1st WHO infodemiology conference

How infodemics affect the world & how they can be managed

30 JUNE & 1, 7, 9, 14, 16 JULY 2020
## Acknowledgments

WHO appreciates contributions from all three levels of WHO, external partners and from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Global Immunization Division’s Demand for Immunization Team in the preparation of the conference. The organizing team wishes to especially acknowledge the support and participation by Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

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Illustration by: Sam Bradd

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Scope & purpose

Background
In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the phenomenon of an ‘infodemic’ has escalated to a level that requires a coordinated response. An infodemic is an overabundance of information – some accurate and some not – occurring during an epidemic. In a similar manner to an epidemic it spreads between humans through digital and physical information systems. It makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it. During epidemics and crises, it becomes even more important to disseminate accurate information quickly, identify and lower barriers for individuals to take steps to protect themselves, their families and communities against the infection. Even when people have access to high-quality information, there are still barriers they must overcome to take the recommended action. Like pathogens in epidemics, misinformation spreads further and faster and adds complexity to health emergency response.

Aim
An infodemic cannot be eliminated but it can be managed. To respond effectively to infodemics, WHO calls for adaptation, development, validation and evaluation of new evidence-based measures and practices to prevent, detect and respond to mis- and disinformation. Additionally, these measures will help propagate, disseminate and amplify evidence-informed guidance for individuals and populations to take protective measures, and in the long-term sustain best practices for infodemic preparedness and response. In the context of this meeting, ‘infodemiology’ is defined as the science behind managing infodemics. The overall aim of this consultation is to take stock of relevant research and effective practices and define public health research needs in order to advance this field. The working language of the meeting will be English. Public webinars will be interpreted into Spanish and French.
Objectives

- Understand the multidisciplinary nature of infodemic management
- Identify current examples and tools to understand, measure and control infodemics
- Build a public health research agenda to direct focus and investment in this emerging scientific field
- Establish a community of practice and research

Participants

- Experts from the fields of Epidemiology & Public Health; Applied Math & Data Science; Digital Health and Technology Applications; Social & Behavioral Science; Media Studies & Journalism; Marketing, UX & Design; Risk Communication and Community Engagement; Ethics & Governance and other relevant scientific disciplines and practices
- UN agencies
- Public health authorities
Format

1) Pre-conference: 29 June 2020

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the multidisciplinary nature of the infodemic and its management
- Learn from experts on potential interventions to manage infodemics
- Get feedback from participants on discussion papers, working documents and infodemiology glossary

FORMAT

- Open to the public with 7 inspiring talks how the infodemic affects the world currently and reflections how it can be managed. Planned talks:
  - Paradigm shifts in epidemiology and making multidisciplinary connections
  - Battling a Pandemic in a Fact-resistant World: Epidemiology, Public Health, and the COVID-19 Infodemic
  - A New Digital Reality: How Fake News and Misinformation are Derailing the Largest Vaccination Effort in History - A Case Study of Polio Programme
  - ‘Gotong Royong’: Blunting the impact of multiple infodemics via a whole-of-society approach
  - Conspiracies, Rumors and Falsehoods: The truth about why the infodemic is so dangerous
  - When fact-checking, media and misinformation collide in Africa
  - Viral (p)articles: A network mapping approach to infodemiology
- ZOOM limit for the public session is 5000 participants
- Anyone can join in and listen, and submit questions on Slido
- Participants will be invited to provide feedback to the draft discussion papers, working documents, and infodemiology glossary
2) **Scientific conference: 30 June & 1 - 16 July 2020**

**OBJECTIVES**
- Define the scientific discipline of infodemiology
- Support the transdisciplinary discussions and identifying commonalities and connections between them
- Identify current examples and tools to understand, measure and control infodemics
- Build a public health research agenda to direct focus and investment in this emerging scientific field
- Establish a community of practice and research

**FORMAT**
- The scientific conference is closed to the public.
- **Day 1 (30 June):**
  - Opening by WHO Director-General
  - 4 scientific keynote discipline talks. Planned talks:
    - Epidemiology, Public Health and infodemic
    - Psychology, marketing and behavioural insight and infodemic
    - Data science, applied maths and physics and infodemic
    - Society, ethics, governance and infodemic
  - Roundtable discussion: Epidemiology and its linkages to the new scientific discipline of infodemiology
- **Day 2, 3, 4 & 5 (1, 7, 9, 14 July):**
  - Working sessions on 4 working topics:
    - **Topic 1:** How can the digital-physical information environment be measured and monitored? Using data triangulation, real-time surveillance and monitoring and metrics development
    - **Topic 2:** How does information originate and spread? Information environment, how low-quality information develops into harmful narratives, and how misinformation propagates
> **Topic 3:** How does information affect and impact individuals and populations? Understanding the risk factors, impact on population & societies behaviour and action, building and maintaining trust, and resilience to misinformation

> **Topic 4:** What interventions work to protect and mitigate? Improving intervention design and building the evidence-based response toolkit

- Each team rotates through the themes over a 2-week period

**Day 6 (16 July):**

- Reporting back from experts to review the outcomes from working groups

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### 3) Public summary: 21 July 2020

**OBJECTIVES**

- Inform participants and the viewing public on conclusions of the scientific conference and next steps
- Link participants and the viewing public with possible follow up opportunities after the conference
- Get feedback from participants on outcomes of the conference and next steps

**FORMAT**

- Public interactive webinar with summary, conclusions of the scientific conference and next steps
- Anyone can join in and listen, and submit questions on *Slido*

**CONTACT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tim Nguyen</th>
<th>Tina Purnat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:nguyent@who.int">nguyent@who.int</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:purnatt@who.int">purnatt@who.int</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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# Agenda

## 1st WHO Infodemiology Conference

7 webinars taking place over 3 weeks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRE-CONFERENCE</td>
<td>29 June 2020</td>
<td>13:00 –17:30</td>
<td>Geneva time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE (closed)</td>
<td>30 June 2020</td>
<td>1 - 16 July 2020</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSIONS OF THE SCIENTIFIC INFODEMIOLOGY CONFERENCE</td>
<td>21 July 2020</td>
<td>15:00 –16:30</td>
<td>Geneva time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Illustration by: Sam Bradd
**Day 1**

**Tuesday, 30 June 2020, 12:00 – 17:40 Geneva time**

### Closed session plenary

**12:00 – 12:10**  
**Welcome**  
* Sylvie Briand, World Health Organization

**12:10 – 12:20**  
**Opening of the 1st WHO Infodemiology Conference**  
* Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization

**12:20 – 12:30**  
**Housekeeping and ways of working**  
* Tim Nguyen, World Health Organization

**12:30 – 12:40**  
**Start of working session**  
Introduction by conference co-chairs  
* Neville Calleja, Ministry for Health, Malta  
* Viroj Tangcharoensathien, Ministry of Health, Thailand

**12:40 – 13:40**  
**Discussion: Epidemiology & linkages to the new scientific discipline of infodemiology**  
* Rosamund Lewis, World Health Organization  
* Dimitri Prybylski, US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, USA  
* Akhona Tshangela, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention  
* Lei Zhou, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, China  
* Laura Espinosa, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

**13:40 – 13:50**  
**Away From Keyboard (AFK) break**

**13:50 – 14:10**  
**Researching the COVID-19 Infodemic in the Digital Era**  
* Saad Omer, Yale University, USA

**14:10 – 14:30**  
**Social Media & Collective Behavior: A Media Science Perspective**  
* Anja Bechmann, Aarhus University, Denmark

**14:30 – 14:50**  
**The New Science of Infodemics Across Social Media Platforms**  
* Neil Johnson, George Washington University, USA

**14:50 – 15:10**  
**Cultures of misinformation: media, motivations, responses**  
* Herman Wasserman, University of Cape Town, South Africa

**15:10 – 15:40**  
**Discussion with the keynote speakers**  
Moderator: *Tim Nguyen*, World Health Organization  
(Questions from *Slido*)

**15:40 – 15:50**  
**Team formation & move to break out rooms in ZOOM**  
- Teams (red, blue, yellow, green) – academics, non-state actor observers  
- Observers (UN, partners)  
- Keynote speakers  
- Topic masters

**15:50 – 16:40**  
**Break-out discussion**  
Discussion in teams expanded with keynote speakers & observers  
Break-out group moderators:  
* Elisabeth Wilhelm, US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, USA  
* Tina Purnat, World Health Organization  
* Margaux Mathis, World Health Organization  
* Stefano Burzo, World Health Organization

**16:40 – 17:10**  
**Report back to plenary**  
Moderator: *Tim Nguyen*, World Health Organization  
Break-out group rapporteurs:  
* Marcelo D’Agostino, PAHO / WHO Regional Office for the Americas  
(continued on next page)
### Day 1, continued

**Tuesday, 30 June 2020, 12:00 – 17:00 Geneva time**

(continued)  
- Atsu Ishizumi, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA  
- Aybuke Koyuncu, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA  
- Tom Trewinnard, World Health Organization  

(Discussion via Slido)

17:25 – 17:40 **Comments by conference co-chairs**  
*Neville Calleja*, Ministry for Health, Malta  
*Viroj Tangcharoensathien*, Ministry of Health, Thailand

Housekeeping, introduction to support team, ways of working, and schedule for next weeks  
*Elisabeth Wilhelm*, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA

17:40 **Adjourn**

### Days 2, 3, 4 & 5

**Closed working sessions**

**1, 7, 9, 14 July 2020**  
See table below for team sprint timings

- Participants work in assigned teams.  
- Rotating discussion of each team through four set topics.  
- Discussion tasks for each team per topic:  
  1. **Review discussion and outputs** that previous teams have recorded on this topic.  
  2. **Discuss the leading questions** selected by the Topic Master for the team and record the brainstorm  
  3. **Discussion:**  
     - Discuss a broad-stroke SWOT analysis of research field to address the working group topic  
     - Identify the most urgent 3-5 research questions that need answers now  
     - What are barriers and enablers for answering these research questions?

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**TOPIC 1**

**How can the digital-physical information environment be measured and monitored?**

*Using data triangulation, real-time surveillance & monitoring and metrics development*

**Topic masters:**
- **Neil Johnson**  
  George Washington University, USA  
- **Anatoliy Gruzd**  
  Ryerson University, Canada

**Support to topic masters:**
- **Marcelo D’Agostino**  
  Pan American Health Organization / WHO Regional Office for the Americas  
- **Dylan Johnson Restrepo**  
  Volunteer
TOPIC 2
How does information originate and spread?
Information environment, how low-quality information develops into harmful narratives and how misinformation propagates

Topic masters:
• Anis Azlan
  Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia
• Masato Kajimoto
  University of Hong Kong, China

Support to topic masters:
• Atsu Ishizumi
  US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA
• Saad Uakkas
  Volunteer

TOPIC 3
How does information affect and impact individuals and populations?
Understanding the risk factors, impact on population, societies’ behaviour & action, building & maintaining trust and resilience to misinformation

Topic masters:
• Julienne Anoko
  World Health Organization
• Judit Bayer
  Budapest Business School, Hungary

Support to topic masters:
• Margaux Mathis
  World Health Organization
• Vicky Houssiere
  World Health Organization

TOPIC 4
What interventions work to protect and mitigate?
Improving intervention design and building the evidence-based response toolkit

Topic masters:
• Emily Vraga
  University of Minnesota
• Sara Rubinelli
  University of Lucerne

Support to topic masters:
• Aybuke Koyuncu
  US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA
• Jamie Guth
  World Health Organization
Days 2, 3, 4 & 5, continued

Closed working sessions

1, 7, 9, 14 July 2020

See table below for team sprint timings

Team color coordination

- Coach – Red team: Tom Trewinnard, World Health Organization
- Coach – Blue team: Daniel Hougendobler, World Health Organization
- Coach – Green team: Brian Yau, World Health Organization
- Coach – Yellow team: Neetu Abad, US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control

Glossary curation

- Stefano Burzo, World Health Organization
- Patricia Ndumbi Ngamal, World Health Organization

Team rotation schedule through discussion topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Expected 90-120 min)</th>
<th>All times are Geneva time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOPIC</strong></td>
<td>Day 2 1 July 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infodemiology glossary Epidemiology-infodemiology linkages</td>
<td>All four teams feed back any further comments to the topic masters &amp; assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 1</strong>: How can the digital information environment be measured and monitored?</td>
<td>Blue team 01:00 – 03:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 2</strong>: How does information originate and spread?</td>
<td>Yellow team 02:00 – 04:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 3</strong>: How does information affect and impact individuals and populations?</td>
<td>Green team 15:00 – 17:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 4</strong>: What interventions work to protect and mitigate?</td>
<td>Red team 13:00 – 15:00</td>
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</table>
Closed session plenary

Thursday, 16 July 2020, 12:00 – 15:30 Geneva time

12:00 – 12:10 Welcome by conference co-chairs
  Neville Calleja, Ministry for Health, Malta
  Viroj Tangcharoensathien, Ministry of Health, Thailand

12:10 – 12:20 Report back from Topic 2
  Anis Azlan, Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia
  Masato Kajimoto, University of Hong Kong, China
  (Discussion via Slido)

12:20 – 12:30 Report back from Topic 3
  Julienne Ngoundoung Anoko, World Health Organization
  Judit Bayer, Budapest Business School, Hungary
  (Discussion via Slido)

12:30 – 12:40 Report back from Topic 1
  Neil Johnson, George Washington University, USA
  Anatoliy Gruzd, Ryerson University, Canada
  (Discussion via Slido)

12:40 – 12:50 Report back from Topic 4
  Emily Vraga, University of Minnesota
  Sara Rubinelli, University of Lucerne
  (Discussion via Slido)

12:50 – 13:00 AFK break

13:00 – 13:15 Presentation of the public health research agenda for managing infodemics
  Tina Purnat, World Health Organization
  (Discussion via Slido)

  Stefano Burzo, World Health Organization
  Patricia Ndumbi Ngamala, World Health Organization
  (Discussion via Slido)

13:25 – 13:35 Reflections from coaches
  Tom Trewinnard, World Health Organization
  Daniel Hougendobler, World Health Organization
  Brian Yau, World Health Organization
  Neetu Abad, US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, USA
  (Discussion via Slido)

13:35 – 13:55 Discussion
  Questions & discussion via Slido

13:55 – 14:00 AFK break

14:00 – 14:25 Reflections by technical partners
  Moderator: Tim Nguyen, World Health Organization
  Dimitri Prybylski, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA
  Anton Schneider, United States Agency for International Development
  Meaghan Charlton, Sabin Vaccine Institute
  Susan Mackay, GAVI
  BMGF TBC
## Day 6, continued

**Closed session plenary**

**Thursday, 16 July 2020, 12:00 – 15:30 Geneva time**

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<td>14:25 – 14:35</td>
<td><strong>Next steps</strong></td>
<td>Tim Nguyen, World Health Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:35 – 14:55</td>
<td><strong>Remarks by chairs</strong></td>
<td>Neville Calleja, Ministry for Health, Malta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Viroj Tangcharoensathien, Ministry of Health, Thailand</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:55 – 15:10</td>
<td><strong>Closing remarks</strong></td>
<td>Mike Ryan, TBC</td>
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<td>Sylvie Briand, World Health Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:10</td>
<td><strong>Adjournment of closed working session</strong></td>
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## Day 7

**Public webinar**

**Tuesday, 21 July 2020, 15:00 – 16:30 Geneva time**

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<tr>
<td>15:00 – 16:30</td>
<td><strong>Round table on the outcomes of the conference</strong></td>
<td>Sarah Hess, World Health Organization, Stefano Burzo, World Health Organization, Elisabeth Wilhelm, US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, USA, Margaux Mathis, World Health Organization, Brian Yau, World Health Organization, TBD: Emily Vraga / Pier Luigi Sacco / Hermann Wasserman, Neil Johnson, Anis or Masato by video statement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


List of participants

Neetu Abad*
Behavioural Scientist
Global Immunization Division
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
USA
vjjx3@cdc.gov

Naglaa Ahmed
Public health consultant
Epidemiologist, STOP programme graduate
Egypt
nelmeguid@hotmail.com

Kwame Amponsa-Achiano
Programme Manager
Ministry of Health
Ghana
kachiano@gmail.com

Arina Anis Azlan*
Lecturer
Centre for Communication and Digital Society, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
Malaysia
arina@ukm.edu.my

Ruben Arcos
Professor
Department of Communication Sciences and Sociology
Rey Juan Carlos University
Spain
Ruben.arcos@urjc.es

James Ayodele
Principal Communication Officer
Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
Ethiopia
Ayodelej@africa-union.org

Judith Bayer*
Associate Professor
Department for Communication Studies
Budapest Business School of Applied Sciences
Hungary
bayer.judit@uni-bge.hu

Anja Bechmann
Professor
School of Communication and Culture - Media Studies
Aarhus University
Denmark
anjabechmann@cc.au.dk

David Broniatowski
Associate Professor
School of Engineering and Applied Science
George Washington University
USA
broniatowski@gwu.edu

Ian Brooks
Research Scientist
School of Information Sciences
University of Illinois
USA
ianb@illinois.edu

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
Lucie Bucci
Senior manager, Immunize Canada
University of Montreal
Canada
lbucci@cpha.ca

Neville Calleja*
Director
Directorate for Health Information and Research
Ministry for Health
Malta
neville.calleja@gov.mt

Elinor Carmi
Postdoctorate Research Associate in Digital Culture & Society
Department of Communication and Media
University of Liverpool
United Kingdom
Elinor.Carmi@liverpool.ac.uk

Damon Centola
Professor of Communication, Sociology and Engineering
Annenberg School for Communication, the School of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
University of Pennsylvania
USA
dcentola@asc.upenn.edu

Orana Chandrasiri
Researcher
International Health Policy Program
Ministry of Public Health
Thailand
orana@ihpp.thaigov.net

Ying Cui
Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention
China
cuiying@chinacdc.cn

Katharine Dommett
Senior Lecturer in the Public Understanding of Politics
Department of Politics and International Relations
University of Sheffield
United Kingdom
k.dommett@sheffield.ac.uk

Joan Donovan
Research Director
Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy
Harvard Kennedy School - John F. Kennedy School of Government
USA
joan_donovan@hks.harvard.edu

Eve Dube
Researcher
Social Sciences and Humanities Network
Québec National Institute of Public Health
Canada
eve.dube@inspq.qc.ca

Adam Dunn
Head of Discipline and Associate Professor in the Discipline of Biomedical Informatics and Digital Health
School of Medical Sciences
University of Sydney
Australia
adam.dunn@sydney.edu.au

Ullrich Ecker
Professor of Psychological Science
Faculty of Science, School of Psychological Science
University of Western Australia
Australia
ullrich.ecker@uwa.edu.au

Laura Espinosa
Scientific Officer Epidemic Intelligence
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
Sweden
Laura.Espinosa@ecdc.europa.eu

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
Camille Francois
Berkman-Klein Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University
USA
camille.francois@graphika.com

Fu Gao
Director-General
Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention
China
gaofu@chinacdc.cn

Anat Gesser-Edelsburg
Professor and Head of Health Promotion Programme
School of Public Health
University of Haifa
Israel
ageser@univ.haifa.ac.il

Nina Gobat
Senior Researcher
Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences
University of Oxford
United Kingdom
nina.gobat@phc.ox.ac.uk

Alfred Gomez
Public health consultant
Epidemiologist, STOP programme graduate
gomezalfred20@yahoo.com

Kacper Gradon
University of Warsaw
Poland
k.gradon@ucl.ac.uk

Anatoliy Gruzd*
Associate Professor, Director, Social Media Lab
Ted Rogers School of Management
Ryerson University
Canada
gruz@ryerson.ca

Aliaksandr Herasimenka
Political communication scholar and a postdoctoral researcher
Oxford Internet Institute - Computational Propaganda Project
University of Oxford
United Kingdom
aliaksandr.herasimenka@oii.ox.ac.uk

Beverly Ho
OIC-Director IV
Health Promotion and Communication Service
Department of Health – Government of the Philippines
Philippines
Beverlyho.doh@gmail.com

Edda Humprecht
Senior Research and Teaching Associate
Department of Communication and Media Research
University of Zurich
Switzerland
e.humprecht@ikmz.uzh.ch

Cherstyn Hurley
Immunisation publications manager
Public Health England
United Kingdom
cherstyn.hurley@phe.gov.uk

Santi Indra Astuti
Communication Studies Faculty
Bandung Islamic University (Universitas Islam Bandung)
Indonesia
santi.indraastuti@gmail.com

Atsu Ishizumi*
CDC/ORISE Fellow
Demand for Immunization Team
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
USA
ovh2@cdc.gov

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position/Institution</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yaling Jin</td>
<td>Assistant Researcher Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention China <a href="mailto:jinyl@chinacdc.cn">jinyl@chinacdc.cn</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Johnson*</td>
<td>Professor Department of Physics, Columbian College of Arta and Sciences George Washington University USA <a href="mailto:neiljohnson@gwu.edu">neiljohnson@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masato Kajimoto</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Practice Journalism and Media Studies Centre University of Hong Kong China <a href="mailto:kajimoto@hku.hk">kajimoto@hku.hk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aybuke Koyuncu*</td>
<td>PHI/CDC Global Health Fellowship Program Centers for Disease Control and Prevention USA <a href="mailto:puj5@cdc.gov">puj5@cdc.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shibani Kulkarni*</td>
<td>CDC/ORISE Evaluation Fellow Global Immunization Division Centers for Disease Control and Prevention USA <a href="mailto:oqj4@cdc.gov">oqj4@cdc.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hao Li</td>
<td>Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention China <a href="mailto:lihao@chinacdc.cn">lihao@chinacdc.cn</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark MacCarthey</td>
<td>Senior Fellow and Adjunct Professor Communication, Culture and Technology Program Georgetown University USA <a href="mailto:maccartm@georgetown.edu">maccartm@georgetown.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominic Maddumba</td>
<td>Executive Assistant Office of the Secretary Department of Health – Government of the Philippines Philippines <a href="mailto:dominicmaddumba.doh@gmail.com">dominicmaddumba.doh@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Mai</td>
<td>Director of Business and Communications and Researcher, Social Media Lab Ted Rogers School of Management Ryerson University Canada <a href="mailto:philip.mai@ryerson.ca">philip.mai@ryerson.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Nabarro</td>
<td>Chair of Global Health and co-Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation (IGHI) Imperial College London United Kingdom <a href="mailto:david@4sd.info">david@4sd.info</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariam Nouh</td>
<td>Research Associate Center of Complex Engineering Systems (CCES) King Abdulaziz City for Science &amp; Technology Kingdom of Saudi Arabia <a href="mailto:mnouh@kacst.edu.sa">mnouh@kacst.edu.sa</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orkan Okan</td>
<td>Research Associate Faculty of Educational Science University of Bielefeld Germany <a href="mailto:orkan.okan@uni-bielefeld.de">orkan.okan@uni-bielefeld.de</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saad Omer</td>
<td>Director Yale Institute for Global Health Yale University USA <a href="mailto:saad.omer@yale.edu">saad.omer@yale.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
Claudia Pagliari
Senior Lecturer in Primary Care and Informatics / Programme Co-Director (MSc Global eHealth)
Usher Institute – Global Health Academy
University of Edinburgh
United Kingdom
claudia.pagliari@ed.ac.uk

Kisoo Park
Professor
Institute for Occupational & Environmental Health
Korea University College of Medicine
South Korea
blesspark@naver.com

Palak Patel*
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
USA
ofj4@cdc.gov

Dimitri Prybylski*
Team Lead
Demand for Immunization Team
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
USA
hjt1@cdc.gov

Junaid Qadir
Professor
Electrical Engineering Department
Information Technology University of the Punjab
Pakistan
junaid.qadir@itu.edu.pk

Atonu Rabbani
Associate Professor
James P Grant School of Public Health
BRAC University
Bangladesh
atonu.rabbani@bracu.ac.bd

Emily Rempel
Knowledge Translation Lead
British Columbia Centre for Disease Control
Canada
emily.rempel@bccdc.ca

Hana Rohan
Assistant Professor in Social Sciences
UK Public Health Rapid Support Team
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Ethiopia
Hana.Rohan@lshtm.ac.uk

Sara Rubinelli*
Professor in Health Sciences with a focus in health communication
Department of Health Sciences and Medicine
University of Lucerne
Switzerland
sara.rubinelli@unilu.ch

Pier Luigi Sacco
Professor
Department of Humanities Studies
IULM University
Italy
pierluigi.sacco@iulm.it

Marietje Schaake
International Policy Director
Cyber Policy Center, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Stanford university
USA
mschaake@stanford.edu

Tara Sell
Senior Scholar, Assistant Professor
Center for Health Security, Bloomberg School of Public Health
Johns Hopkins University
USA
tksell@jhu.edu

Kenji Shibuya
Director
Institute for Population Health
King’s College London
United Kingdom
kenji.shibuya@kcl.ac.uk

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
Kai Shu  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Computer Science  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
USA  
kshu@iit.edu

Briony Swire-Thompson  
Associate Research Scientist  
Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences  
Northeastern University  
USA  
b.swire-thompson@northeastern.edu

Lisa Talia Moretti  
Digital Sociologist and Head of user research  
Institute of Management Studies  
Goldsmiths University of London  
United Kingdom  
l.moretti@gold.ac.uk

Mike Tamir  
Lecturer  
School of Information  
University of California Berkeley  
USA  
mtamir@ischool.berkeley.edu

Viroj Tangcharoensathien*  
Senior Adviser  
International Health Policy Program  
Ministry of Public Health  
Thailand  
viroj@ihpp.thaigov.net

Naveen Thacker  
Director  
Deep Children Hospital and Research Center  
Kutch, Gurajat, and International Pediatric Association  
India  
drnaveenthacker@gmail.com

Akhona Tshangelena  
Programme manager  
Mortality Surveillance  
Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention  
Ethiopia  
AkhonaT@africa-union.org

Shannon Turner  
Executive Director  
Public Health Association of British Columbia  
Canada  
execdir@phabc.org

Heidi Tworek  
Assistant Professor  
Department of History  
University of British Columbia  
Canada  
heidi.tworek@ubc.ca

Emily Vraga*  
Associate Professor  
Hubbard School of Journalism And Mass Communication  
University of Minensota  
USA  
ekvraga@umn.edu

Herman Wasserman*  
Professor of Media Studies and Director of the Centre for Film and Media Studies  
University of Cape Town  
South Africa  
herman.wasserman@uct.ac.za

Robyn Whittaker  
Honorary Associate Professor and Programme Co-Lead, eHealth/mHealth  
National Institute for Health Innovation  
University of Auckland  
New Zealand  
r.whittaker@auckland.ac.nz

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
Elisabeth Wilhelm*
Health Communications Specialist
Demand for Immunization team, Global Immunization Division
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
USA
nla5@cdc.gov

Andrea Würz
Expert Behaviour Change and Risk Communication
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
Sweden
Andrea.Wurz@ecdc.europa.eu

Lei Zhou
Senior Researcher, Chief of Branch for Emerging Infectious Disease
Public Health Emergency Center
Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention
China
zhoulei@chinacdc.cn

Ying Zhou
Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention
China
zhouying@chinacdc.cn

Observers

Juliet Bedford
Anthrologica
United Kingdom
julietbedford@anthrologica.com

Manlio De Domenico
Head of the Complex Multilayer Networks (CoMuNe) Research Unit
Center for Information Technology
Fondazione Bruno Kessler
Italy
mdedomenico@fbk.eu

Stéphane Duguin
Chief Executive Officer
CyberPeace Institute
Switzerland
cromet@cyberpeaceinstitute.org

Bruce Gellin
President
Global Immunization
Sabin Institute
USA
Bruce.Gellin@Sabin.org

Catherine Gicheru
ICFJ Knight Fellow
Kenya
cgicheru@gmail.com

Aino Huxley
Publications Editor
Hybrid CoE - The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats
Finland
aino.huxley@hybridcoe.fi

Rachel Lonsdale
Senior Program Officer
Communications and Advocacy for the Polio Program
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
USA
Rachel.Lonsdale@gatesfoundation.org

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
Susan Mackay  
Head, Demand, Communities and Gender  
GAVI  
smackay@gavi.org

Erin Mcaweeney  
Graphika Inc.  
USA  
erin.mcaweeney@graphika.com

Danielle Pedi  
Senior Program Officer  
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene  
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation  
USA  
Danielle.Pedi@gatesfoundation.org

Anton Schneider  
Senior SBC Advisor  
Bureau for Global Health, Office of Infectious Disease  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)  
USA  
aschneider@usaid.gov

Melanie Smith  
Cyber Intelligence Analyst  
Graphika Inc.  
USA  
melanie.smith@graphika.com

Harry Sufehmi  
Founder  
Mafindo  
Indonesia  
harry@mafindo.or.id

Olivia Tulloch  
Anthrologica  
United Kingdom  
oliviatulloch@anthrologica.com

Claire Warde  
Co-Founder and Director  
Firstdraft  
United Kingdom  
claire@firstdraftnews.com

Sonia Whitehead  
Head of Research  
BBC Media Action  
United Kingdom  
sonia.whitehead@bbc.co.uk

Harry Wilson  
Chief Product Officer  
CitiBeats  
Spain  
hwilson@citibeats.net

Tim Zecchin  
Managing Director  
Media Measurement  
United Kingdom  
Tim.Zecchin@mediameasurement.com

United Nations Organizations

Guy Berger  
Director for Freedom of Expression and Media Development  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)  
g.berger@unesco.org

Carla Daher  
Global Emergency Specialist  
Community Engagement and Accountability to Affected Populations  
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)  
cdaher@unicef.org

Stewart Davies  
Humanitarian Affairs Officer  
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)  
davies1@un.org

Katie Drew  
Innovation Officer (Communicating with Communities)  
The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)  
drew@unhcr.org
Niamh Hanafin
Senior Advisor Information Integrity
United Nations Development Fund (UNDP)
niamh.hanafin@undp.org

Rustam Haydarov
Global Polio Eradication Programme
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
rhaydarov@unicef.org

Miguel Luengo-Oroz
Chief Data Scientist
UN Global Pulse
miguel@unglobalpulse.org

Carlos Navarro Colorado
Principal Advisor
Public Health in Emergency
UNICEF
cnavarrocolorado@unicef.org

Angus Thompson
Senior Social Scientist: Demand for
Immunization
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
jthomson@unicef.org

Kolitha Prabash Wickramage
Global Health Research and Epidemiology
Coordinator
Migration Health Division
International Organization for Migration
kwickramage@iom.int

Fatou Wurie
Emergency Specialist
U-Report
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
fwurie@unicef.org

Other international organizations

Vitalba Crivello
Policy Analyst
European Science Media Hub (STOA)
European Parliament
Belgium
vitalba.crivello@europarl.europa.eu

Sabrina Spieleder
Information and Communication Officer
Strategic Communications Division
European Union External Action
Belgium
sabrina.spieleder@eeas.europa.eu

World Health Organization

Regional Office for Africa

Halim Abdallah
Deputy Communications Focal Point
COVID-19 Response, WHO Health Emergencies Programme
habdallah@who.int

Julienne Anoko*
Risk communication & community
engagement/Social sciences Officer
Emergency Preparedness
ngoundoungj@who.int

Tom Trewinnard*
Consultant
COVID-19 Response, WHO Health Emergencies Programme
tom@fathm.co

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
Regional Office for the Americas / Pan American Health Organization

Marcelo D’Agostino*
Senior Advisor
Information Systems for Health, Evidence and Intelligence for Action in Health
dagostim@paho.org

Regional Office for Eastern Mediterranean

Tamer El-Maghraby
Information Officer
Infectious Hazard Prevention and Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
elmaghrabyt@who.int

Beste Sultan GÜLGÜN
Technical Officer (Communications)
Country Health Emergency Preparedness & IHR, Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office
gulgunb@who.int

Arash Rashidian
Director
Science, Information and Dissemination Division
rashidiana@who.int

Regional Office for Europe

Olga Fradkina*
Administrative Officer
WHO European Centre for Primary Health Care
fradkinao@who.int

Clayton Hamilton
Technical Officer
Country Health Policies and Systems
hamiltonc@who.int

Regional Office for South-East Asia

Supriya Bezbaruah
Technical Officer, Risk Communications
WHO Health Emergencies Programme
bezbaruahs@who.int

Regional Office for Western Pacific

Leilia Dore
Consultant, Community Engagement (COVID-19)
WHO Health Emergencies Programme
dorel@who.int

Headquarters

Philip Abdelmalik
Team Lead
Information Systems and Innovation for Public Health Intelligence, Health Emergency Information and Risk Assessment, WHO Health Emergencies Programme
abdelmalikp@who.int

Zerthun Alemu Belay*
Assistant to Unit Head
High Impact Events Preparedness, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
alemubelayz@who.int

Ian Askew
Director
Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, Science Division
askewi@who.int

Yolanda Bayugo
Technical Officer
Learning Solutions and Training
bayugo@who.int

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
Sylvie Briand*
Director
Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
briands@who.int

André Buell*
Office Assistant
High Impact Events Preparedness, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
buella@who.int

Stefano Burzo*
Consultant
High Impact Events Preparedness, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
burzos@who.int

Melinda Frost
Technical Officer
High Impact Events Preparedness, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
mfrost@who.int

Ioana Ghiga
Technical Officer
High Impact Events Preparedness, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
ghigai@who.int

Hermjona Gjyla*
Clerk
Staff Health Insurance
gjylah@who.int

Jamie Guth*
Consultant
High Impact Events Preparedness, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
jguth@who.int

Lisa Hansen
Consultant
Health Emergency Information and Risk Assessment, WHO Health Emergencies Programme
hansenli@who.int

Daniel Hougendobler*
Project Officer
Pandemic Influenza Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
hougendoblerd@who.int

Vicky Houssiere*
Consultant
High Impact Events Preparedness, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
houssierev@who.int

Aleksandra Kuzmanovic
Social Media Officer
Department of Communications
kuzmanovica@who.int

Rosamund Lewis*
Medical Officer
Emerging Diseases and Zoonoses
lewisr@who.int

Jianfang Liu*
Web Producer
High Impact Events Preparedness, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
liujia@who.int

Abdi Mahamud
Incident Manager
Strategic Health Operations
mahamuda@who.int

Jaouad Mahjour
Assistant Director-General
Emergency Preparedness
mahjourj@who.int

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
Margaux Mathis*
Technical Officer
Epidemic Forecasting and Analysis, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
mathism@who.int

Lisa Menning
Technical Officer
Essential Programme on Immunization
menningl@who.int

Thomas Moran
Consultant
High Impact Events Preparedness, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
morant@who.int

Patricia Ndumbi Ngamala*
Technical Officer
Digital Health Technologies, Digital Health and Innovation, Science Division
ndumbip@who.int

Tim Nguyen*
Unit Head
High Impact Events Preparedness, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
nguyent@who.int

Andrew Pattison
Technical Officer
Department of Communications
pattisona@who.int

Jonathan Polonsky
Epidemiologist
Health Emergency Information and Risk Assessment, WHO Health Emergencies Programme
polonskyj@who.int

Tina Purnat*
Technical Officer
Digital Health Technologies, Digital Health and Innovation, Science Division
purnatt@who.int

Romana Rauf*
Programme Management Officer
Infectious Hazard Prevention and Preparedness, Emergency Preparedness
raufr@who.int

Isabelle Sahinovic
Technical Officer
Pharmacovigilance, Regulation and Safety
sahinovici@who.int

Sameera Suri
GOARN Secretariat, Emergency Response
suris@who.int

Brian Yau*
Consultant (Vaccine Safety)
Pharmacovigilance, Regulation and Safety
byau@who.int

* Member of the expanded conference organizing team
Biographies

Co-chairs:
- Neville Calleja
  Ministry for Health, Malta
- Viroj Tangcharoensathien
  Ministry of Health, Thailand

Keynote speakers:
- Anja Bechmann
  Aarhus University, Denmark
- Neil Johnson
  George Washington University, USA
- Saad Omer
  Yale University, USA
- Herman Wasserman
  University of Cape Town, South Africa

Topic masters:
- Julienne Anoko
  World Health Organization
- Anis Azlan
  Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia
- Judit Bayer
  Budapest Business School, Hungary
- Anatoliy Gruzd
  Ryerson University, Canada
- Masato Kajimoto
  University of Hong Kong, China
- Sara Rubinelli
  University of Lucerne, Switzerland
- Emily Vraga
  University of Minnesota, USA

World Health Organization:
- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
  Director-General, World Health Organization
- Sylvie Briand
  World Health Organization
- Stefano Burzo
  World Health Organization
- Rosamund Lewis
  World Health Organization
- Margaux Mathis
  World Health Organization
- Tim Nguyen
  World Health Organization
- Tina Purnat
  World Health Organization

Panelists from Centers for Disease Prevention and Control:
- Dimitri Prybylski
  US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control
- Akhona Tshangela
  Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
- Elisabeth Wilhelm
  US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control
- Andrea Wurz
  European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
- Lei Zhou
  Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, China
Dr Neville Calleja qualified as a medical doctor in 1999 and proceeded to study Medical Statistics and Public Health after his medical training. He qualified as a specialist in public health medicine in 2006 and was awarded Membership of the Faculty of Public Health in the UK in 2011.

In 2013, Neville completed his PhD studies on the statistical correction of misclassification of disease status between self-reported and examined health surveys. He has been employed at the Directorate for Health Information and Statistics within the Ministry responsible for Health since 2001, taking on its helm in 2007, and also served as Acting Chief Medical Officer during 2014. DHIR is responsible for the collation of national health statistics on behalf of the National Statistics Office.

Since 2007, the Directorate took on a research role, conducting a series of epidemiological surveys on a national scale, including two Health Interview Surveys, a survey on Elderly Needs Assessment, and a Sexual Health survey – the main data sources for health inequality analyses in Malta. Dr Calleja has 18 years of experience lecturing medical statistics, epidemiology and public health to all health care professionals, together with ethical and scientific review of projects at local and international level.

He has been part of the Senior Advisory and the Transitioning Strategy groups of the Malta COVID-19 Response team since the beginning of the epidemic here in Malta early in March.
Viroj Tangcharoensathien, MD. PhD, is the Senior Adviser to International Health Policy Program (IHPP), Ministry of Public Health.

Trained in medicine at Mahidol University, he served for almost 10 years in small rural hospitals in north-eastern Thailand. He received the Thai Medical Association’s Best Rural Doctor Award in 1986. He completed a PhD on community health financing at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, supported by Rockefeller Foundation Scholarship, where his thesis won the Woodruff Medal in 1991 for the most outstanding PhD thesis of that year in the School.

In 2001 he co-found International Health Policy Programme (IHPP), Ministry of Public Health, Thailand as first Deputy Director, then Director, then Senior Advisor and now Secretary General.

He received the Edwin Chadwick Medal in 2011 for his contributions to improve health systems in the interests of the poor; and the Sam Adjei Distinguished Public Service Award in 2018 by the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research and Health Systems Global for his engagement in health systems development and research. He received WHO Director-General’s Health Leaders 2019 Award in recognition of his outstanding leadership in Global Health. He published 243 articles in international peer review journals since 1989.
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
Anja Bechmann is a professor of media science and the director of DATALAB – Center for Digital Social Research, Aarhus University, Denmark. She is also director of the EU Center of Excellence for Research in Social Media and Information Disorders, and a former member of the EU Commission HLEG on Disinformation. She was a thinker in residence at the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts in 2019. Her research focuses on social media and collective behavior, and her work has been published in journals such as New Media & Society, Digital Journalism, The Information Society, and Big Data & Society.
Neil Johnson is a professor of physics at GW and heads up a new initiative in Complexity and Data Science which combines cross-disciplinary fundamental research with data science to attack complex real-world problems. His research interests lie in the broad area of Complex Systems and ‘many-body’ out-of-equilibrium systems of collections of objects, including humans and machines.

Neil is a Fellow of the American Physical Society (APS) and is the recipient of the 2018 Burton Award from the APS. He received his BA/MA from St. John’s College, Cambridge, University of Cambridge and his PhD as a Kennedy Scholar from Harvard University. He was a Research Fellow at the University of Cambridge, and later a Professor of Physics at the University of Oxford until 2007, having joined the faculty in 1992. Following a period as Professor of Physics at the University of Miami, he was appointed Professor of Physics at George Washington University in 2018. He presented the Royal Institution Lectures ‘Arrows of Time’ on BBC TV in 1999. He has more than 300 published research papers across a variety of research topics. His published books include Financial Market Complexity published by Oxford University Press and Simply Complexity: A Clear Guide to Complexity Theory published by Oneworld Publications. Neil co-founded and co-directed CABDyN (Complex Agent-Based Dynamical Systems) which is Oxford University’s interdisciplinary research center in Complexity Science, and an Oxford University interdisciplinary research center in financial complexity (OCCF).
Saad Omer
Yale University, USA

Saad B. Omer is the inaugural Director of the Yale Institute for Global Health, and a Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at Yale University, Schools of Medicine and Public Health. He has conducted studies in the United States, Guatemala, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and South Africa. Dr Omer’s research portfolio includes clinical trials to estimate efficacy and safety of maternal and/or infant influenza, pertussis, polio, measles and pneumococcal vaccines and trials to evaluate drug regimens to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV. He has published over 290 papers in peer reviewed journals and has mentored over 100 junior faculty, clinical, and research post-doctoral fellows and PhD and other graduate students.
Herman Wasserman

University of Cape Town,
South Africa

Herman Wasserman is Professor of Media Studies and Director of the Centre for Film and Media Studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. He has published widely on media, democracy and misinformation in Africa. He is Editor-in-Chief of the journal African Journalism Studies and a Fellow of the International Communication Association.
Julienne N. Anoko, is a social-anthropologist (PhD) from the Sorbonne University in France. She completed her academic preparation in the area of epidemiology & public health, and gender & health performing masters’ degrees in the University Rey Juan Carlos in Spain. For greater than 20 years, she has been demonstrating and putting in practice how the use of sociocultural evidence from research/ action research can contribute in efficient programming and accountability of development and humanitarian’ interventions. Thus, she has been supporting several Governments, UN agencies and NGOs in Europe, Latin America and Caribs and Africa.

Between 1997 and 2019, she collaborated as researcher for the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, responded outbreaks (Ebola, Marburg, H1N1, Zika, Plague) with UNICEF, WHO, UNMEER in coordinating the implementation of interventions fitting with sociocultural contexts.

Dr Anoko is recipient of both the ‘Research and Innovation 2015 Award’ from the French Red Cross Humanitarian Fund and the ‘MARSH AWARD FOR ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE WORLD, 2017’ from the UK Royal Institute of Anthropology.

Since February 2019, Dr Anoko is the Social Sciences/Risk Communication & Community Engagement Focal Point of the WHO Regional Office for Africa into the Emergency Preparedness and Response Programme (EPR).

Dr. Anoko is senior advisor of networks such as ALERRT, SoNar Global, IDS, RIF&PIC, RAE, etc. She has published books and papers, and contributed in developing several guidelines for United Nations agencies.
Anis Azlan

*Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia*

Arina Anis Azlan is an academic at the Centre for Research in Media and Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her research interests are in health communication, information management and communicative behaviour among publics. Her current research projects include investigating factors influencing disease prevention behaviours.
Judit Bayer
Budapest Business School, Hungary

Judit Bayer is associate professor of media law and international law at the Budapest Business School, Hungary, and a Schumann Fellow at the University of Münster. Her research background is in human rights, freedom of expression, media freedom and pluralism, and privacy. She has a PhD in constitutional law (internet regulation) and habilitation in constitutional law (data protection).

Bayer has authored several books and articles in the field of media law, more narrowly in the field of disinformation, liability of internet service providers, freedom of expression on the internet, public service broadcasting, and human rights. She has authored numerous articles and has presented papers in international conferences. She has been member and director in various research projects, among others on media pluralism within the European Union in 2016, and on disinformation and propaganda and its impact on human rights and democracies in 2018.
Anatoliy Gruzd, PhD is a Canada Research Chair in Social Media Data Stewardship, Associate Professor at the Ted Rogers School of Management at Ryerson University, and Director of Research at the Social Media Lab. Anatoliy is also a Member of the Royal Society of Canada’s College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists; a co-editor of a multidisciplinary journal on Big Data and Society; and a founding co-chair of the International Conference on Social Media and Society.

His research initiatives explore how social media platforms are changing the ways in which people and organizations communicate, collaborate and disseminate information and how these changes impact the norms and structures of modern society.
Masato Kajimoto, Ph.D., is an associate professor at the Journalism & Media Studies Centre at the University of Hong Kong. He specialized in misinformation ecosystem research in Asia and news literacy education.

In 2019 he founded a student-driven fact-checking initiative called Annie Lab (http://annielab.org) that simulates a working newsroom with an aim to synthesize journalism training and news literacy curricula.

Masato is also the chief producer of the online course on Coursera titled *Making Sense of the News: News Literacy Lessons for Digital Citizens* and the YouTube series *Strapline: News Literacy for the Rest of Us* (http://strapline.org).

He served as the leading researcher and co-editor for the paper ‘Information Disorder in Asia and the Pacific: Overview of Misinformation Ecosystem in Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam’.

His recent publication includes an entry on News Literacy in the Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Communication. Before beginning a career in teaching and research, he worked as an online reporter and web producer for CNN International.
Sara Rubinelli holds a degree in Classics and Philosophy from the Catholic University of Milan (I) and a PhD from the University of Leeds (UK) in the areas of argumentation theory, persuasion and rhetoric. She is Professor in Health Sciences with a focus in health communication at the Department of Health Sciences and Medicine of the University of Lucerne (CH). Since September 2009 she leads there the Person-Centered Healthcare Group at Swiss Paraplegic Research (CH). She is President of the European Association for Communication in Healthcare (EACH). Main areas of interest include: health communication with a main focus on disinformation and risk communication, social marketing and health campaigns, health behavior, biases and heuristics.
Emily Vraga

*University of Minnesota, USA*

Emily K. Vraga is an associate professor at the Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota, where she holds the Don and Carole Larson Professorship in Health Communication. Her research examines methods to correct health misinformation on social media, to limit biased processing of news messages, and to encourage attention to more diverse content online. She has published over 60 peer-reviewed journal articles and has worked with social media companies and public health organizations on best practices to address health misinformation on social media.
World Health Organization
Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was elected as WHO Director-General for a five-year term by WHO Member States at the Seventieth World Health Assembly in May 2017.

He is the first WHO Director-General to have been elected from multiple candidates by the World Health Assembly, and is the first person from the WHO African Region to serve as WHO’s chief technical and administrative officer.

Immediately after taking office on 1 July 2017 Dr Tedros outlined five key priorities for the Organization: universal health coverage; health emergencies; women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health; health impacts of climate and environmental change; and a transformed WHO.

Prior to his election as WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros served as Ethiopia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2012–2016. In this role he led efforts to negotiate the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in which 193 countries committed to the financing necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr Tedros served as Ethiopia’s Minister of Health from 2005–2012, where he led a comprehensive reform of the country’s health system. All roads lead to universal health coverage for Dr Tedros, and he has demonstrated what it takes to expand access to health care with limited resources.
Dr Sylvie Briand (MD, MPH, PhD) is the director of the Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness (GIH), WHO Emergency Preparedness (WPE) at the World Health Organization (WHO/WHE), HQ Geneva.

The Department of Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness (GIH) advances global efforts to prevent and control existing and emerging infectious diseases by increasing access to evidence-based interventions; fostering impactful innovation; and leveraging technical, operational and strategic partnerships. The scope of GIH includes COVID-19 but also other dangerous pathogens such as pandemic influenza, plague, Nipah virus, smallpox and other pox viruses and arboviruses (Zika, and Chikungunya).

Since 2001, Dr Briand has been actively involved in the detection, preparedness and response to global threats, leading the scientific and strategic component of the WHO response (avian and pandemic influenza, Ebola, Zika, Plague, yellow fever, cholera, MERS).

Before joining WHO, Dr Briand worked as public health project director for different global health agencies in various geographic regions.
Stefano Burzo is a consultant supporting the WHO COVID-19 Infodemic Management Response pillar. He is completing his PhD in political science and international relations at the University of British Columbia.

He has training and experience in methodologies of social science research, both quantitative (e.g. large-n data analyses) and qualitative (e.g. interviews, survey design). He is using mixed methods in his dissertation. His research focuses on international cooperation on investment developing low-income countries and international cooperation, especially in the context of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs).
Dr Rosamund Lewis is leading on the health sciences stream of the Infodemic Management group in the WHO COVID-19 response. Her day job in the Emergencies Programme is to head the WHO Smallpox Secretariat, leading on orthopoxviruses and biosecurity for the agency. A public health physician with an early career in family and emergency medicine, Rosamund has served WHO, the Government of Canada and other agencies at global, national and municipal levels in emergency preparedness, surveillance and response, immunization, and a range of disease control programmes. Other roles focused on field epidemiology in emergency settings (MSF/Epicentre) and new vaccines and health systems (GAVI/CIDA). Along with a Bachelor of Science and medical degree from McGill University, Rosamund holds a Master of Science in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, a Master of Management, and fellowships in Family Medicine and Public Health and Preventive Medicine and has published extensively in her areas of work.
Ms Margaux Mathis is a Technical Officer in the Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness (GIH) department within the WHO’ Health Emergencies programme (WHE).

She has been involved in many outbreak and pandemic responses since 2014, including Ebola in West Africa in 2014-2015, MERS in the Republic of Korea in 2015, Plague in Madagascar in 2017 and the COVID-19 pandemic. She has worked on many cross-cutting issues such as transfer of knowledge and use of new technologies for better preparedness and response to epidemics.

She is currently part of the Secretariat of the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Infectious Hazards (STAG-IH), which provides independent advice and analysis to WHO Health Emergencies Programme on the infectious hazards that may pose a potential threat to global health security.

Prior to joining WHO, Ms Mathis worked in the health and social sector at local level and at the international level in the United States.

She holds a master degree in political and social sciences, with a specialization in public health policies.
Mr Tim Nguyen is the Head of Unit for High Impact Events in the Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness Department of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme (WHE). His team manages (i) the WHO Information Network for Epidemics (EPI-WIN), a platform to unite the work on managing disease infodemics during emergencies, and (ii) the strategic global governance of pharmaceutical interventions including pandemic influenza and smallpox vaccine as well as influenza antivirals. In the COVID-19 pandemic response, he co-manages the ‘Managing Infodemic’ pillar.

He joined WHO in 2006 initially working as a Technical Officer in the Yellow Fever Programme which managed an initiative funded by the GAVI Alliance to provide 40 million doses of vaccine to most at risk populations in low resource settings. In 2008, he joined WHO’s Global Influenza Programme and took part in the global response work to the first influenza pandemic of the 21st century. In 2011, he was the founding member of WHO’s Global Hepatitis Programme and project manager for the development of the first WHO treatment guideline for HCV.

From 2014-2017, he was the Unit leader for Knowledge Management, Evidence and Research for Policy-Making at the WHO Regional Office for Europe based in Copenhagen, Denmark. There, he established the scientific journal Public Health Panorama and was responsible for the development of the WHO/Europe resolution and action plan for evidence-informed policy-making. Before joining WHO, he worked as management consultant in the pharmaceutical industry.
Tina Purnat is a Technical Officer for Digital Health Technologies in the newly established Department of Digital Health and Innovation at WHO. She works on (i) developing frameworks for assessment and evaluation of AI and other digital health technologies, (ii) standards and tools for health information exchange, and (iii) related aspects of health data governance supporting health information exchange and use of data in health. As part of the WHO response to the COVID-19 epidemic, she currently also supports the WHO infodemic management response pillar.

Tina has worked at the intersection of health research, analysis and policy-making with an emphasis on health information analysis and health information systems. She left basic science research in 2007 to join the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, where she led data collection, capacity building, and reporting of data on notifiable infectious diseases in the EU. She later worked at WHO and University of Munich as an analyst and clinical data manager in clinical trials and implementation research studies in LMICs.

Between 2015-2019, she was Unit Leader for Health Informatics and Information Systems, and 2016-2018 acting Unit Leader and Programme Manager for Health Information, Monitoring and Analysis at WHO Regional Office for Europe. There, she led the European Health Information Gateway; capacity building courses Autumn Schools/Advanced Courses in health information and evidence-informed policymaking; and integration and strengthening of health information systems. She was managing editor of the European Health Report 2018, which outlined the vision for improved use of evidence, research and health information to inform policy-making in the WHO European Region.
Panelists from Centers for Disease Prevention and Control
Dimitri Prybylski is an epidemiologist and Team Lead of the Demand for Immunization team in the Integrated Systems Branch of the Global Immunization Division at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. Recently he has served as the Africa Regional Advisor on CDC’s COVID-19 International Task Force and has also been deployed as the Epidemiology team lead on the Ebola epidemic response in Sierra Leone. Dimitri also was the Team Lead for CDC’s HIV Key Populations Surveillance Team and has over three decades of applied public health experience in over 30 countries. His main technical areas of focus are in surveillance and biobehavioral epidemiological research with a strong interest in multidisciplinary areas such as data triangulation, integrated analysis and the emerging field of Infodemiology. Dimitri holds a Ph.D. in Epidemiology from the University of Maryland School of Medicine, an MPH in International Health and Epidemiology from the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health and a B.S. from the University of Michigan in Biology and Anthropology.
Akhona Tshangela
Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

Ms. Akhona Tshangela joined the Africa CDC in 2016 and is one of the first staff members, she played a critical role in launching Africa CDC and developing its first programs. Currently her main role is to manage the Mortality Surveillance Program. In this role, she is responsible for designing and executing the program’s strategy for understanding the numbers and causes of death in African countries and improving the use of this data for decision making. Currently for the COVID-19 response she is currently the chair the Sciences, regulations and standards technical working group; under the Africa Task Force on Coronavirus (AFTCOR), a joint partnership between Africa CDC and Member States, supporting Member States with making science based policy decisions. She also leads the knowledge management platforms, innovations and research for the COVID-19 response. She is also part of the Steering Committee for the COVID-19 Clinical Research Coalition.

Before arriving at Africa CDC for more than 7 years, Akhona held several positions at South Africa’s National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), including being a medical scientist to being an epidemiologist at the Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis. She is a graduate of the Field Epidemiology Training Program graduate.
Elisabeth Wilhelm is a Health Communications Specialist working in the US CDC Global Immunization Division on a team of behavioral scientists to diagnose and address vaccine demand and acceptance issues, especially supporting the needs of low and middle-income countries (LMICs). She is focused on crisis communication following vaccine related events, evidence-based behavior change communication strategy development and infodemic management, especially related to misinformation about immunization in the digital environment. Elisabeth has been involved in health research and evaluation efforts in ten countries and regularly designs and conducts trainings on communication and vaccine demand topics. Elisabeth holds an MA in Communications from Johns Hopkins University.
Andrea Würz  
*European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control*

Andrea works at the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), a scientific agency of the European Union, as Expert in Behaviour Change and Risk Communication. She works in the Vaccine-Preventable Diseases and Immunisation Programme (VPI-DP).

Andrea joined ECDC in 2006. Her activities focus on the development of guides, tools and capacity building activities to support countries in effective risk communication for prevention of infectious diseases, in particular in the area of vaccination, as well as on emergency risk communication in the context of preparedness planning.

The projects she has coordinated include communication toolkits on several infectious diseases, publications on health communication and guides on communication on vaccination. She is the lead for the content development of the European Vaccination Information Portal (EVIP), a multilingual website launched in April 2020 with information on vaccination. She has also coordinated the network of ECDC’s National Focal Points for Communication in the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) countries.

Andrea’s professional experience includes corporate communications and press and media work. She studied journalism and a postgraduate in international relations at the Central University of Venezuela, and has a Master in EU Law and Economics (Spain).
Lei Zhou, M.D., Senior Researcher, is the Chief of Branch for Emerging Infectious Disease at the Public Health Emergency Center in Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. After receiving her Bachelor and Master’s degrees from School of Public Health, Peking University in 2002 and 2005, specializing in epidemiology, she joined China CDC and worked for over 15 years in public health emergency response in China. During COVID-19 pandemic, she served as both Deputy Lead of international cooperation task force and Lead of epidemiological data analysis and situation awareness team. Her research interests are prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases, and pandemic influenza preparedness and response. She has published over 40 peer review articles in international journals, including the *NEJM, JID, CID, EID* and *OFID.*
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