and to improve their social inclusion.

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Dr. Yusuf Ciftci



Dr. Yusuf Ciftci works in the Policy and Advocacy team at the Doctors of the World UK (Medecins du Monde) to promote access to healthcare for everyone including migrants in vulnerable circumstances. Alongside coordinating the Safe Surgeries Network to ensure migrants have more inclusive accessing primary care, he also leads various co-production projects. As a migrant himself, Yusuf works with experts by experience of the UK immigration system to achieve a meaningful engagement with migrants and improve the DOTW policy, services and campaigns and contribute to inclusive healthcare access for marginalised migrant groups.

Professor Marie Norredam



Prof. Marie Norredam is a professor in Migration, Ethnicity and Health at the University of Copenhagen and Director of the Danish Research Center for Migration, Ethnicity and Health, MESU. She also works part-time in the clinic training as an infectious disease specialist with special relation to the Section for Immigrant Medicine, University Hospital Hvidovre, Copenhagen. Her work has been focusing on migrant and ethnic minority health, infectious diseases and migration, vulnerable groups of migrants and equity in health and access and use of health services in Denmark and internationally. She has published more than 150 books and articles and is a member of several national and international boards and steering committees related to work on migrant and ethnic minority health.

Dr Elisabeth Waagensen



Dr Elisabeth Waagensen is a Medical Doctor and a Master in Disaster Management from the School of Global Health at the University of Copenhagen. Currently a Technical Officer for the Migration and Health Programme in the Country Support for Impact Unit at the WHO Regional Office for Europe. Dr. Waagensen worked in clinical medicine for a number of years, where the importance of working intensively with personal motivation methods and promoting prevention of illness through a holistic approach to health and well-being that tackles the specific determinants of health that an individual may face in their own life became and increasing area of interest. While finishing her Thesis on the Perception of Preparedness by Danish Medical Doctors in Case of Large-scale Emergencies, Elisabeth started working for the WHO Regional Office in Copenhagen, with the Migration and Health Programme. Primary responsibilities include developing the research and evidence agenda for the programme, as focal point for the WHO Collaborating Centers in Refugee and Migrant health, and for administrating the production of publications from the programme, ensuring consistent and respectful representation of refugees and migrants in all outputs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Elisabeth has also functioned as the focal point to the Incidence Management Support Team and coordinated the migration and COVID-19 publications for the WHO European region and works to ensure that all measures and recommendations in the region are inclusive of refugees and migrants.