

European Public Health Conference, Marseille 2019

Plenary 5: Social inequalities and migrant inclusion in urban settings: a call for changing public health practice

Saturday 23 November, 09:40 – 10:40

Organiser of the plenary & moderator: EuroHealthNet

ABSTRACT

More than half of the world's population now lives in urban areas, and urbanisation has significant impacts on the whole of society. Cities are major destinations for internal and external migration alike. Access to services, affordable housing, and quality employment in urban areas are challenges common to all vulnerable populations, including migrants. These difficult circumstances – and rising inequalities generally – have strained social inclusion efforts across Europe. In addition, migration has become highly politicised; fake news is used to undermine trust and divide communities. This leads to increased discrimination and is restricting access to education, work, justice and health. Power disparities lead to health inequalities. In this environment, policymakers, civil society actors, and community advocates must work collaboratively and creatively across sectors to improve health and social outcomes not only for migrants, but for all vulnerable populations in urban environments. **How can public health practice adapt to this context to better address the needs of migrants as well as other vulnerable populations? We should move away from describing the problems to work on the solutions. How can we change public perceptions? How can normative agencies and research institutions respond to and support the needs/challenges of public health practitioners 'on the ground' in cities?**

This session will attempt to address these and related critical questions, discussing the way forward for health equity and urban and migrant health while highlighting inspiring case studies.

Topics include:

- What are some of the key 'myths' about migrant communities, living and working in cities, that must be corrected to facilitate social integration and improve service provision? Are migrants a burden on services (health, long term care, social care, childcare) or contributors? Are they receiving more benefits than contributing in taxes? How to respond to discrimination/racism and stigmatisation?
- How do we ensure that urban health and social services are person-centred and founded on the principles of proportionate universality? Given the diversity of migration flows to cities, how do we develop appropriate public services for each group, considering cultural dimensions as well as nurture and build on their existing skills and resources?
- What is the role of living and working situations in shaping opportunities and health outcomes for migrants? Can housing, schools, workplaces or urban renewal projects in communities be used to build bridges to other forms of support?

- Where is public health failing and what needs to be changed for improved health and wellbeing and reduced inequalities, giving current contexts as described above? What can be done at the European level to address urban and migrant health issues?

Speakers:

- Brief introduction by **Caroline Costongs**, Director EuroHealthNet (moderator)
- Setting the scene - **Bernadette Kumar**, Director Norwegian Centre for Minority Health Research, Research member of the UCL-Lancet Commission on Migration and Health
- WHO perspective by **Santino Severoni**, Acting Director of the Division of Health Systems and Public Health, WHO Europe
- Perspective from practice: **Lucinda Hiam**, GP and honorary research fellow at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK
- Perspective from practice: **Maryam Gardisi**, Deputy Director, International Psychosocial Organisation IPSO, Germany
- Tying together the big picture: **Jean-Paul Moatti**, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Institut de recherche pour le développement