Health inequalities: threats and opportunities

Many of today’s public health issues – obesity, diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease – are strongly associated with health inequalities. Literature from across the world shows that gaps in income, employment, education and the socioeconomic gradient in health worsen health outcomes for disadvantaged populations. Despite progress in life expectancy and health status, inequalities persist both across countries and across population groups within countries. What is behind the persistence of these harmful and avoidable inequalities? How can we increase equity through action on the social determinants of health? Where are there further opportunities for improvements? In this session we will explore these themes, with a particular focus on learning lessons from differences in approaches and responses.

This session links directly to the theme of ‘Health in All Politics’, looking at how progress in a wide range of policy areas has promoted better, more equitable health, but also reviewing the work that still needs to be done to finally close the health inequalities gap.

Health equity: global, national, local
MICHAEL MARMOT, Professor, Director of the International Institute for Society and Health, Epidemiology and Public Health, UCL Institute of Health Equity, UK

Health equity: early life and inter-generation
TUNG-LIANG CHIANG, Professor of Public Health, Health Behaviours & Community Sciences, National Taiwan University

NGO contributions to tackling health inequalities in Europe
NICOLA BEDLINGTON, Secretary General, European Patients Forum & CLIVE NEEDLE, Senior Policy Advisor, EuroHealthNet

Interviewed by ELODIE BESNIER, International Health Policy Officer, Public Health Wales and member of the Young Forum Gastein

Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool developed by Japan Gerontological Evaluation Study project
KA TSUNORI KONDO, Professor of Preventive Medical Science, Department of Gerontological Evaluation at the Centre for Gerontology and Social Science, Chiba University, Japan

Politics, policies and health equity: Reflections from the Pacific Rim
SHARON FRIEL, Professor of Health Equity, Regulation and Global Governance, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian University

An EU Council Presidency perspective on tackling health inequalities
An interview with NATASHA AZZOPARDI-MUSCAT, Ministry of Health, Malta and EUPHA President

Panel discussion and summing-up
YIN-WEI WANG, Director-General, Health Promotion Administration, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan R.O.C.
MARTIN MCKEE, Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Moderated by HARRY RUTTER, Senior Lecturer, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine