



AGENDA

EUROHEALTHNET ANNUAL SEMINAR 2024

Navigating times of change for public health

New insights on mental health, wellbeing and health behaviours to advance health equity

3 June 2024, 14.00 – 17.00

UTRECHT (THE NETHERLANDS) & ONLINE



Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid
en Milieu
Ministerie van Volksgezondheid,
Welzijn en Sport



NAVIGATING TIMES OF CHANGE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

New insights on mental health, wellbeing and health behaviours to advance health equity

Date: Monday, 3 June 2024, 14.00 – 17.00

Venue: Jaarbeurs, Jaarbeursplein 6, Utrecht & online

We are living in turbulent times, with conflict on our borders, rising costs of living, the climate crisis and demographic change. The digital and green transition, and political shifts tied to the upcoming European elections add to the uncertainty of the road ahead. It is essential to keep our long-term public health goals in mind to navigate towards progress. The EuroHealthNet 2024 Annual Seminar offers an important opportunity to calibrate our compass, taking stock of the latest policy and research in mental wellbeing and health behaviours to support healthier, more inclusive and sustainable societies, even in times of change.

Recent crises reaffirmed how important people's mental health and psychosocial wellbeing are and how deep inequalities still persist in our societies, preventing people from enjoying healthy lives. Health behaviours are increasingly influenced by structural and systemic factors beyond people's control, raising questions of social justice. Even as more research and knowledge becomes available, it is not always clear how to apply it, who benefits, and how it can add value and improve the effectiveness of health systems across levels of governance. EuroHealthNet's seminar will present new insights on mental health, wellbeing and health behaviours and how they can be applied to improve health equity in Europe.

13.30 **Registration and networking**

14.00 – 14.15 **Welcome and introductions**

Chair [Caroline Costongs](#), Director of EuroHealthNet

- **Marith Volp**, Director of Public Health and Health Services at the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM)
- **Marjolijn Sonnema**, Director General for Public Health at the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports
- Welcome video by **Nicolas Schmit**, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights

14.15 – 15.15 **Session 1: Social inequalities, vulnerabilities and mental health in times of change**

Co-moderated by [Nicoline Tamsma](#), Co-ordinating Adviser, RIVM & [Matej Vinko](#), Head of the Mental Health Centre, NIJZ

As our societies undergo systemic transformations with uncertain outcomes, population mental health across Europe has been negatively impacted. We see this dramatically in young people, who suffered severe social and educational consequences during the pandemic, currently face rising costs-of-living, and fear a future in which climate change adaptation has been insufficient. We also see this across all age groups living in vulnerable situations, with levels of loneliness hitting record highs and people losing their sense of social belonging and purpose.

Each of these shocks has hit the least well-off in our society hardest, exacerbating inequalities and reducing resilience to future challenges. Unfortunately, this coincides with a period of rapid change when people will need more mental flexibility and resilience than ever before to adapt and learn new skills to thrive in the 21st century (including new ways of working, living and consuming).

This session will provide an overview and examples of policies for mental health and wellbeing, strategic frameworks, and implementation of local approaches and interventions on social and economic determinants to improve mental health outcomes and define areas for further action.

- **Prof Laura Shields-Zeeman**, Head of Mental Health & Prevention at Trimbos Institute and Professor at Utrecht University - *Mental health inequalities: Looking forward and globally, acting locally*
- **Jessica Mahoney**, Policy Analyst at the OECD Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity - *How to make societies thrive? Coordinating approaches to promote well-being and mental health*
- **Dr Claudia Marinetti**, Director of Mental Health Europe – *Reacting to crises, addressing vulnerabilities: Building resilience and recovery-oriented mental health support*

Coffee/ tea break

15.45 – 16.45 **Session 2: Behavioural and cultural insights for better health equity decision-making**

Co-moderated by [Marijn de Bruin](#), Chief Scientist Behavioural Unit, RIVM & [Yvette Shajanian Zarneh](#), Head of Unit, BZgA

The need to understand better what drives individual and collective behaviour has always been a cornerstone of public health. Our actions, like alcohol or tobacco use, the food we

choose, how physically active we are, and whether and how we engage with health systems, have a big impact on our health.

Structural and systemic factors related to socio-economic, cultural, environmental and commercial drivers, are often beyond people's control and heavily influence behaviours. These factors and behaviours are crucial to analyse and provide valuable insights for health decision making. As laid out in the [WHO European regional action framework for behavioural and cultural insights for health \(2022-2027\)](#), individual behaviour and social circumstances, together account for 60% of factors determining people's health. Behavioural and cultural insights (BCI) can improve the design and uptake of health related policies, services, and communication, and lead to better health and well-being and a reduction in health inequalities. Yet BCI in health remain underexplored and underutilized.

This session will present and discuss different perspectives on BCI and its use across the European Region. It will address recent developments in behavioural science, evidence, training and advocacy in two current themes of application: 1) environmental sustainability, 2) digitisation of our societies.

- **Katrine Bach Habersaat**, WHO/Europe's Regional Advisor for BCI - *The status of the WHO European regional action framework for behavioural and cultural insights for health (2022-2027)*
- **Dr Sanae Okamoto**, Researcher at United Nations University-MERIT and co-lead of the UNU-Climate Resilience Initiative - *How can we leverage pro-environmental behaviour to enhance human and planetary wellbeing?*
- **Dr Jon Roozenbeek**, Lecturer in Psychology and Security at King's College London - *What consequences does our digital behaviour have for public health and wellbeing?*

16.45 Final reflections

- **Bert van der Hoek**, CEO Trimbos Institute
- **Prof Arjan Bos**, Head of Centre for Public Health, Care and Society at the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM)
- **Caroline Costongs**, Director EuroHealthNet

17.00 Reception, non-alcoholic afterwork drinks and snacks



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