

Workshop: How can we further rights-based and evidence-based policies on migrant and ethnic minority health?

Background and objectives

A 2015 IOM report showed Europe to be the only major world region in which attitudes to migration were predominately negative. In the USA, anti-migrant policies and rhetoric have increased since recent US election. In this climate, efforts to improve conditions for migrants – in particular, their health – are running into strong headwinds. It is more important than ever for researchers and organisations promoting migrant health to join forces and redouble their efforts to get policies improved.

This 90-minute seminar will focus on the question: how should we go about this? The three speakers will put forward in turn perspectives based mainly on human rights, scientific evidence, and a combination of both.

1. **Alyna Smith (PICUM)** will discuss the chasm between migrants' right to health and national policies, examining the efforts of civil society organisations to hold states accountable under existing international standards. The language of rights and research must be translated into messages that are meaningful for the mainstream, in order to give voice to the silent majority that does not support policies hostile to migrants.
2. **David Ingleby (University of Amsterdam)** will introduce a position paper currently being prepared by the Migrant and Ethnic Minority Health Section of EUPHA. There is an urgent need to reduce the gap between public health researchers and the bodies responsible for implementing findings and setting research priorities. Research into migrant and minority health is constantly generating new insights, but these are inadequately reflected in policies and research funding.
3. **Santino Severoni (WHO Europe)** will argue that migration is a structural phenomenon, calling for long-term policies and fundamental health system adaptations. WHO Europe is working on this issue hand-in-hand with Member States and international organizations, and has developed the first Strategy and Action Plan on Refugee and Migrant Health, aimed at promoting intersectoral approaches, collaborative networks and international dialogue.

These 15-minute presentations will be followed by an open discussion centred on the question: how can we, as workers in the field of migrant and ethnic minority health, most effectively promote policy change for the benefit of these groups?

Main messages

1. Researchers and advocates need to join forces to confront the growing challenge of anti-migrant sentiment and 'fact-free politics'.
2. More attention must be paid to effective communication with the public and policy-makers.

Chair: Santino Severoni

Coordinator: David Ingleby