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## March 2021 ASPHER Newsletter



Pictured: Blue Flock of Peace from the BlueSheepFarm, Pulheim, Germany.  
Image by [Helmut Jungclaus](#) from [Pixabay](#).

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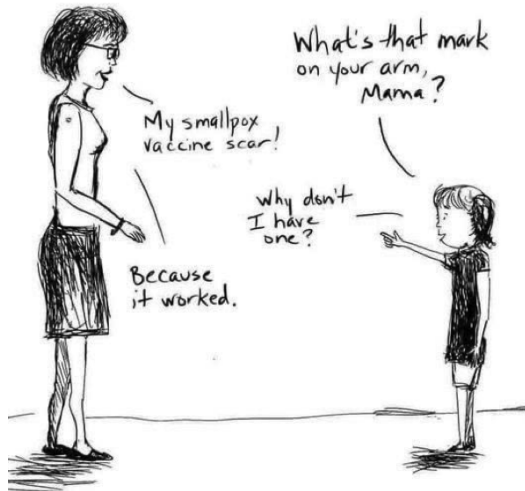
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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A shot in the arm? Or shot in the foot?

Where is Europe going in its pandemic response?



We should begin by celebrating the extraordinary impact and power of vaccination. It is one of the iconic interventions of public health. It works. The COVID-19 vaccination race has been a spectacular hi-tech multinational effort, at great but orderly pace and it is paying off – the vaccination programmes of [Israel](#), [UK](#), [Spain](#) and [USA](#) are demonstrating great promise and potential – death rates in vaccinated groups are down considerably. Figure 1 and 2 are examples from USA and Israel.

The United Arab Emirates has had major success in its vaccination programme. Malta and Gibraltar are also exemplars of good practice in vaccinating against COVID-19. (figure 3)

Figure 1. United States. Source: [Financial Times](#)

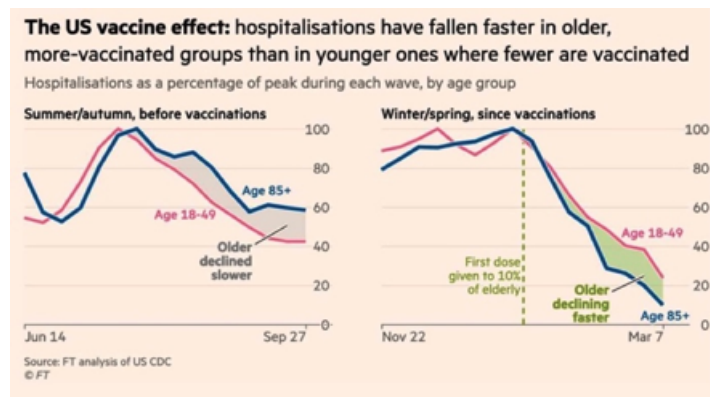


Figure 2. Israel. Source: [Eric Topol](#)

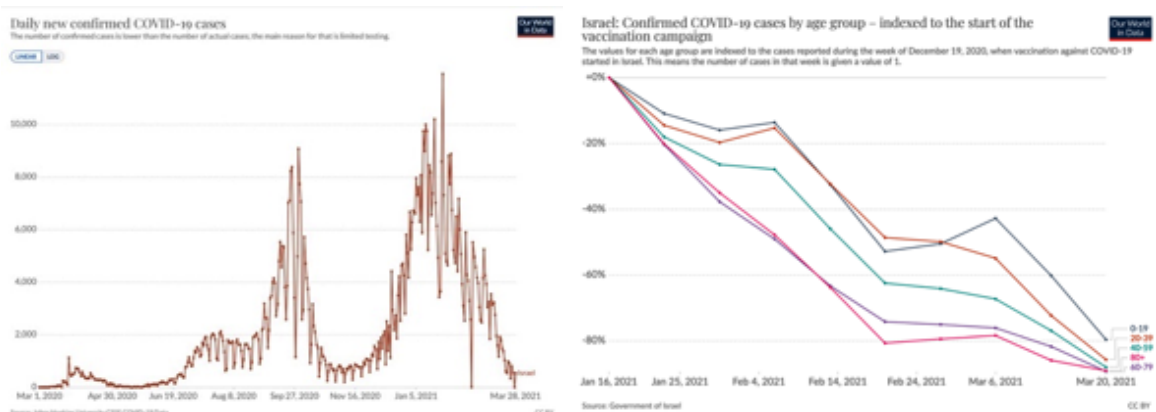
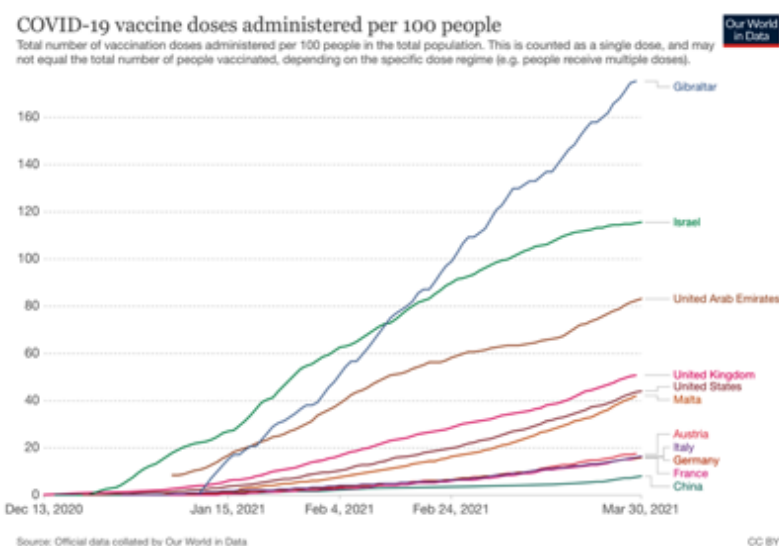




Figure 3. United Arab Emirates.



Yet set against this, we have the spectre of new variants arising everywhere, grotesque inequality in access to vaccines, and European political leaders intent on plucking defeat from the jaws of victory. And no, Prime Minister Johnson, the success of COVID vaccination is [not a triumph of capitalism and greed](#).

The pandemic continues to wreak havoc across Europe. We have seen terrible impacts in Portugal, UK and Ireland, apparently following Christmas relaxations. France has reimposed lockdowns. In Germany, Chancellor Merkel has apologised to the nation for a proposal to shut down the country for five days of Easter, although rates of COVID have surged again, and roll out of vaccination is described as '[glacial](#)'. Belgium is imposing [lockdown for Easter](#) as rates have risen again. [Austria is in lockdown](#). [Czechia has been experiencing a major disaster](#), with severe illness and deaths overwhelming its health systems. Hungary has now shot up the infections and deaths league tables. Estonia and Montenegro have come from low down to feature prominently. [Lithuania](#) too saw a major spike now reducing.

The United Kingdom hasn't come out of lockdown, but is continuing on its '[roadmap](#)' to [freedom](#)'. Ostensibly a planned route, based on 'data not dates'. Rates of infection have levelled or increased and stand at 2000 a day more than during the first lockdown. It is still [a rocky, uneven and a dangerous road](#), with all schools opening at the same time a major hazard. Deaths and hospital admissions are down through a combination of lockdown and vaccines.

Ramunė Kalėdienė joined our task force meeting to discuss their experience on March 18th. She is advising national ministers on action needed, and it seems to be paying off. In Lithuania, however, as for many parts of Europe there is now extensive and dangerous vaccine hesitancy. This has been fuelled disastrously by the wholly avoidable political [vaccine wars](#) against the AstraZeneca vaccine. European politicians have been chaotic and sluggish in implementing vaccination programmes and they have failed to use and follow the science. They have contributed to worsening levels of vaccine resistance around Europe. This has been the worst example of ignorant and negligent vaccine nationalism we

have seen so far and will cost lives and prolong the pandemic. [ASPHER has welcomed the European Medicines Agency](#) decision on the AstraZeneca vaccine.

There were hints of the problem ahead, in disputes over vaccine supply, [in our BMJ opinion piece in January](#). We have also expressed our concerns over [vaccine passports](#) – if implemented now they are likely to cause more resistance. Thanks to Giulia Sesa for leading that statement. If passports are an inevitability, then they need to be done well, protect privacy, be secure from fraud, reduce inequalities and reinforce confidence in vaccines. We are not there yet.

The potential for us all to have passports relating to vaccines that don't work is a major concern [shared by the WHO](#). It is essential we try to anticipate new variants and vaccine resistance and work cooperatively across nations to address this. We should all be concerned about the movement of COVID into younger age groups as is being witnessed in [Brazil](#), in [Italy](#) and [Israel](#).

The ASPHER COVID-19 task force is documenting [the situation weekly](#) and I commend these reports to you – new ones published on Fridays. My thanks go to Pallavi Chatarajupalli and Ralf Reintjes of HAW Hamburg for putting this together for us.

The world has now been locked in pandemic for over a year. The death toll stands at 2.8 million. Western nations have done very badly. There will need to be a reckoning – in all countries. Early in the pandemic there was talk in the United Kingdom of the [‘corporate manslaughter’](#) unlawful killing in the neglectful exercise of public authority. That concern is now being [called ‘social murder’](#). Prime Minister Johnson [says he ‘made mistakes’](#), but he will not admit these on the [scale they have now been documented](#). For other countries too there are clear political failures which have rendered public health responses inadequate. ASPHER has documented the failures of governments in our statement on [the erosion of public health](#). At the same time, we have celebrated the actions and [achievements of our schools during the pandemic](#).

I think my [three faces of COVID](#) analysis broadly holds true. There were countries which were well prepared and decisive from the start which have continued to suppress the virus – particularly in Asia-Pacific and Australasia, but also Finland and Norway; there were those who did well in the first phase through following the WHO advice, this included some of our European colleagues like Czechia, Slovenia which then took their eye off the ball; and there are those who have done badly throughout – the UK, USA, Brazil, you choose the rest... And in contrast, we can celebrate the extraordinary success of community responses like that in the [Dharavi slum in Mumbai](#). This for me shows what is possible – without modellers, without sophisticated science, with just basic public health knowledge and a community willing to recognise a problem and respond to it collectively, and support each other [during their enforced isolation](#).

It is clear we are nowhere near out of this pandemic yet. The current mantra is worth restating – [‘we will not be safe until everyone is safe’](#). We need to commit far more strongly to a global approach to [tackling a global problem](#). This century can be the [century of pandemics](#). We are observing [swine flu in Poland](#), and [avian flu in Russia](#). As a species we

are invading and destroying more natural habitats, bringing us more closely in contact with the microbes and parasites which might find us tasty and make [‘the jump’](#) to humans. Our insatiable [lust for land](#), air travel, conflict, consumer goods, foods and addictions all stack up to [making pandemics more likely](#). Our [obesity levels](#), [our pandemic non-communicable diseases](#) and [our unequal societies](#) make it more likely those pandemics will be destructive.

So it is encouraging that our leaders seem at least to be expressing a desire to learn the lessons of the pandemic and see in a new treaty for better international preparedness and response in the future. On March 30th 2021, [world leaders pledged](#) to strengthen international responsiveness to pandemics through a new global treaty. The European Union has set out plans to strengthen its capabilities through a [Health Emergency Responsiveness Agency](#). We now need to see the concrete actions that will be required if we are to turn this vision into reality. ASPHER stands ready to support our leaders in learning and acting on the lessons of the pandemic.



On a lighter note...the World Cup qualifiers are on!

## ‘More to life than COVID!’

ASPHER has been active this year implementing our [2025 strategy](#), reviewing our governance arrangements and building our partnerships. Our 2025 Strategy seeks to develop and take forward our core concerns for competency development, curriculum, workforce capacity and professionalisation.

We are concluding a [piece of work with ECDC](#) on revising core competencies for infectious disease training (UCCAIDE). We also hope to be announcing a new project on vaccinology and vaccine hesitancy very soon. We are in discussion with the WHO Europe about launching our Road Map on Professionalisation this year.

We intensified our collaboration with the [Global Consortium on Climate Change and Health Education](#) and will be seeking schools to take this forward with us soon. [Rana Orhan’s excellent paper](#) on the work of European Schools on the climate change agenda has also been published and offers an important snapshot of what is going on and what is possible.

We will be bringing important new governance proposals forward to the General Assembly this June. We are developing the governance and support for and with our young professionals group.

In our partnership work we have had fruitful discussions with the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) and plan to launch our new partnership accord at the [General Assembly](#), 4<sup>th</sup> June. We will also be active in the [European Public Health Week](#), 17-21 May. ASPHER works closely with the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) and looks forward

to collaborating with the [newly appointed Director General Dr Milka Sokolović](#) when she comes into the post on 6 April. We have signed up to the [European Health Union Manifesto](#).

We have been working closely with APHEA, the [Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation](#). Many of our members took part in an extremely successful international webinar on March 4<sup>th</sup> featuring contributions from schools across five continents. I came away with a tremendous sense of solidarity, comradeship and commitment to improving the health of the public. My thanks go to Julien Goodman Director of APHEA and colleagues who made the event the success it was.

We are active members of the new Global Network for Academic Public Health with sister organisations from the Americas, Africa and Asia and there will be more information on this later in the year.

I have also been active this month with presentations for the [British Association of Social Work](#), the [United Arab Emirates University Institute of Public Health](#) and the North American Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH). The ASPPH meeting was an opportunity to speak about [‘building and restoring trust in public health’](#) a theme we will of course be reflecting on greatly in the coming years.

I would like to thank Robert Otok and Lore Leighton the ASPHER Secretariat for their tireless support, and for working to the wire to get the newsletter out before the Easter holiday. Thanks to everyone who has been working with us in ASPHER. We wish you all a Happy Easter, or Happy Spring holiday, whatever you may be celebrating, may it be fun, and may it be safe!

And you can find Dr Harp’s Medicine Band new single on apple and spotify now ‘Walking to New Orleans’ <https://music.apple.com/gb/artist/dr-harps-medicine-band/268594577>, featuring Dr J on harmonica.

Professor John Middleton, President, ASPHER  
April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

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## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

ASPHER Secretariat is happy to bring you the Association’s news from the month of March just in time to enjoy over your spring holidays. ASPHER and our Members have been busy and we are impressed with how schools have coped with ongoing COVID challenges. We are delighted to have so many of you actively contributing to the Association’s Task Force. You will [find recent contributions here](#) in the newsletter. If you haven’t joined us yet, we encourage you to send a representative from your institution.

Mark your calendars! [ASPHER is planning for the 2021 General Assembly the afternoon of Friday 4 June as well as the Deans’ & Directors’ Retreat on Monday-Tuesday 27-28](#)

[September](#). Given the ongoing pandemic situation and travel restrictions, both will be held virtually. We will follow up with the GA agenda in May and present the Deans' & Directors' programme at the GA. If you have ideas for the Retreat, please share them with us! We are also calling on you for [nominations for the 2021 Andrija Stampar Medalist and Deans' & Directors' Good Practice Award](#).

We are very pleased to announce that new This Is Public Health Campaigns are kicking off in Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal under the 2021 global campaign. We will bring you news on those as they get underway and we look forward to more campaigns joining under the TIPH Global banner.

Association-led Projects are also well underway with the Kick Off and work on preparatory work packages for the Erasmus+ capacity building award: [Sharing European Educational Experience in Public Health for Israel \(SEEEPHI\)](#). Meanwhile the ECDC project [Updating Core Competencies in Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology \(UCCAIDE\)](#) is entering a crucial period after the recent Technical Advisory Group - ECDC meeting to finalize the competencies list in consultation with 300+ experts. If you are able to help or have contacts that could contribute, please let us know. We hope to be bringing you more news next month about another timely project on vaccinology and vaccine hesitancy.

ASPHER will be involved with other major European Public Health events this year including [EUPHA's European Public Health Week](#) from 17-21 May and the [European Public Health Conference](#) from 10-12 November. We will tell you more about what we are planning for EUPHW in the next newsletter – make sure to send us any events your school will take part in so we can showcase your initiatives. Take note that the EPH Conference abstract deadline is 1 May. ASPHER is discussing the plenary programme with partners and we have more to tell you about that soon.

We look forward to dedicating a portion of our April newsletter to the work of ASPHER's Early Career Young Professionals as well as the ASSETS Summer School plans. Until then please enjoy all the news and [opportunities](#) from our [Members](#) and [Partners](#)!

Best wishes and happy spring from the ASPHER Secretariat,  
Robert Otok and Lore Leighton

**Please don't forget to share your news, publications, comments & suggestions with [lore.leighton@aspher.org](mailto:lore.leighton@aspher.org) to be included in the next regular issue of the [newsletter](#) and on the ASPHER website [activity log](#).**

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## ASPHER COVID-19 TASK FORCE

All [ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force](#) materials are freely available at [asper.org](http://asper.org). Please be sure to take advantage of their work in your schools and disseminate them widely.

### ASPHER Statement on the Erosion of Public Health Systems

**The structural erosion of our public health systems has led to a lack of preparedness and resulted in ineffective responses to present crises**

Over the past few decades, public health systems have been eroded to the point where they are unable to properly develop their four health systems framework functions, as defined by the World Health Organization (financing, provision, stewardship, and resource generation) which allow essential public health functions and operations to be carried out.

Public health has suffered from major cuts in funding in part due to the economic crisis as well as the government austerity policies. Governments have had to search for solutions to reduce expenses and increase cost-effectiveness; the health sector in particular was an unfortunate target for such cuts. Another key contributing factor to the erosion of public health is the decreasing ability of governments to generate sufficient human, physical, and knowledge resources. Decreasing capacity in a context of growing demand, however, inevitably triggers a downward cycle of increased health risks coupled with decreased access to and quality of care, which in turns leads to a higher burden of disease. This is not a sustainable functioning, and long-term investment in more and better adapted resources for health is crucial for meeting the growing demands on public health services and increasing their potential for prevention and new challenges.

Despite public health experts raising their voices, governments have either proven to be slow to listen or have disregarded advice, even blaming the scientific community for failed responses in some instances. Not only is this approach dangerous as it contributes to the decreasing credibility of public health institutions, but it also leads to a lack of public trust in politicians, impeding the success of measures taken which require buy-in from the entire population (e.g. compliance with vaccination, social distancing, and mask wearing).

Read the [ASPHER Statement on the Erosion of Public Health Systems](#).

### BMJ Opinion:

#### Covid-19 vaccine passports and vaccine hesitancy: freedom or control?

Recent debates around “vaccine passports,” or formal/mandatory certification of vaccination, point towards a potential widening societal divide between those who are vaccinated and those who are not. Those with certification of covid-19 immunisation might be permitted to travel, work, go to the gym, play sports, attend entertainment events, dine in restaurants, and ultimately, return to “normal” life.

There is an urgent need for coordinated, global policy on vaccination passports or certification, and for complementary policies at national and local levels. The need for such policies raises many questions: How should vaccine prioritisation plans be modified in light of possible growing demands linked to immunisation passports? How would this deal with the different variants and their fit with prior vaccines? How would vaccine passports be implemented in countries/areas with high vaccine-hesitancy rates? Would this result in fraudulent documentation? Would clinicians come under pressure to provide medical exemption certificates? Will vaccine passports be a precondition for one's working environment?

Since passports are an imminent reality, [trust, community involvement and consent](#) are essential in bringing societies together and ensuring effective international action.

[Read the full article in BMJ Opinion.](#)

Sesa G, Wong BLH, Czabanowska K, Reid J, Davidovitch N, Martin-Moreno JM, Middleton J. Covid-19 vaccine passports and vaccine hesitancy: freedom or control? BMJ Opinion. 30-03-21. URL: <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/03/30/covid-19-vaccine-passports-and-vaccine-hesitancy-freedom-or-control/>

## ASPhER Welcomes European Medicines Agency Judgement on the Safety of AstraZeneca Covid-19 Vaccine

On Thursday 18 March, the European Medicines Agency (EMA)'s Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) issued its opinion on new unexpected cases of severe cerebral venous thrombosis associated with platelet deficiency (thrombocytopenia) and bleeding detected in several European countries, following vaccination with the AstraZeneca (AZ) COVID-19 Vaccine. The evaluation requested by the Member States from the EMA is part of the reinforced surveillance of these vaccines.

However, ASPHER regrets that the different countries did not coordinate to present a common position when the first cases of thromboembolism were announced. Without calling into question the competence of each country, such differences in the decisions taken can only be a source of misunderstanding by the public. Many of our members are reporting substantial damage to public confidence in COVID-19 vaccination. This is a major concern for us in the fight against this deadly disease.

On the basis of the assessments made by the WHO, the EMA and the MHRA, considering the extremely favourable benefit/risk ratio, the performance of the system for monitoring the effects of vaccines, taking into account the additional information provided on the SmPC and the package leaflet, and noting the capacity of the States to take the necessary decisions, ASPHER recommends the continuation of vaccination programmes with authorised vaccines, including AZ vaccine.

Read the full ASPHER statement on the AstraZeneca vaccine in [English](#) and [French](#).

## ASPHER COVID-19 Situation Reporting for Europe

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid spread of the virus in almost all countries has resulted in considerable disruption of public health at a global level. The pandemic has cost over two million lives up to the moment (2,719,163) and the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases has surpassed 0.1 billion with the highest number in the Americas (54,249,753) followed by Europe (42,870,334), South-East Asia region (14,287,370), Eastern Mediterranean (3,199,413), Africa (3,013,815), and Western Pacific (1,797,635) according to WHO statistics.

The ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force and ASPHER Young Professionals with HAW Hamburg are putting together weekly COVID-19 situation reports for Europe. Find the reports updated every Friday at: <https://www.aspher.org/covid-19-situation-reporting.html>

## How to Count Illness, 2nd edition - Italian translation



*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.

An updated [Second Edition](#) became available in January and has now been [translated into Italian](#).

For links to the original and second edition and all translated versions (Arabic, French, Georgian, German, Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian and Spanish) see:

<https://www.aspher.org/how-to-count-illness.html>

## COVID-19 HSRM Cross Country Analysis Report

### **Which Strategies Are Countries Using For Mass Gatherings And Community Events And How Have They Changed Throughout The Pandemic?**

Mass gatherings or community events are hotspots of infectious disease diffusion and can lead to a surge of cases.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced authorities and governments to reassess their approach to these gatherings. This analysis outlines the most commonly adopted strategies across the European Region. Information was collected from the [COVID-19 Health Systems Response Monitor \(HSRM\)](#) (up to 15 February 2021). The main purpose of restrictions on mass gatherings and community events is to mitigate or prevent superspreading events (SSE), one of the main drivers of COVID-19. SSEs occur when one person infects a disproportionate number of other individuals. This can lead to explosive growth in cases, as

well as sustained transmission in later stages. Usually, they are catalysed through [circumstantial factors](#) at gatherings such as those with large crowd sizes, close contact between people, and poorly ventilated indoor areas. Thus, the prevention of SSE resulting from gatherings is highly important.

Most countries adopted policies on gatherings during the first wave in March 2020, and were then reimposed in October 2020 during the subsequent waves. The series of measures taken can be divided into two categories: restrictions on mass gatherings and limitations on the number of people in private social gatherings.

[Read the full report here.](#)

Gkekos L, Díaz Luévano C, Signorelli C. Which Strategies Are Countries Using For Mass Gatherings And Community Events And How Have They Changed Throughout The Pandemic? COVID-19 HSRM. 02-03-21.

URL: <https://analysis.covid19healthsystem.org/index.php/2021/03/02/which-strategies-are-countries-using-for-mass-gatherings-and-community-events-and-how-have-they-changed-throughout-the-pandemic/>

## School Children and COVID-19 Risks

On Thursday 18 March, the COVID-19 Task Force held a special round table discussion on COVID-19 issues concerning Children and Schools. Invited guests included: Arnaud Fontanet, Institut Pasteur, Emerging Diseases Epidemiology Unit, Paris, France; Nisreen A Alwan, School of Primary Care, Population Sciences and Medical Education, University of Southampton, UK; Nicola Gray, UNESCO Chair Second Survey on the Safe Reopening of Schools; and Jonathan Suk, ECDC Principal Expert for Emergency Preparedness and Response. Task Force members contributed their own country specific knowledge and there was open discussion.

The ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force children's subgroup plans to review and possibly update its statements on [impacts of the pandemic on children](#) and on [mask use by children](#).

ASPHER would like to commend the following articles and reports on the topic to our members:

Fontanet A, Grant R, Greve-Isdahl M, Sridhar D. Covid-19: Keeping schools as safe as possible. BMJ. 2021;372:n524

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n524>

Gurdasani D, Alwan NA, Greenhalgh T, et al. School reopening without robust COVID-19 mitigation risks accelerating the pandemic. Lancet. 2021;397(10280):1177-8.

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00622-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00622-X)

Jourdan D, Gray NJ, Barry MM, et al. Supporting every school to become a foundation for healthy lives. Lancet Child & Adolescent Health. 2021;5(4)295-303.

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(20\)30316-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30316-3)



European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. COVID-19 in children and the role of school settings in transmission - first update. 23 December 2020.

URL: [https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/COVID-19-in-children-and-the-role-of-school-settings-in-transmission-first-update\\_1.pdf](https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/COVID-19-in-children-and-the-role-of-school-settings-in-transmission-first-update_1.pdf)

## Call to join the ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force

The [ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force](#) is always open to new members and new ideas to help make a difference during the Pandemic. **If you or a colleague at your School is interested to join the Task Force please let Robert know at [robert.otok@aspher.org](mailto:robert.otok@aspher.org).**

## Selected ASPHER Member COVID-19 Publications

Czabanowska K, Kuhlmann E. Public health competences through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic: what matters for health workforce preparedness for global health emergencies. Int J Health Plann Mgmt. 2021;1-6.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/hpm.3131>

Middleton J. Is England's exit plan from lockdown a road to nowhere? BMJ Opinion. 2021.

URL: <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/02/25/is-englands-exit-plan-from-lockdown-a-road-to-nowhere/>

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## ASPHER AND MEMBER NEWS & EVENTS

### ASPHER 2021 General Assembly and Deans' & Directors' Retreat

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, the ASPHER Executive Board has taken the decision to hold both the 2021 General Assembly and the Deans' & Directors' Retreat electronically.

Please mark your calendars!

The virtual **ASPHER General Assembly will be held on Friday 4 June 2021**. We will get back to you soon with more information and to announce the time.

The virtual **ASPHER Deans' & Directors' Retreat will be held Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 September 2021**. The programme is under discussion and details will be presented at the General Assembly. If you have ideas for the Retreat, please share them with Robert at [robert.otok@aspher.org](mailto:robert.otok@aspher.org).

## Call for ASPHER Award Nominations!

ASPHER is calling on our members to send your nominations for the 2021 Andrija Štampar Medal and the 2021 Deans' & Directors' Good Practice Award.

The prestigious Andrija Štampar Medal is awarded each year to a distinguished person for excellence in the field of Public Health. [See more about the award and past medalists here.](#)

The Deans' & Directors' Good Practice Award showcases the best master programmes and Continuing Professional Development courses offered by members of the Association. Three main characteristics of the programmes and courses will be assessed: impact, internationalisation, and innovation. [See more about the award and past winners here.](#)

**Please send your nominations to Robert at [robert.otok@aspher.org](mailto:robert.otok@aspher.org) by 1 May 2021!**

## Updating Core Competencies in Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology (UCCAIDE)

The ASPHER and University College Dublin run project, Updating Core Competencies in Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology (UCCAIDE), has been progressing on its work for ECDC. After over 40 intensive expert interviews on its initial competencies list, the UCCAIDE Steering Group and ECDC Technical Advisory Group came together on 18-19 February for an in depth review of the competencies.

The Steering Group is taking the TAG feedback forward to revise the competencies in preparation for consultations with over 300 experts including ASPHER members. We hope all those who are contacted will make time to contribute to this important piece of work which will also help inform the next ASPHER Core Competencies list for the Public Health Professional.

**If you or someone at your school would be interested to help review the list or if you have relevant contacts, please let Julia Barry know at [ecdc.project@ucd.ie](mailto:ecdc.project@ucd.ie).**

## Sharing European Educational Experience in Public Health for Israel (SEEPHI)

The ASPHER coordinated project Sharing European Educational Experience in Public Health for Israel (SEEPHI) officially started on 15 January. The partners held their Kick- Off meetings during the week of 8 February and preparatory work packages to survey and map the public health workforce needs and the public health educational offerings in Israel are underway.



SEEEPHI is a Capacity Building in Higher Education project funded through ERASMUS+, which transfers knowledge and best practices from European Union Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to countries and HEIs outside the EU. The project begins in January 2021 and runs for three years involving ASPHER as the coordinating organization and a consortium of ASPHER Member schools (four EU HEIs and four Israeli HEIs) and the Israeli Association of Public Health Physicians.

ASPHER sees SEEEPHI as an excellent opportunity to pilot a comprehensive capacity building action in a specific country context, which may be applied in a similar manner to other countries and regions wishing to improve the employability of their PH graduates and build their Public Health Workforce capacity. A key outcome of the project will be a tested protocol that may be adapted to other settings and available to all ASPHER Members.

To learn more about SEEEPHI read the Project Profile [here](#).



## Network of Francophone Public Health Institutions (REFESP)

On March 18, 2021, a new network bringing together schools of public health was launched: the network of French-speaking public health institutions: *Réseau des établissements francophones en santé publique* (REFESP).

This network was created at the initiative of the EHESP School of Public Health with the support of the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie* (AUF). Today, bringing together establishments from 11 countries, its objective is the development of excellent public health practices in the French-speaking world, recognized worldwide.

Professor Laurent Chambaud, Director of EHESP will be heading up the venture as REFESP President. ASPHER looks forward to future collaboration!

[Read more about REFESP here](#) (in French).

## SSPH+ COVID-19 support to the Federal Office of Public Health



The SSPH+ community supports the Federal Office of Public Health of the Swiss Confederation (FOPH) in continuously screening literature on COVID-19 related themes, defined by FOPH. In the meantime, our calls resulted in several teams screening the literature on specific themes. Three reports have been delivered already (two on the effectiveness of non-pharmaceutical interventions and one on vaccines).

These reports are also made available on the SSPH+ [COVID-19 platform](#) for interested public health professionals to disseminate the current state of knowledge on COVID-19 related topics among the research community. Feedback and comments on these reports are welcome. You can use the forum function ("reply") under each published report to share your feedback directly on the platform.

For access to the platform: please contact Joachim Pelikan ([joachim.pelikan@swisstph.ch](mailto:joachim.pelikan@swisstph.ch)) to request your registration. Questions on the literature screening and reports can be addressed to Jorgen Bauwens ([jbauwens@ssphplus.ch](mailto:jbauwens@ssphplus.ch)).

## The University of Sheffield (ScHARR) Mini Master Classes

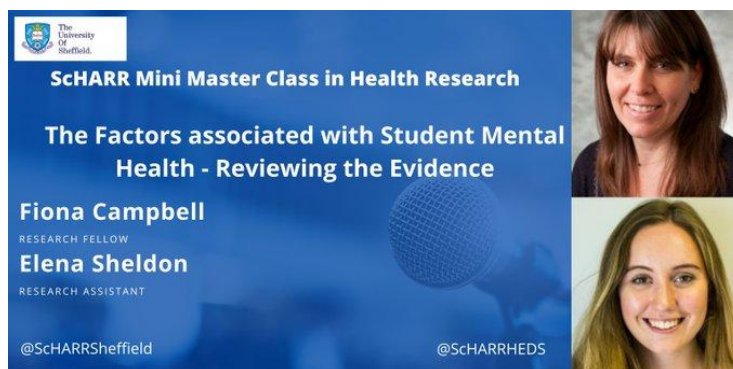
### The Factors associated with Student Mental Health

Thursday 22 April 2021 at 1:00pm GMT



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

Poor mental health of further and higher education students is a growing public policy concern. A 2020 Insight Network survey of students from 10 universities suggests that “1 in 5 students have a current mental health diagnosis” and that “almost half have experienced a serious psychological issue for which they felt they needed professional help” - an increase from 1 in 3 in the same survey conducted in 2018. The global coronavirus pandemic and measures to contain it has led to a worsening of the levels of poor mental health among young people including students in higher education. In order to develop high quality interventions that seek to improve the mental health of young people in higher education it is necessary to have a good understanding of the factors that contribute to poor mental health and also those that strengthen mental wellbeing.



Join us online for a monthly online masterclass by one of our health research experts based in The School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR) at The University of Sheffield as we explore topics in the changing world of public health research. In the coming months we plan to cover topics on health inequalities, global health, health decision and policy making, health technologies among other similar themes.

Learn more and register [here](#).



## Global youth representatives and advocates claim for far-reaching changes in digital health governance

In recognition of a global health governance ecosystem plagued with inequities, this short commentary authored by members of the ASPHER Young Professional's group and others critically analyses the recent focus on youth 'inclusion' in global digital health governance and discusses potential strategies to amplify and include youth voices in accessible and meaningful ways, without museumising them. As global youth representatives and advocates with varied backgrounds and lived experiences in health and technology across the world, we are well-positioned to provide critique on how youth have been engaged thus far in digital health governance as well as provide recommendations.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Wong BLH, Smith RD, Siepmann I, Hasse A, Tandon S. Youth engagement in digital health: a critical perspective towards meaningful youth agency in governance. *Medicus Mundi Switzerland Bulletin* #157.

URL: <https://www.medicusmundi.ch/en/advocacy/publications/mms-bulletin/digital-health-a-new-era-of-global-health/kapitel-3/youth-engagement-in-digital-health-a-critical>

## The Global One Health Environment: A Learning Module

The first edition of the framework for a Learning Module on Continuing Environmental Education (CEE) for postgraduate scholars, guided by their academic teachers: a compilation from the literature is now available.

This learning module was prepared by members of the Working Group 1HOPE-GPA (Governance, Policy, and Advocacy), part of the One Health for One Planet Education (1HOPE) Initiative to support learning and teaching about the environmental status of the planet. It aims at fostering interaction between inclusive governance and environmentalist activities in the community.

This is developed in five chapters, each with several sections. The chapters cover learning material on: 1) The Global interdependence, 2) Environmental sustainability, 3) Toward multilevel education, 4) An approach to implementation, followed by 5) Guidance for organizers and lecturers.

The Learning Module provides suitable study material for postgraduate students under the guidance of their lecturers whereas the final chapter outlines the possible institutional organization of the Learning Module.

Abed Y, Dobe M, Eliakimu E, et al. Special Volume 2021: The Global One Health Environment. *South Eastern European J Public Health (SEEJPH)*. 2021.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11576/seejph-4238>

## Member Appointments and Awards

### Appointments to the Italian *Piano Nazionale Prevenzione Vaccinale (PNPV) 2021-2025*

Congratulations to ASPHER Members Anna Odone of University of Pavia; Chiara Cadeddu and Andrea Silenzi of Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Rome; Paolo D'Ancona of University of Pisa; Claudio Costantino of University of Palermo; and Riccardo Orioli of Sapienza University of Rome for their appointments by the Ministry of Health to the Italian Working Group for the Vaccination Prevention Plan: *Piano Nazionale Prevenzione Vaccinale (PNPV) 2021-2025*. ASPHER wishes you all the best in this important work!

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## PARTNER NEWS AND EVENTS

### Call for Abstracts: 14th European Public Health Conference: Public health futures in a changing world

**Virtual event: 10 - 12 November 2021**



European public health has not had a good COVID. Across Europe the public health response to a pandemic has been largely unsuccessful. This is despite an enormous amount of very hard work in public health units all across the EU. This reflects a

weakness within the profession, which has been manifested in the curious phenomenon of dual strands of public health advice, official and unofficial, in several EU countries. Politicians were placed in an impossible position by this. This needs to be openly and constructively faced. By and large, public health has had limited impact on the design and implementation of a core public health policy.

So. The world of public health changes, but many key pieces remain the same. A key part is to hold to that which we value, and to build on that, and extend out from that, to meet new and pressing needs. A focus on where we are, and where we want to go might be helpful for clarification. The relevant word is 'futures', and not 'future'. We expect an even more diverse public health, with the public health workforce delivering in new and more traditional arenas.

**[Abstract submission](#) for the 14th EPH Conference 2021 is open from 1 February until 1 May 2021, 18:00 CET.**

Participate at the EPH Conference 2021 by sharing your work with colleagues. The EPH Conference offers excellent opportunities to learn from the latest research and practice, to network with experts and colleagues and to expand your professional horizons. Abstracts

are invited for workshops and single presentations in all areas of public health research, practice, policy and education. Abstracts are considered for oral and poster presentations. Workshop proposals are considered for 60-minutes sessions. Do not miss the opportunity to share your work at the largest virtual public health event in Europe. Over 1,500 delegates expected. Conference registration opens 1 April 2021. [See the EPH Conference website for more information.](#)

## Celebrating 25 Years of EPIET



ASPHER congratulates EPIET on its celebration of 25 years of public health training.

A series of [video testimonies](#) with alumni and former scientific coordinators were recorded and collected by the EPIET Alumni Network, highlighting the enthusiasm and experience of this professional community, which stays strong after 25 years, hoping to inspire future enrolments in this programme and network!

## WFPHA Webinar: Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccination



The World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) thanks the world-renowned speakers for making its "Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccination" webinar a huge success.

In case you weren't able to join, don't miss the opportunity to watch:

- Full recording of the webinar:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01uIrV\\_P5BY&t=2153s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01uIrV_P5BY&t=2153s)
- Recording of Prof. Anna Odone session:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LfMneICIMM>
- Recording of Prof. Ethel Leonor Noia Maciel session:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0z1gvZJiQA>
- Recording of Prof. Julie Leask session:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GR9uUA-8Mms&t=17s>

The complete series of Immunization Webinars organized by WFPHA are available on WFPHA YouTube channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/WorldFederationofPublicHealthAssociations/videos>

Keep up to date with all the activities and news relating to the Immunization Webinars by following WFPHA on social media:

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/WFPHA\\_FMASP](https://twitter.com/WFPHA_FMASP)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ngowfpha/>  
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/wfpha>

## Call from European scientists to implement Nutri-Score in Europe



In May 2020, the European Commission (EC) announced as part of its Farm to Fork Strategy the adoption before the end of 2022 of a harmonised mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling to help consumers to make health-conscious food choices. Scientists and public health actors welcome the announcement of such a public health policy, which they have been calling for for many years and is also recommended by WHO Europe and strongly supported by major European consumer associations.

The signatories of this call wish to remind that only science should guide policy decision-making in the field of public health and that the choice of the single harmonised front-of-pack nutrition label for Europe must meet this single requirement and not the interests of economic operators (manufacturers, retailers or specific food sectors) or states that defend them. Nutri-Score has been yet adopted by multiple European countries (France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Luxembourg, Netherlands) and is currently being discussed as the system that could be adopted at EU level on the basis of its scientific background.

[Learn more about Nutri-Score here.](#)

[See the Call from European scientists to implement Nutri-Score in Europe here.](#)

[Sign the call here](#) or contact Serge Hercberg at [s.hercberg@uren.smbh.univ-paris13.fr](mailto:s.hercberg@uren.smbh.univ-paris13.fr).

## ECOSOC - The future of health governance: an online global youth dialogue hosted by GHFutures2030 and the WHO

**April 6, 2021 13:00 GMT**



**ECOSOC**  
**YOUTH FORUM**  
**10TH ANNIVERSARY**

This side event, co-organised by The Lancet and Financial Times Commission, “Governing Health Futures 2030: Growing up in a digital world” and The World Health Organization in periphery of the ECOSOC Youth Forum, aims to facilitate an open dialogue for youth to discuss and share perspectives/experiences regarding the future of health governance in the context of digital transformations in health and any proposed solutions.

[Register for the event here.](#)



## SEEJPH E-Collection 2014-2020

Since 2014 the South Eastern European Journal of Public Health published 15 volumes, time to celebrate and to reflect. With this intent our publisher Jacobs Company assembled still relevant papers published throughout the years. Here are the key themes:

- European Health Policy
- Public Health Professionalization
- Public Health Ethics
- Primary Care
- Children and Youth Health
- Women Health
- Regional Perspective: South Eastern Europe
- The Global Perspective

We are proud to present this electronic collection to our readers and the general public. You can scroll through it at: <https://www.jacobs-verlag.de/international-public-health/>. You will be surprised how much you missed.

Dr. Hans Jacobs, Lage, Germany and Prof. Genc Burazeri, Maastricht, The Netherlands

## LEPH 2021 Legal Epidemiology Satellite Workshop Materials



This satellite conference held on March 16-19, 2021, was funded by the National Science Foundation Law and Science Program, as a global gathering of people whose work in public health law research (also known as legal epidemiology) informs practice and policy at the intersection of law enforcement and public health. The satellite provided participants with an outlet to share their research, advance scholarship and methods, and support early-career and underrepresented scholars who are interested in studying the effects of criminal law and its enforcement on public health.

Legal epidemiology – the scientific study of law as a factor in the cause, distribution and prevention of disease and injury – is an emerging transdisciplinary field with roots in health, socio-legal and behavioral research. The intersection of law enforcement and public health encompasses both the obvious concerns and questions related to the interaction of law enforcement and communities, and broader questions about the effects of law and policy on security, safety, power, and control. It also asks how these issues interact with health, well-being and equity; all questions legal epidemiologists seek to answer.

[Recordings of the event are available here.](#)

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## OPPORTUNITIES

### Call for Applications: Young Forum Gastein Programme – EHFG 2021

The Young Forum Gastein (YFG) programme was initiated in 2007 to enable promising young health professionals to attend the annual European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) and become a part of an inspiring network which now includes over 500 members (Young Gasteiners) working in public and private sectors, civil society, and science & academia. Participation in the YFG network introduces young experts to the EHFG community and the European public health scene in general. It also offers a unique opportunity for the Young Gasteiners to actively contribute to the annual EHFG conference as authors of session reports or blog posts, moderators or rapporteurs and get involved in discussions on the current challenges and developments in health in Europe and beyond.

In 2021, the EHFG conference will consist of a full week of digital sessions and networking opportunities and hence, also the Young Forum Gastein will apply an interactive and engaging digital format for this year's cohort. The YFG programme will start with a kick-off evening event in early September and will continue throughout the EHFG conference week from 27 September to 1 October 2021.

[European Health Forum Gastein \(EHFG\)](#) is pleased to announce that it will once again offer a number of scholarships to enable young health professionals from the WHO European Region to participate in our prestigious Young Forum Gastein (YFG) programme.

**Applications are due by 26 April 2021.** Detailed information on the scholarship and selection criteria can be found in the [announcement flyer](#) as well as on the [website](#).



**YOUNG FORUM  
GASTEIN**

### Opening: The Institute for Nursing Science (INS) of the Medical Faculty at the University of Basel

The Institute for Nursing Science (INS) of the Medical Faculty at the University of Basel is one of Europe's leading centers for nursing science (<https://nursing.unibas.ch/de/home/>). We would like to inform you that the INS is currently recruiting for an [Professorship \(open rank\) in nursing science with a focus on "Innovation in Care Delivery"](#)

This professorship includes ongoing opportunities to develop research-driven interprofessional innovations, particularly by applying clinical, health services research and implementation science methods, within the INS's dynamic clinical, health policy and interdisciplinary practice partnerships.


Please find more information in the job advertisements in the links below:


[English advertisement](#) | [German advertisement](#)

This competition is open to all candidates who fulfil the listed criteria, regardless of current rank. The details of the professorship will reflect the successful candidate's individual characteristics.

## Call for papers: Health in all Sustainable Development Goals

The two journals [International Journal of Public Health](#) (IJPH) and [Public Health Reviews](#) (PHR) - now both Gold Open Access - of the Swiss School of Public Health have launched a call for papers. The best papers will win an award, celebrated during the Health and Wellbeing week of the [World Expo2020](#) (Jan 2022).

 International Journal of Public Health (IJPH; Impact Factor 2019: 2.4) invites Original Articles: [details](#)

 Public Health Reviews (PHR; Cite Score 2019: 5) invites Policy Briefs and Reviews: [details](#)

### Due dates:

**by 20 April 2021: Abstract submission**

**by 18 July 2021: Submission of invited papers**

Suzanne Suggs and Kaspar Wyss are leading the calls, supported by Amir Takian, Nino Künzli, Jasmina Saric and Rajesh Kumar Rai.

For questions, please contact the Managing Editor ([anke.berger@swisstph.ch](mailto:anke.berger@swisstph.ch))

We look forward to your Abstract!

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Share the ASPHER newsletter!



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