

Conferences, festivals and webinars

One of the traditional ways to build journal's recognition and meet potential authors is strategic attendance of national and international conferences by its editors. Though in 2020 many "live" conferences were cancelled, there were even more opportunities to participate in a variety of excellent virtual events from all over the world: congresses, conferences, festivals and webinars. In this editorial, we present highlights of the most interesting and inspirational events that were "attended" by our co-editors. Naturally, most of those events were focussed on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and discussed the impact of this pandemic on population health and health systems, with some themes that attracted special attention of academia and policymakers and were repeatedly addressed at different meetings: digital health and health data governance; public-private partnerships; health systems resilience; evidence-based policy decision-making; infodemics and health literacy; new approaches to health research.

COVID-19: From viral to containment. A series of 17 webinars (delivered from April to December) from the European Health Management Association (EHMA) with a goal to bring together all the key stakeholders (healthcare managers and professionals, policymakers, scholars and research studies, citizens at large) involved in health management to tackle some of the most important issues related to the COVID-19 global crisis. Presenters from different countries shared their experience and lessons learnt on managing primary care during the pandemic; control recommendations for hospitals; internal procurement; health systems and health literacy; laboratory insights; managing chronic diseases; safety of hospital staff members and patients; mental health; health research and innovation; and other aspects of health governance during the pandemic. One of the most inspirational webinars – "Stockholm public healthcare system emergency response to SARS COV2 and winter preparations" was conducted by John Øvretveit – Professor of Medical Management at the Karolinska Institutet and R&D officer for Stockholm healthcare primary and community health services, and a member of our Editorial Advisory Board. Webinars' recordings are available for free at <https://ehma.org/covid-19-webinar-series/>

Countering COVID-19 Disinformation to Advance Global Public Health, a webinar organised by the Civilian Research and Development Foundation Global (CRDF Global) on 8 June 2020. CRDF Global is an independent non-profit organisation founded in 1995 in response to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the threat of large-scale proliferation of weapons technology from the region, with its diverse staff members and networks of local community and government stakeholders it delivers tailored programmes that meet specific regional needs in over 100 countries across the globe. There were presenters from the US Department of State, Vietnam Ministry of Health, and Georgia National Center for Disease Control and Public Health. The videos from webinar are accessible with password from: <https://crdf.remote-learner.net/course/view.php?id=37§ion=0>

"INSIGHT 2020: a Festival of analysis and learning" (28 September–13 November 2020) – was organised by the Strategy Unit (NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit, UK) and explored some of the challenges facing decision-makers in health and care in 2020 and beyond; emerging models of practice to make best use of analysis to inform decision-making; and presented examples of the work already happening in this area.

The Strategy Unit provides a range of services to support health and care organisations at a local, regional and national level in addressing complex challenges: analysis, modelling, strategic support, evaluation, evidence review and knowledge mobilisation. They are also



supporting the development of the Midlands Decision Support Unit (DSU) network, which brings together 12 partnership organisations across a geographical area. DSU network aim is to share work and learn from each other, reduce duplication by joining up systems with shared interests, build analytical and problem-solving capacity across the region, and connect analysis to decision-making.

The Festival comprised a mixture of virtual events, workshops and panels, representing conversations at a local, national and international level. It was very versatile thematically and used a great variety of activities to keep participants actively involved. Each week focussed on a central theme, starting with a “headline” presentation each Monday, supported by targeted sessions, and the week’s speakers convened each Friday for an interactive panel discussion and Q&A to respond to the key debates raised during the week:

- (1) Week One: Our decision-making context in 2020;
- (2) Week Two: The role of the Decision Support Network;
- (3) Week Three: Analytical Priorities of the Decision Support Network;
- (4) Week Four: Special series on health inequalities;
- (5) Week Five: The Decision-making toolbox and
- (6) Week Six: Making the most of our decision-making resources.

Excellent speakers and creative approaches made those 33 events a great learning opportunity. There were 48 presenters from 27 organisations, with 3,500 registrations for different events. The questions raised and solutions suggested were very practical and evidence-based, for example: what are the long-lasting health impacts of COVID-19; how to network the right people and help them develop information analysis skills; how to apply health data analysis as a response to strategic questions; how do we know what we know; how artificial intelligence (AI) influences changes in the resource use in healthcare; what have changed since providing analysis to decision-makers; ethical framework and the role of qualitative research; understanding and dealing with health inequalities; supporting informal care; making sense of an emerging COVID-19 evidence base; how to maximize the decision quality and bring implementation into decision-making process. Session videos are available for free at <https://midlandsdecisionsupport.nhs.uk/news/insight2020/>

The Evaluation Guide was also presented, which is written for people at all levels with an interest in evaluation and “takes you through the process, and considerations, in designing and delivering a high quality evaluation – whatever your resources. The focus is on principles for best practice, not a single proscribed approach, with links to further resources.” <https://midlandsdecisionsupport.nhs.uk/documents/dsu-evaluation-guide>. There was also a session introducing a Guide to support strategic decision-making in health and social care. This is available at <https://midlandsdecisionsupport.nhs.uk/services/decision-support-methods/>

Resilient health systems 2020. This Digital Congress of the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (KBV) took place on 1 October 2020 as part of Germany’s Presidency of the EU Council. It took up the experiences of the healthcare systems, which were made during the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany and in the EU, with the main focus being on the consequences and what could be learnt from them. Thematically, the conference was oriented at the outpatient medical system in Germany. The topics addressed digital care approaches, the structure of self-governance, aspects of education and training, regional testing strategies for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and linking public health services and European and national health institutions. Debates in two panels and nine sessions with 39 presentations brought many answers to light: from

international experts for an audience of more than 700 from 38 countries. Most of the presentations are available as videos online at <https://www.healsy20.eu/frontend/index.php>

BESSI webinars. The behavioural, environmental, social and systems (BESSI) interventions Collaboration aims to provide information about planned and completed research into reducing SARS-CoV-2 transmission, and facilitate both novel and replication research. Webinar Series 1 (October–December 2020) covered: The Science of BESSI; The Policy Environment; The Funding Environment; Engineering approaches to COVID; Learning from international success during COVID; BESSI research in Africa. Videos from the webinar series are available at <https://www.bessi-collab.net/videos>

World Health Summit. One of the world's leading strategic forums for global health every October draws international experts from academia, politics, the private sector and civil society to Berlin. During 2020 three-day online summit, stakeholders and decision-makers from 100 countries and every field in healthcare worked together to find solutions to global health challenges and set the agenda for a healthier future. The Summit attracted 300 speakers and 6,000 online participants. Summit's central topics were: Pandemic Preparedness in the Age of COVID-19: Global Cooperation not Competition; Strengthening the Role of the European Union in Global Health; Climate Change and Health: Risks and Responses; Partnership for the Goals: United Nations' 75th Anniversary; Accelerating the SDG3 Global Action Plan for Health and Well-Being; Translational Research: Advancing Innovative Treatments; Digital Health and AI for Pandemic Preparedness. From 50 delivered sessions, we would like to highlight the following:

- (1) *D 06 – A Call to Action for Health Data Governance.* As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose immense challenges to public health and the economy, governments increasingly rely on digital technologies to manage the disease and to monitor and contain the spread of the virus. The convergence of big data – from diverse data types and a broad range of sources – with immense advances in information technology and AI offers unprecedented opportunities for individual and public health.
- (2) *PD 09 – Strong Partnerships as a Determinant of Health.* One thing the sustainable development agenda has projected to the globe is the interdependency amongst the goals. On the road to reach the 2030 SDGs, it becomes clear that urgent commitments are needed to accelerate the attainment of health-related targets and SDG3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages).
- (3) *WS 09 – Evidence-Based Decision-Making in Global Health.* What is evidence and how is it used in making decisions about COVID-19? The session examined the role and contributions of different research disciplines (virology, intensive care medicine, epidemiology, sociology, economy, ethics, etc.) at different stages of the pandemic as well as the different types of evidence that researchers provide and politicians and authorities base their decision on (e.g. individual publications and reviews).

All sessions videos are available at <https://www.youtube.com/user/WorldHealthSummit1>

European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies Webinar series on the COVID-19 response (October–December 2020). This webinar series draw lessons from country experiences based on the COVID-19 Health System Response Monitor (HSRM) – which has been designed in response to the COVID-19 outbreak to collect and organize up-to-date information on how countries are responding to the crisis across the whole WHO European Region. The series included thematic webinars (scaling-up population testing; centralization within and between governments; balancing surge capacity and regular services; health financing and COVID-19; protecting health workers while maintaining surge capacity;

long-term care, protecting older people in nursing homes) and webinars on country groupings (Nordic countries; Social health insurance countries; Visegrád countries). HSRM is accessible at <https://www.covid19healthsystem.org/mainpage.aspx>. Webinar recordings are available at YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHc-Xk2PFTy32jORUHSjxdQ>. Next series is starting in January 2021.

Nordic Health 2030 – Pockets of the Future (2–6 November 2020). The Nordic Health 2030 Movement works across the Nordics and Nordic organisations to transform health and well-being. The Movement rests on three sets of principles, that have the aim of making personalized and preventive care a reality for all: “The New Social Contract (the Resilience Workstream): Everyone should contribute; nobody should be left behind; The New Data Models (the Data Workstream): All individuals and professionals should be able to experience meaningful input and output of health-related data in real-time; The New Business Models: All organizations providing health care should be incentivized and rewarded for preventive efforts provided to individuals”. In November online event they showcased a series of solutions to transform local, regional, national and global services, products and mindsets. All presentations and videos are available at <http://nordichealth2030.org/pockets-programmes/>

16th World Congress on Public Health took place virtually in Rome, Italy (12–16 October 2020), with the main message “Public health for the future of humanity: analysis, advocacy, and action”. It included plenary sessions, world leadership dialogues, workshops with short communications, poster displays, satellite sessions. Pre-conference discussions covered such topics as: Communication in public health: neglected but essential; Privacy by default, security by design; Effects of GDPR on public health research; Working with Indigenous People in Public Health Settings; Helping people to help themselves to better health – From theory to practice. There was a special session on COVID-19: “Migration, ethnicity, racism and the COVID-19 pandemic: key perspectives on a global crisis” (presentations from this session are available at <https://www.gsmerh.org/gsmershlaunch>). Complete Congress programme is available at <https://wcp2020.com/app/programme/programme.php>

Irina Ibragimova and Helen Phagava