

August 2020 ASPHER Newsletter



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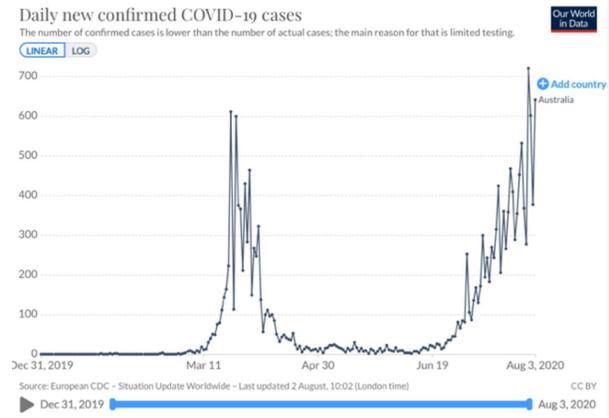
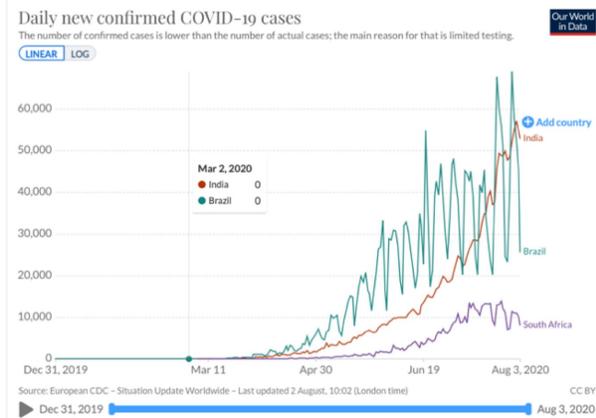
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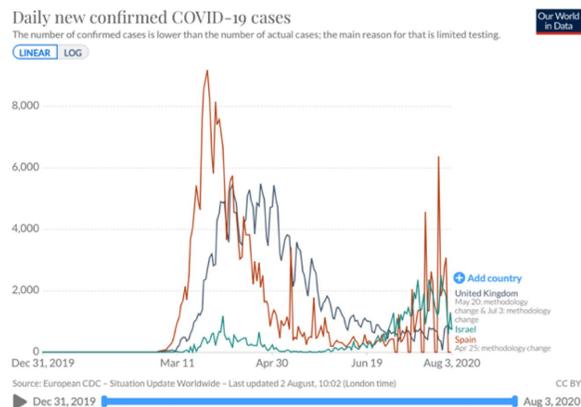
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Many of us are trying to take some summertime out for rest and recovery from the pandemic. But the SARS-CoV-2 virus isn't. It may be biding its time, ready to take us on again in the autumn. In [the Americas, Africa and India](#) it's running wild.



In Australia too it has taken off.



For some in the European region it never went away, or [is already coming back strongly](#), in [Spain](#), [Israel](#), and the [UK](#) for example. I've written more about the [UK situation in the ASPHER President's blog](#).

There are localised outbreaks associated with high-risk precarious industries like [meat packaging](#), [sweatshop clothing](#) manufacture, [fruit and vegetable harvesting](#). Some are home-related outbreaks associated with multiple generations living under the same

roof. It seems many European nations are experiencing a backlash of viral activity as they try to reduce lockdown measures. And - less fatally perhaps, but with greater potential for spread, and leaving us all vulnerable to the resurgence of the pandemic in the autumn. Chronically affected COVID-19 survivors and ['long haulers' are being recognised](#) and require continuing health care.

For ASPHER it has been a period of intensive activity - major new publications have appeared [on our site related to the COVID-19 pandemic](#) - statements on planning for a [second wave and planning for winter](#), [children's issues](#), [children's use of masks](#) and [surveillance apps](#). We've published a [BMJ editorial on meat plants and COVID](#). We have surveyed selected schools of public health about their [plans to re-open in the autumn](#). We have developed a [strong teaching resource](#) for the public and professionals. This and other publications are now appearing in multiple languages. We are also continuing to develop our repository of the depletion of public health services prior to the pandemic, and past,

and continuing failures to take on public health advice. Examples from all countries, welcome. Please forward to the secretariat.

We were pleased to launch our joint publication with WHO, the [WHO-ASPHER competency framework for the public health workforce in the European Region](#) in June. Our thanks to Kasia Czabanovska, for leading this landmark publication. This summer, we have also consulted widely on our new strategy to 2025 and this is now being finalised for the September General Assembly.

The strategy will develop all our existing areas of work including professionalisation, workforce development, training and research. In addition, we have introduced new elements of great significance to ASPHER for the future. The biggest of these is the redoubled commitment to working with and for young public health professionals. Our young professional group has gathered pace during the COVID pandemic. Many are working with us on a wide range of COVID issues - from the very technical [surveillance apps issues](#), [effectiveness of testing](#) and [de-escalation epicurves](#), through to global statements and the successful virtual ASSETS meeting is [reported in this newsletter](#).

A second new element of the strategy will be corporate citizenship. How do our schools behave as leaders in their local communities? Do they practice what they teach on climate breakdown? And most importantly, do they practice what they preach on anti-racism? Rana Orhan has undertaken two excellent studies on the role of public health schools in teaching about climate change, and in how they act as corporate citizens in this important area. She has also surveyed the ASPHER executive to assess our carbon footprint and to devise a policy for ASPHER to reduce our impact on the climate and environment. We will report more on these in coming months and hopefully see them published. Our [statement on racism and public health, and the role of schools](#) has been published by the International Journal of Public Health. Thank you to Oliver Razum and Lisa Wandschneider for Bielefeld's leadership on this for us.

Our strategy also majors on developing our international links and relationships with sister associations of academic public health across the global regions. We held the first formal meeting of the new [Global Network of Academic Public Health \(GNAPH\)](#) in July. The meeting took first steps towards agreeing its constitution and terms of reference. We also agreed a statement on [the role of the WHO in the pandemic](#). I have great confidence in this new organisation. Everyone is committed to strengthening the role of public health professionals and systems around the world to protect and improve the health of people and planet.

Thank you to our Secretariat, our executive board, the COVID taskforce and the young professionals group for their tireless work on our behalf. Come back refreshed after the summer and let's continue the task of protecting and improving the health of the people we serve.

Enjoy your summer,

Professor John Middleton - President, ASPHER

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

ASPHER Secretariat has been busier than usual this summer with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. We hope all our Members are keeping safe while also finding some time to enjoy summer holidays. It is hard for all of us in public health to relax as we [prepare for what is likely to be a tough winter](#).

We have much to report in the Newsletter from the [ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force](#) as well as a feature on [efforts to fight COVID-19 from ASPHER Members in Spain](#). ASPHER is working to gain a better understanding of how our Member Schools are handling the crisis with two new surveys. The first a rapid reporting survey on School's planning for reopening in the autumn. [A report of initial results is already available below](#). The second survey will look into the different [initiatives taken by SPHs to participate in the combat against COVID-19](#). It will be piloted in August and will go out to all ASPHER Members this fall.

Don't miss the monthly TIPH highlight on [Leaders for Public Health in Europe in Maastricht and the Euro-region Limburg](#). The campaign was run by students in the MSc in Governance and Leadership in European Public Health programme at Maastricht University under the direction of ASPHER past-President Kasia Czabanowska and with support from CAPHRI, Care and Public Health Research Institute and the Institute of Education, FHML. They had some great initiatives and we are looking forward to their final video production coming soon!

Planning is underway for the [ASPHER General Assembly on Thursday 10 September](#). You can expect to have all the relevant information for the Assembly in the September Newsletter including updates on ASPHER 2025 Strategy, President and Executive Board elections, Stampar Medal and Deans' & Directors' Good Practice Award Candidates and much more!

Be well and stay safe,

Robert Otok, Lore Leighton, Naomi Nathan - ASPHER Secretariat

Please don't forget to share your news, publications and announcements with lore.leighton@aspher.org to be included in the next regular issue of the Newsletter and on the [ASPHER website activity log](#). **We are now publishing more regular monthly newsletter reports which will better ensure timely release of your announcements to the ASPHER Membership!** Finally, we always appreciate any comments and/or suggestions for improvements for us to consider for the newsletter - let us know!

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ASPHER 2020 DEANS' & DIRECTORS' VIRTUAL RETREAT

Reporting from ASPHER 2025 Strategy consultation meeting - 2 July

The Member's only ASPHER 2025 Strategy consultation meeting was held on 2 July with ASPHER President John Middleton welcoming the participants. We heard from University of Bielefeld and the School of Public Health, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev to discuss issues of diversity pertaining to ASPHER's Vision and Values. ASPHER Director Robert Otok explained the Strategy Outline, including core mission and enabling areas, with corresponding strategic objectives, activities and outputs, and the proposed timeline, as well as new membership policy. ASPHER Fellow Naomi Nathan was on hand as a representative for the next generation of students, alumni and young professionals to speak to the student and alumni enabling area.

ASPHER was pleased to have many representatives of Member Schools participating on 2 July and we received positive and constructive feedback. Final comments and reflections will be incorporated in the final 2025 Strategy document and distributed to the ASPHER Membership prior to the ASPHER General Assembly on 10 September where the new Strategy Agenda will be adopted.

ASPHER 2020 General Assembly

We will hold the **ASPHER General Assembly online on Thursday 10 September 2020**. Please note this meeting date in your agenda! You can look forward to information about the President and Executive Board elections and the nominees for the Andrija Stampar Medal 2020 and the ASPHER Deans' & Directors' Good Practice Award 2020 in the upcoming September edition of the ASPHER newsletter. Always check back to the [ASPHER Deans' & Directors' Retreat webpage](#) for the most up to date information.

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COVID-19 NEWS

ASPHER COVID-19 Initiatives from our Members and Partners

Each month over the coming months, ASPHER will be featuring a more in depth look at COVID-19 actions taken by selected Member Schools. This month we hear from Spain - from the Andalusian School of Public Health and prof. Jose M Martin-Moreno, University of Valencia. If your school has an interesting initiative related to COVID-19 let Lore know at lore.leighton@aspher.org.

ASPHER continues to maintain a [COVID-19 Resource Webpage](#) with links to Members' initiatives, relevant sources for COVID-19 information, and COVID-19 and Infectious Disease online training material.

Feature: COVID-19 Actions in Spain

Part 1: COVID-19 in Spain – making the case to strengthen Public Health

by Prof. Jose M Martin-Moreno, University of Valencia, Spain

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Figure: *Together we will stop this virus (Spanish government campaign)*

On the 31st of December 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission in Hubei Province of China reported a cluster of 27 cases of pneumonia of unknown aetiology. It was a report that many of us read as another piece of information in the context of news and alerts notified by the WHO. Almost no one could even imagine the tsunami was coming for most of the world. We refused the possibility that this could be threatening to affect us in our comfortable, Western world. In any case, it was something "typical of the Asian countries." And the idea that the virus could reach Europe was always counteracted with an emphatic statement: "We are well-prepared for this to have no significant impact".

On the 31st of January, the first case infected by SARS-CoV-2 in Spain was reported. One week later, on the 7th of February, EU health ministers held a high-level meeting (by video conference) under the coordination of the Croatian Presidency of the EU. Member States, together with representatives of the European Commission and the European Centre for Prevention and Control of Diseases (ECDC), reviewed the situation of the outbreak. With that touch of arrogance that characterises us Europeans, the conclusion was that the epidemic did not represent a real threat for us, considering that we were dealing with a problem that was primarily restricted to Asian countries.

Following the advice of the WHO, no particular restrictions and controls on air traffic were imposed. In parallel, and to avoid stigmatisation for the city where it was first identified (Wuhan), WHO announced that the new coronavirus disease should be renamed "COVID-19". This word was a contraction of the name "coronavirus" and "disease". But perhaps the most procrastinating period followed that moment, as the WHO waited until the 11th of March 2020 to declare the outbreak a pandemic, when the community spread in different countries and continents was already more than obvious.

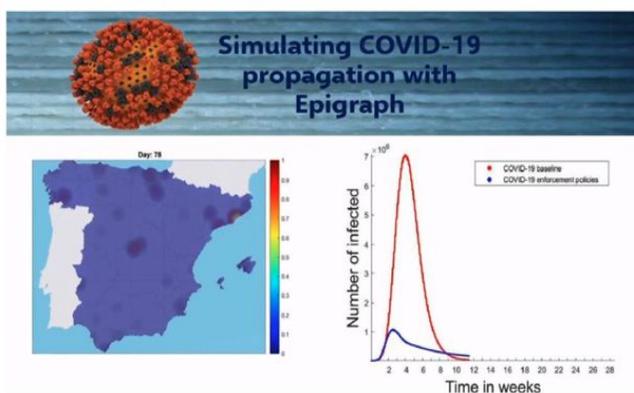


Figure: *How law enforcement policies have been essential to control the situation*

In Spain, after several demonstrations with large mass gatherings on Sunday the 8th of March (the impact of which has been and continues to be a source of enormous controversy), there were subsequently peaks of a thousand new cases per day. Just to illustrate the above,

from 399 accumulated hospitalisations on the 10th of March, the following day the number rose to 1858 hospital admissions (1459 more in a single day). By the 13th of March, cases had been confirmed in all 50 provinces of the country. Given the overwhelming nature of the situation, an extraordinary measure was approved: the Royal Decree of the 14th of March, which declared the state of alarm, and imposed the lockdown on the 14th of March 2020, for the management of the health crisis caused by COVID-19.

Health professionals and those who live in nursing/elderly homes have experienced exceptionally high infection rates. On the 25th of March, the number of deaths due to COVID-19 in Spain exceeded that of China, and on the 2nd of April, 950 people died of the virus in 24 hours—at that moment this was the highest of any country in a particular day, although other Member States have since surpassed that. On the 17th of May, the daily death toll announced by the Spanish government fell below 100 for the first time, and the 1st of June was the first day without deaths by coronavirus. Little by little, the number of new cases and deaths were declining, and in this way, the state of alarm ended on the 21st of June.

On the 4th of June, the results of the Spanish nationwide seroprevalence study showed that about two million people, or 5% of the population, could have been infected during the pandemic, a figure ten times higher than the figure of confirmed cases on that date, but almost ten times lower than necessary to achieve herd immunity.

In following up on this situation, the Spanish Parliament created a national Commission for Economic and Social Reconstruction, including the assessment of the health care and public health sector, to debate proposals to accelerate the recovery of Spain after the pandemic. I have been privileged to be one of the experts invited to speak to this reconstruction commission.



Figure: Prof Martin-Moreno advocating for the need of strengthening Public Health at the Commission for Economic and Social Reconstruction of the Spanish Parliament

Summing up my recommendations were:

1. In addition to the short-term actions, while we are in a pandemic threat, consisting of epidemiological surveillance, testing, tracing, isolating the cases and quarantining

the contacts, as well as providing a reasonable plan to ensure the availability of vaccines as a public good.

In the longer term I proposed:

1. Plan in due time (when the pandemic period is over) an independent assessment to know what was done right, wrong, risks and opportunities for improvement by the time a new scenario of these characteristics arises, which will undoubtedly occur sooner or later. This research must be independent and led by a person of scientific-academic prestige together with a group of independent experts.
2. Strengthen, revitalise and legitimise our Ministry of Health, currently fragile, impoverished of competences, and with minimum resources to face not other challenges, but its competences in a highly decentralised country.
3. Create a Spanish Public Health Agency, catalysing and developing the essential public health functions or operations that are today well-founded and conceptualised.
4. Given the global dimension of this challenge, which requires worldwide and regional coordination and coherence, and despite criticism from individual governments and specific circles, we should strengthen with total determination the role and resources available to the WHO and, in our European dimension, to the ECDC.
5. Increase investment in public health services (at least doubling the current minimum amount within three years). Better articulate and strengthen both public health and primary health care.
6. Improve and simplify the legal transferability of information systems for both clinical and epidemiological surveillance and alert purposes
7. Support training and professionalisation in public health, providing it with professional outlets where they can develop their potential.

Part 2: Understanding COVID-19 from a public health perspective, Andalusian School of Public Health, Spain

A snapshot of COVID-19 interventions from a School of Public Health.



In the first days of the quarantine, the [Andalusian School of Public Health](#) (EASP) created a [space on its website for citizens and professionals](#), focused on providing information about Coronavirus and

resources to help different sectors of the population facing confinement.

To this was added a [space to understand the pandemic from a Public Health perspective](#). The portal has already published 75 entries, to which more than 50 EASP professionals and collaborators have contributed and has received 132,500 visits. It includes [COVIDiario](#), a portal for statistical computing and graphics of national and regional COVID-19 data, run by EASP, based on governmental figures with the objectives to monitor the evolution of the epidemic and to use this information to disseminate epidemiological concepts in a language understandable to the public. Trends are also disseminated through social media.

Furthermore, the very proactive [Andalusian School of Patients](#) has started a [classroom for people in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19](#). Through this website, one can access a space for "Confirmed cases of COVID-19" and another for "Close contacts".



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In each of them, anyone in this situation can find information about: instructions and tips for isolation and quarantine and videos of patients, caregivers and professionals, who have gone through this situation, with first-hand testimonies.

In the fields of training, research and evidence dissemination



Based on needs, EASP reached out with several training topics including a Contact Tracing training program for 600 professionals from Primary Care Centers, a training program on strengthening and coordinating surveillance activities, and training for health service workers about

workplace risk prevention. The latest success story is the creation of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) designed as a [virtual learning community for nursing homes for the elderly and other care facilities](#). The MOOC includes online training courses dedicated to health care workers at Andalusian nursing homes and other care facilities. More than 3000 people have signed up so far to the following sessions: emotional well-being of people who live and work in nursing homes and other care facilities in the context of COVID-19, basic measures of prevention and protection against COVID-19 in residences, care for people with COVID-19 who live in nursing homes, design of a contingency plan against COVID-19, end-of-life accompaniment and detection and notification system for COVID-19 cases in nursing homes and other care facilities.

The EASP also contributes to the management of the pandemic with the development of a **statistical predictive model** on prevalence, care activity and frequency of usage of health services and occupation of intensive care units, among others. Data is shared in a platform with the Andalusian Health Ministry for supporting regional public decision makers.



Entrevistas sobre COVID-19 y Salud Pública

In collaboration with the medical journal Gaceta Sanitaria, EASP launched **45 interview sessions**, live streamed on YouTube, with public health experts that were viewed almost 1500 times. Interviews picked up the knowledge at the given moment and at the same time provided a diverse view of public health. Interviewees spoke about resilience of health systems, mental health, sociology of care, health inequalities, epidemiological surveillance, palliative care and death, anthropological perspective of health,

gender perspectives, professionalism and prioritized decision-making, technology and health, community health, nursing management; to name a few. All interviews can be viewed [here](#).

Furthermore, EASP published **15 scientific articles** with diverse angles, listing just a few of the topics here: socio-economic impact, nursing homes, comorbid conditions and chronic disease, gender perspectives, psychosocial aspects in health workers, etc. All publications can be accessed [here](#).

Finally, senior and associated professors are daily involved in providing management support to public decision makers and participate in the fight against misinformation. More than 120 newspaper articles, radio interviews, TV interviews and podcasts were published.

An international view of the pandemic

In line with the interest arising in other countries, EASP has dedicated a [platform on information and resources specialized in the pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Maghreb and the Middle East](#). The portal has received 1,440 visits.



Furthermore, an **exchange of experiences in COVID19 management by Ibero-American Countries** was launched. In partnership with the Ibero-American Ministerial Network for Health Learning and Research –RIMAIS–, EASP has organized 10 [webinars](#) about “Lessons learned from Covid-19 management” leading to a pre-conference with more than 1000 attendees. Speakers were policy-makers and academics from 10 different Latin-American countries. This pre-conference laid the

foundations for the realization of a Conference "Lessons learned from Covid-19 and challenges for health systems" to be held on September 28-30, 2020.

As well, EASP has been involved in the “[Health Information for All](#)” initiative since 2018 and all relevant products and activities generated by EASP during the pandemic are being disseminated through the Spanish forum covering 34 countries



Global Network for Academic Public Health Statement on the World Health Organization’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Global Network for Academic Public Health met on 9 July to advance on its global governance initiative and to take the first steps towards agreeing its constitution and terms of reference. As a key point of action, the Network drafted a statement on the World Health Organization’s response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.



The Statement acknowledges that: *‘The World Health Organization (WHO) has been a key driver of response efforts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to lead the response despite having come under immense scrutiny globally. As the disease burden intensifies and the associated crisis deepens, it is essential to contextualise the WHO’s response within the scope of its responsibilities, the context of their mandates, and their level of maneuverability, as well as to appraise it in the backdrop of the knowledge and evidence unfolding around coronavirus pandemic.’*

[The World Health Assembly has resolved to have an independent inquiry into the global response to the coronavirus pandemic.](#) Among its calls, *‘The Global Network is committed to stand in solidarity with, reinforce, and coordinate the efforts of our members and member associations of public health worldwide as well as to provide evidence and make expertise available for the independent inquiry as requested by the WHO.’ ‘Now is the time to stand firmly behind the WHO and strengthen its efforts in handling the COVID-19 pandemic moving forward.’*

The full Global Network for Academic Public Health statement on the World Health Organization’s response to the COVID-19 Pandemic is [available to download here](#) and will be published this month in the [International Journal of Public Health](#).

ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force

ASPHER has convened a [COVID-19 Task Force](#) to facilitate relevant networking necessary to respond to the pandemic emergency. The task force holds biweekly meetings and is working to identify priority areas related to the COVID-19 emergency and aftermath where

ASPHER and Schools of Public Health may play a role. If you or a colleague from your school would like to get involved please contact Robert at robert.otok@aspher.org.

The ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force has produced a large body of work and recommendations, with language translations whenever possible. We encourage our Member Schools to make use of the Task Force publications and distribute them widely!

ASPHER Rapid Review Survey: Reopening of Schools of Public Health

ASPHER Young Professionals: Ines Siepmann, Pallavi Chatarajupalli, Ranjeet Dhonkal, Melissa Sawaya, Tobias Weitzel & ASPHER Director - Robert Otok

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly altered the education environment. Institutions have been tasked with implementing rapid responses that allow for a continuity of education, effective course provision, and ongoing support services for students, all while keeping students, faculty, and staff healthy and safe. The constantly changing health environment makes this increasingly difficult, as does a lack of available research on best practices. The goal of this rapid review is to gather information about the planning and preparedness of Schools of Public Health (SPH) in the European Region for reopening campuses after closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The collection of this information, along with a follow-up in September, will provide both a record of the reactions and allow for quantitative and qualitative analysis of the different paths and rationale present amongst the convenience sample of 32 schools included. By promoting dialogue, SPH can better design and enact policies and recommendations relevant to them. Indeed, few national authorities have launched specific guidance for reopening higher education campuses. European SPH could play a critical role in policy and guideline development.

The review was conducted via email with initial contact made by Robert Otok and follow-up done by the Young Professionals (YPs) during the week of July 22-29. Schools from the ASPHER network were chosen as a convenience sample. Of the 59 schools contacted, 32 responded. Preliminary statistical analysis has been done, with further qualitative analysis using the thematic analysis method in progress. Schools were asked about their plans for teaching and exam methods, new recruitment and international policies, equipment and infrastructure development, budget and contingency planning, whether or not they felt safe returning to campus, and if decisions in general were evidence-based.

Regarding the form of teaching, 65% of schools will rely on hybrid learning via online platforms on which a combination of synchronous as well asynchronous activities will take place in addition to socially distanced face-to-face sessions. Given that the majority of schools will rely on online learning, particular online software such as Moodle and Wiseflow will be used to monitor and assess students during exams for approximately half the schools. Other schools will avoid classic examination and instead focus on other forms of assessment such as open book exams, written assignments, and presentations.

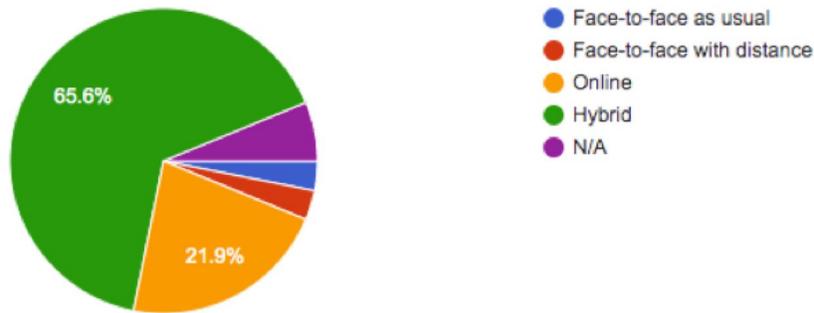


Figure: Method of delivery

In terms of technological infrastructure, most schools chose to invest in the improvement of their IT departments in an effort to anticipate possible scenarios that might arise from the pandemic. Examples include

implementing online communication programs such as Zoom and Microsoft teams. In addition, these schools often provided online training and guidance to their teachers in order to ensure the best possible quality of learning - and recognized that the workload of their teachers will increase as many predict their budget will decrease.

In order to ensure the safe return of their students and staff this fall, all schools will be taking comprehensive health measures across their campuses. For instance, 23 schools will reduce class size, 17 schools will use contract tracing and mobile apps, 10 schools will install plexiglass barriers in libraries, offices, and classrooms, and 10 schools will make the use of personal protective equipment and social/physical distancing mandatory. The majority of schools have a contingency plan, though only 19 (61%) felt as though the decisions were based in science. Twenty-two respondents felt comfortable returning to their campuses.

This initial analysis leaves room for further examination, especially regarding thematic pattern recognition among the responses and identifying associations and discrepancies between responses. For example, how is a school going to adhere to social distancing without reducing class sizes? Can degrees still be accredited if the method of delivery changes? How contingent are these plans on national COVID-19 levels? And, how different will these plans be for a follow-up in September? European SPH are implementing these changes rapidly as the fall semester approaches. The many predicted changes to delivery will be immediately tested, and ASPHER looks forward to further analyzing and collaborating with these SPH to understand and analyse best practices.

The Survey will be repeated in September to follow up on changing dynamics and we'll bring you more in depth reporting on all results.

ASPHER Survey: The role of Schools of Public Health in the COVID-19 response and beyond

The development of the COVID-19 pandemic has stressed the necessity of using all accessible resources in meeting this serious infection threat and its consequences for individual citizens as well as specific population groups and society. Thus, engaging in the combat against the pandemic is natural and, furthermore, an ethical claim for Schools of Public Health (SPH).

ASPHER believes that Schools of Public Health are playing a critical role now but also in the aftermath of the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. From contributing to the dialog on how to best and most safely emerge from current lockdowns, to training the current and next generation of public health professionals on how to respond to the next disease outbreak, to synthesizing and understanding the vast amount of data currently being generated for various sources, to contributing to a more health literate public.

To enlighten this, ASPHER has been developing a survey with its affiliated institutions to compile the different initiatives taken to participate in the combat against COVID-19. This can range from specific trainings emerging, reinforcing health communication to the public, evidence dissemination, and up to providing advice to political bodies. From there, ideas and best practices may emerge and help designing the role of Schools of Public Health beyond the present COVID-19 situation. This should enable us to make the voices of ASPHER member schools heard and show the importance and role of broad Public Health perspectives in the combat of epidemics.

ASPHER will pilot the survey in August with the general survey going to all ASPHER Membership in October.

Planning for a Second Wave, Planning for Winter

The ASPHER Statement and Recommendations for Second Wave and Winter COVID-19 planning are [now available](#).

Hope for the best, plan for the worst

ASPHER believes northern hemisphere countries should expect a second wave of the COVID pandemic, from the autumn. Its impacts will be made worse by other economic, social and health service conditions.

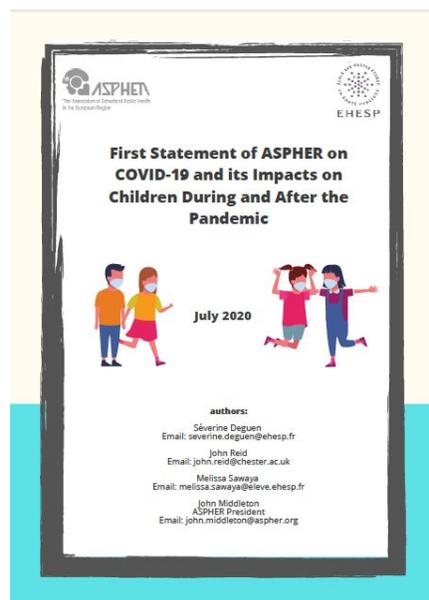
ASPHER recommends the following four priorities for detailed winter preparedness during July to September 2020:

1. *Engage widely now with excluded and vulnerable groups to prepare for a winter second wave.*
2. *Re-establish and reinforce essential health and social services, to catch-up over summer and autumn, and to preserve their function during the second winter wave.*
3. *Instigate social and economic policies to underpin good quality of life during the economic downturn from the first or second wave.*
4. *Reduce excess mortality and keep older people and all others with Long-Term Conditions safer this winter.*

As [WHO EURO Director Hans Kluge has said](#), reflecting on the apparent respite most European countries are experiencing from COVID-19, ‘we should not use this time to celebrate, but to plan’.

Children's Impact Statement and update on Masks for Children with Disabilities

First Statement of ASPHER on COVID-19 and its Impacts on Children During and After the Pandemic



The ASPHER COVID-10 Children's subgroup has posted the First Statement of ASPHER on COVID-19 and its Impacts on Children During and After the Pandemic. The Statement looks at how, why, and for how long will children be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and what are the solutions to mitigate these consequences, particularly on education and schooling.

The statement presents brief epidemiologic evidence on COVID-19 among children population, looks at lockdown and its impact on children in terms of inequalities, and post-lockdown; reopening of schools.

It comes with two infographics: presenting solutions to help ameliorate inequalities among children caused by COVID-19; and mandatory protective measures for school reopening.

[Download the ASPHER Children's Statement here.](#)

Children with Disabilities: Update to the ASPHER Statement on Use of Masks by Children

The [ASPHER Statement on the Use of Masks by Children](#) has been updated to reflect special concerns for use of masks by children with disabilities. The update version of the Statement is available for download now in the original English and in translated versions for Arabic, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.

Contact-Tracing Apps

Countries in the European region are lifting their lockdown as the initial wave of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infections seems to wane. Now complementary strategies need to be considered for this novel situation where people have to "live with the pandemic" amid the absence of pharmacological solutions. As part of a comprehensive set of contact tracing procedures, apps are a promising option to help to break the chain of infection by electronically contributing to identify and notify individuals who may have been exposed to the infection.

However, apps need to be highly regulated to ensure that they are not misused. The app should adhere to the highest privacy standards of the [EU General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#). The objective of these apps should be to find at-risk individuals; richer population-health data can be collected through other means involved in the general process of epidemiological surveillance. Finally, a Health Education approach should be promoted to explain to all groups and communities why a contact tracing strategy is so important to fight this epidemic and the advantages and limits of apps.

The ASPHER COVID-19 Surveillance App subgroup has produced a [statement](#) and a [repository of technical terms](#).

Handbook of Basic Epidemiological Concepts - translations

How to Count Illness: Basic epidemiological concepts for understanding the COVID-19 epidemic is a useful handbook of epidemiological terms aimed at giving journalists and the general public a better understanding of what we mean when public health talks about COVID-19.

How to Count Illness was recently featured in the Portuguese magazine *Visão*, "[Este prontuário explica 60 conceitos de epidemiologia, usando linguagem simples e terra-a-terra](#)" (in Portuguese).

Arabic, German, Georgian, Hebrew, Italian and Portuguese Translations are now available and more are expected soon. [Download the original English version and translations here](#).



Inequalities and Vulnerable Populations

The COVID-19 Inequalities and Vulnerable Populations subgroup has set out a busy summer schedule. The subgroup is completing a *Basic term booklet - WHAT IS INEQUALITY?* of concepts for understanding inequality in the COVID-19 epidemic. And in addition to providing feedback to other COVID-19 subgroups, they have several rapid investigative projects ongoing with the ASPHER Young Professionals group that will be reported in September, including: impacts of COVID-19 on homeless people; inequalities in use of digital tools to access health education; unmet needs for vital health and social care within high-income countries; how are countries taking a syndemic approach to COVID-19; and others.

Check back to the [subgroup web platform](#) for updates. We look forward to hearing more on all these initiatives very soon!

Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has impacted massively on all aspects of economic, social and educational life. It has affected children and families and adversely impacted on older people, people with disability and vulnerability to infection. Health systems have been stretched to their limits and the personal safety of health and care workers and other key workers is being threatened. Businesses and borders have been closed down.

The immediate priority of the countries is to fight and prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic and limit the weakening of socio-economic consequences at most. Many countries are now tentatively addressing the first steps to lighten the effect of country-wide lockdown, to seek to recover, resetting their economies, safely, without awakening a second wave of the pandemic.

The COVID-19 De-escalation subgroup has set up a [page of the ASPHER website dedicated to policies and descriptions of the state of the emergence from lockdown](#) and recovery from the pandemic in different countries. Subpages also include: [Relaxation from Lockdown](#), [Cross-Country Analysis](#), [ASPHER Conclusions so far](#), and [Ongoing & Further Work](#). It is a dynamic page - material will be published here as it becomes available. If you would like to contribute, please contact the ASPHER Secretariat or Ranjeet Dhonkal at Ranjeet.Dhonkal@haw-hamburg.de directly.

Young Professionals

The Young Professionals group has been working to better organize their activities. This includes a formal application process to join the group and procedures for establishing official faculty mentors as ASPHER looks to expand their activity beyond the COVID-19 Task Force. The group has members integrated into the operations and work of all the ASPHER COVID-19 subgroups.

Other COVID-19 Subgroups

Further COVID-19 work is also underway from the Vaccination Subgroup and the Public Health Erosion Subgroup. If you have material or examples that are of interest for these topics please contact the ASPHER Secretariat.

Health System Response Monitor: Policy highlights

The ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force and the Young Professionals group are engaged in rapid response reporting on [Cross Country Analysis](#) for the COVID-19 [Health System Response Monitor](#) (HSRM). HSRM is a joint undertaking of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the European Commission, and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.



The report: **What channels are countries using to communicate with the public and at what frequency?** has recently been released. By Tobias Weitzel, ASPHER Young Professional, University of Copenhagen, Denmark and John Middleton, this policy snapshot outlines the most commonly used communication channels in the European Region and draws comparisons between strategies. [Read the report here.](#)

Lancet Migration: Situational and policy briefs: COVID-19 and migration

The Lancet is publishing a [series of situational and policy briefs](#) summarising key practical and operational aspects of the COVID-19 response in relation to migrants and refugees. They include public health and policy recommendations and perspectives that build on the [Lancet Migration Global Statement](#) recommendations to ensure migrants and refugees: have access to healthcare; are included in prevention, preparedness and response; and are part of responsible and transparent public information strategies, during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are intended to be short briefs providing key information on particular migrant and refugee contexts and thematics, rather than fully comprehensive country or regional overviews.

ASPHER Members have made contributions to many of the country situational briefs including Nadav Davidovitch & Dani Filc, Ben Gurion University for the [Israel Situational Brief](#), Ifeoma Nneka Emelurumonye, University of Turin for the [Italy Situational Brief](#), Maren Hintermeier, University Hospital Heidelberg & Kayvan Bozorgmehr, University of Bielefeld for the [Germany Situational Brief](#), and Miriam Orcutt, University College, London for the [Greece Situational Brief](#).

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DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)31601-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31601-9)

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McKee M. The UK's response to covid-19 does not inspire confidence in its ability to protect health as we drift into a No Deal Brexit. *BMJ Opinion* 2020.

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<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2020/07/03/david-nabarro-and-john-atkinson-dealing-with-covid-19-means-looking-beyond-immediate-crisis-response>

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Phumaphi J, Mason E, Alipui NK, et al. A crisis of accountability for women's, children's, and adolescents' health. *Lancet* 2020;396(10246):222-224.

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DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)31207-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31207-1)

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THIS IS PUBLIC HEALTH (TIPH) EUROPE CAMPAIGN



Each month for the ASPHER newsletter we will be featuring one of the This is Public Health (TIPH) European Campaign winners. We hope these features will be an inspiration to all our Members to draw upon for how your schools can make use of the TIPH Campaign and contribute to the recognition and visibility to public health and the work of SPHs. This month's featured campaign we are bringing to you comes from Maastricht University.

THIS IS PUBLIC HEALTH: Leaders for Public Health in Europe make impact in Maastricht and Euro-region Limburg

by **Rebekah Erickson, Eliza Zantema and Leo Gkekos**
Members of the Maastricht TIPH Campaign Committee

Organisation and Aim

The Maastricht (Netherlands) TIPH campaign was represented by students in the MSc in Governance and Leadership in European Public Health programme at Maastricht University directed by dr Kasia Czabanowska, which is part of the Department of International Health at the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (FHML).

Figure: Interviewing Bert Jongen, a City of Maastricht Councilor.



The cohort consisted of approximately 50 motivated students from a diverse range of academic and cultural backgrounds. The TIPH campaign was endorsed by Professor dr Rianne Letschert, Rector Magnificus of Maastricht University and supported by School CAPHRI, Care and Public Health Research Institute and the Institute of Education, FHML. A number of local partners were involved in the campaign including: the Maastricht City Hall and various student organisations that endorsed and supported the campaign. The students and staff developed a Code of Professional Conduct to run the campaign and students who were actively involved in the core campaign team were acknowledged and rewarded for their participation with certificates provided by the university.

Figure: Student discussing what public health is at a university Open Days event.



The overarching aim of the Maastricht TIPH campaign was to increase awareness of the broad and multifaceted field of public health and the many different ways public health initiatives are being used to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of our community. To demonstrate the diversity of the field, the students chose to focus on campaign activities that highlighted six different areas of public health: nutrition, cross-border health, physical activity, mental health, healthy cities (infrastructure), and digital health. The target audience for this campaign included community members living in the Maastricht area, with a particular focus on the student community due to its size and ease of approachability, as well as the broader population in the Netherlands and beyond.

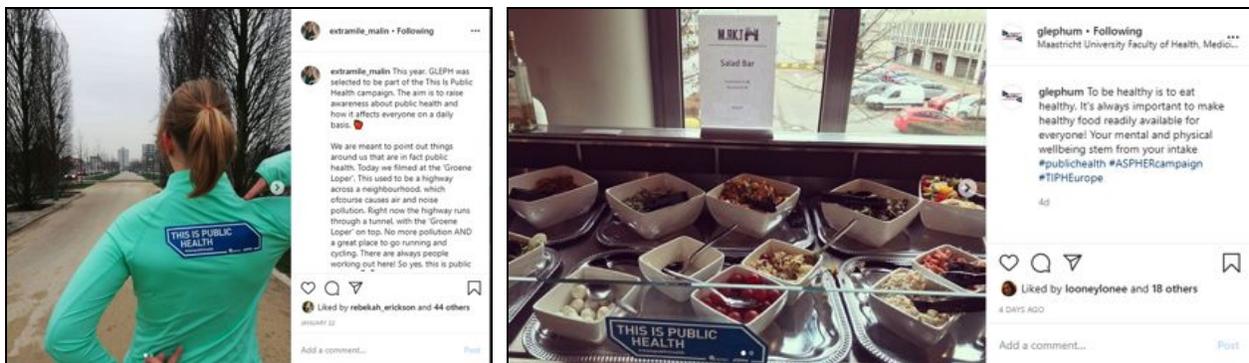
Activities

The creativity, ambition and knowledge of the students proved to be a perfect fit with their different academic and cultural backgrounds, which resulted in a variety of campaign outputs. These outputs fell into three main categories: social media engagement, attending university Open Days events, and creating educational videos, which are further detailed below. A central tool was also the use of blue 'This is Public Health' campaign stickers, which were placed on various health-promoting initiatives throughout the city to increase the visibility of public health in the local community.

Figure: Campaign stickers at an event to improve cycling safety by giving away free bike lights



Social Media Engagement



Figures: Social media posts: about the purpose of public health; to draw awareness to how designated green spaces and paths for running promote public health; and to how providing healthy food options promotes public health.

Various activities and services in the community that serve public health goals were documented through photos, videos and educational captions that were shared widely on social media. These were shared on both university social media channels as well as the personal accounts of students in order to reach a larger and more diverse audience.

Some examples of activities that were documented and shared online include:

- Attending a meditation class and interviewing the teacher about how meditation practices can improve mental health and reduce stress
- Sending holiday postcards to the elderly to reduce loneliness
- Highlighting healthy food options and educating people about how nutrition is important for their health
- Attending an event that gives bicycle lights away to highlight how such measures can protect the health and improve safety of cyclists
- Filming a student going on a run in the green spaces of Maastricht
- Taking photos of carnival decorations and informing the public about how events that bring people together in the community help to reduce loneliness
- Taking photos of a TIPH campaign sticker at the train station to demonstrate the importance of environmental sustainability and infrastructure for healthy cities



Figures: *Sending holiday greeting cards to the elderly; Attending a meditation class to reduce stress; Highlighting Maastricht carnival for creating community connection.*

University Open Days

The university had scheduled three open days for prospective students in the same time span as the TIPH campaign. Unfortunately, due to the corona pandemic, only two took place. At these events, the students volunteered to spread the word of public health and its actions around the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences. TIPH campaign stickers were also distributed to prospective students, who were encouraged to post on social media using the TIPH affiliated hashtags. Lastly, the campaign was also touched upon during the preview lectures of the MSc in Governance and Leadership in European Public Health.

Educational Video

An educational film was created as an overarching final output of the campaign. This video aimed to explain what public health is, highlight the diversity of the field, and demonstrate its vital importance in our everyday lives. An additional Behind the Scenes video was also produced which highlighted the experiences of the students involved in the campaign and their reasons for pursuing public health as a career.

In the educational video, the students are filmed partaking in various health-promoting activities and using public health services in the city (with TIPH campaign stickers attached) as well as conducting interviews with public health professionals, researchers and policy makers to highlight the diverse range of projects happening in Maastricht. Throughout the video, the students explain why these different initiatives are important for improving the health and wellbeing of the community and what public health entails as a profession.



Figures: A student getting familiarized with the filming equipment; Behind the scenes footage of filming.

The filming overlapped with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which offered a unique opportunity to demonstrate the vital importance of implementing public health measures to keep people safe during these times. The final product of this campaign is an engaging video, sparked with humour and enthusiasm, of the students showcasing the dynamic and exciting field of public health. This video, along with the behind-the-scenes footage of the students working together, will soon be available on the websites of ASPHER and Maastricht University.

Make use of the TIPH label for your COVID-19 Actions and beyond!

What and who makes up Public Health is often not well understood by people outside of the field. We at ASPHER believe that the COVID-19 crisis has presented us with a unique moment in time for public health to make itself more visible and show the world what Public Health is really about and how action is taken to protect the health of the population.

If Public Health is to emerge stronger from this crisis, we must be able to have influence with decision makers, advocate for better funding for education and training, and recruit the best and the brightest of our young people to careers in Public Health. But in order to do so our actions must be recognized!

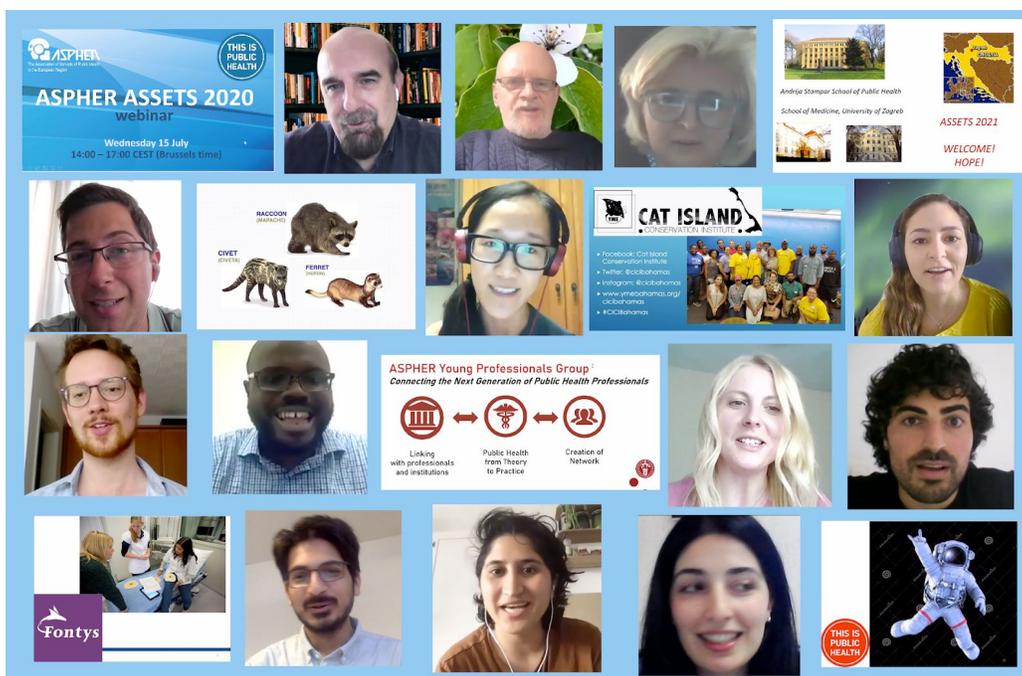
We therefore encourage our Member Schools to label their COVID-19 actions with the This is Public Health (TIPH) Europe brand.

Official TIPH campaign logos are available [here](#). And don't forget to use the hashtags: #ThisIsPublicHealth, #TIPHEurope, #ASPHERCampaign, #ASPPHgoesglobal

REGULAR ASPHER BUSINESS

ASSETS Reunion

The 2020 Andreja Stampar Summer Education and Tutoring School (ASSETS) was derailed by both the COVID-19 pandemic and a magnitude 5.3 earthquake that hit Zagreb on 22 March. However in place of the in-person programme, ASPHER held a reunion webinar with the 2019 ASSETS class and invited ASPHER's Interns and new participants from the ASPHER COVID-19 Young Professionals group to participate.



2019 ASSETS alumni Antoni Alegre, Olga Gershuni, Charles Hamilton, Mariam Lobjanidze and Ivan Lopez updated the group on their work over the past year and how they have been managing to move forward during the time of COVID. ASSETS Director José M. Martín-Moreno, John Middleton and Mirjana Tiljak were on hand from the ASSETS Faculty to provide feedback and advice.

Fanny Goel and Rana Orhan presented their work interning with ASPHER in 2020. While Ranjeet Dhonkal, Tobias Weitzel and Annabelle Wong gave a presentation of the overall work of the ASPHER COVID-19 Young Professionals group as well as specifics about their own projects.

It was great to see everyone and catch up with the 2019 alumni. ASPHER, the Andreja Stampar School of Public Health and the ASSETS faculty look forward to the 2021 edition of ASSETS in Zagreb, Croatia! Keep it in mind for your students next year.

ASPHER statement on racism and health: racism and discrimination obstruct public health's pursuit of health equity

The COVID-19 pandemic has unmasked structural racial inequalities. ASPHER member schools need to act against racism now. The pandemic has not only caused a global public health crisis; it has also increased and accentuated longstanding structural social inequalities and ethnic/racial discrimination

Racism and discrimination are public health issues, globally and in Europe. They are contributing factors to the COVID-19 crisis. As public health researchers and practitioners, we must be aware of this. We need to take the necessary actions to address racism and discrimination in order to attain health equity.

The ASPHER *Statement on Racism and Health: Racism and discrimination obstruct public health's pursuit of health equity* is now available in the International Journal of Public Health. [Read the Statement here.](#)

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

Opportunity: University of Nicosia Medical School Faculty Position In Epidemiology and Public Health



UNIVERSITY
of NICOSIA | MEDICAL
SCHOOL

The Department of Primary Care and Population Health of the University of Nicosia Medical School is seeking a highly motivated faculty member with relevant academic qualifications and research experience in the field of Epidemiology and/or Public Health to undertake teaching and research. Interested candidates can apply for ANY RANK.

Qualifications required:

- PhD (in the field of Epidemiology and/or Public Health)
- Teaching Experience
- Research experience
- Publication record

The ideal candidate should be eligible to work in a European Union country.

[For further information and application requirements see the full announcement here.](#) Please send your application to hr@med.unic.ac.cy by **Friday 7th August, 2020**. The successful candidate should be able to join the team at the start of the new Academic Year 2020-21. Please indicate the position that you are applying in the subject line of your email.

SSPH+ Summer School and Annual Conference

Summer School in Public Health Policy, Economics, and Management

24-26 August 2020

The Swiss School of Public Health (SSPH+) Summer School in Public Health Policy, Economics, and Management will take place fully online and we have a rich program of 1-3 day courses, plus 2 freely accessible plenary lectures each day at 9:00-10:00 and 17:00-18:00 CEST.

Our novel course "[Is Breathing killing us? Tackling Air Pollution using science for policies to protect health](#)" will conveniently take place on Zoom August 24, 25, and 26 (Monday to Wednesday) from 13:00-15:00 CEST.

Ambient air pollution is a leading cause of morbidities and premature death. The course provides basic insights into the measurement, modeling and monitoring of exposure to air pollution, its health effects and the overall impact and costs for public health. Clean air policy solutions will be introduced with success stories, "low hanging fruits" and global challenges for the implementation of these policies. Participants will explore global examples of policy approaches and strengths and limitations in their own countries. Study groups will draft strategies to adopt at least one clean air policy.

Several experts agreed to contribute to this interactive course, including representatives of WHO and the Federal Office of the Environment. ASPHER Executive Board Member, Nino Kuenzli's [plenary lecture](#) "Air pollution and COVID-19" on Wed 9:00h will be part of the course.

The course fee is CHF 300 but full-coverage SSPH+ scholarships are available. Instructions for applying for the scholarships are on the 2nd page of the course flyer or online.

Please find more information from the [flyer](#) and [online](#). **Register for the course [here](#).**

Virtual Swiss Public Health Conference 2020

2-3 September 2020

Registration is open for the Swiss Public Health Conference 2020 on "From Evidence to Public Health Policy and Practice". The [Swiss Public Health Conference](#) is organised by the Swiss Society for Public Health and SSPH+. Each year, a Swiss academic institution assumes the role of host and takes the scientific-thematic lead.



Download the conference programme [here](#).

UMIT - Modeling Approaches for HTA: A Practical Hands-on Workshop, 3-5 March 2021

Early Booking Deadline until 20 December 2020

UMIT
the health & life sciences university

University for Health Sciences, Medical Informatics and Technology (UMIT), Austria is pleased to announce their eleventh 3-Day Certificate Course "Modeling Approaches for HTA: A Practical Hands-On Workshop", 3-5 March 2021 to be held in Hall in Tirol, Austria.

Course Directors:

- Beate Jahn, PhD, Assistant Professor, UMIT - University for Health Sciences, Medical Informatics & Technology, Austria
- Ron Goeree, MA, Professor Emeritus, Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, McMaster University
- Uwe Siebert, MD, MPH, MSc, ScD, Professor of Public Health and Health Technology Assessment, UMIT - University for Health Sciences, Medical Informatics and Technology, Austria

The workshop combines theoretical concepts with practical hands-on exercises comprising five different modeling techniques applied in Public Health and HTA. Real-world case examples from different acute and chronic diseases will be discussed. **New feature: Special session on COVID-19 modeling with international experts in the field.**

Online booking for this course is available via www.umat.at/htads.

APHEA News



This year's been an interesting one so far for the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA). Obviously, the same as everyone, we were hit with COVID-19 travel restrictions. Our answer to this was to

look toward conducting remote site visits in line with groups such as the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). We had also used this opportunity to address our longer-term environmental impact associated with air travel. If you're interested please go to our website www.aphea.be to see the COVID-19 statement.

Apart from the on-site issues, the wider (off-site) activities have continued to grow and we've seen both a growth in new applicants as well as confirmation that the next round of re-applications are all confirmed. To date, this means that all of the initial accredited programmes are returning. Again, please do look through the website if you're interested to learn more.

Finally, we've been rather busy rearranging our statutes and structures. Last year, Belgium underwent a fundamental legal change which directly affects NGOs such as ourselves. This we addressed through the generation of new statutes. These statutes also provided an opportunity to better reflect the activities and operations of APHEA.

This year also saw the older institutional members of APHEA finalise their 3-by-3 year mandates and, as such, APHEA have reappointed a new membership consisting of ASPHER and IANPHI (International Association of National Public Health Institutes). The older members, who have been so vital in our early development, will continue with APHEA as part of an external advisory board. Integral to these changes, we have also appointed a new Board of Directors which includes more individuals with direct experience of accreditation. Again, all this information can be found on our website.

In summary, apart from the acute problems associated with the onset of COVID-19 we've managed to increase our activity and structurally prepare ourselves for the future. It's worth repeating our sincerest thanks to ASPHER, IANPHI, EuroHealthNet, EHMA, EPHA, EUPHA, the members of the Board of Directors and Accreditation as well as all the reviewers who have given their time to APHEA.

Julien Goodman - APHEA Director

[ASPHER Past-President, Kasia Czabanowska in WCPH 2020 Blog](#)

[The Crisis - a friend or a foe for public health leaders](#)

ASPHER Immediate Past-President, Kasia Czabanowska contributed to the WCPH 2020 Blog with a call to: analyse, advocate and above all take action through leadership [that] will no longer be about top down authority and enforcement, but it will be about the impact we make by finding ourselves in "four critical situations" which according to the philosopher Roman Ingarden include: "to be responsible", "to accept responsibility", "to be called to responsibility", and "to act responsibly". We are witnessing a transformational change and this change will require value-driven, ethical, authentic transformational leaders at all levels of the health system.

[Read Kasia's blog: "The Crisis - a friend or a foe for public health leaders"](#).

Register now for the WCPH2020. Benefit from early registration fees until 5 August.



Registration rates for the virtual WCPH2020 have been substantially reduced. More than 3,000 colleagues from over 100 countries have already registered. Don't miss the chance to join the global community in public health. Member fees are €190, non-members €240.

Special reduced fees for students €130 and delegates from LMIC €150. [Register here](#).

70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

The 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC70), the annual meeting of the governing bodies of the European Region, will be held on 14–15 September 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting will be held virtually with a reduced 2-day programme.

Health ministers and high-level representatives of the 53 Member States of the WHO European Region as well as partner organizations and civil society will be connected to discuss issues including: the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and lessons learned, both globally and regionally; the new European Programme of Work 2020–2025 “United action for better health”; transformation in the Region; the proposed budget for 2022–2023 and its regional implications; and accreditation of regional non-State actors.

The meeting will be webcast live in English and Russian, and proceedings will be covered on WHO/Europe’s social media channels. Engage in the discussions using #RC70Europe.

Share the ASPHER newsletter!



[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)

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