

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

Moving Past COVID-19 – Lessons Learned from Responses around the World
Virtual Workshop Series

AGENDA
MARCH 17, 2021

Objectives:

This virtual workshop series will broadly examine the response to COVID-19 in the US and abroad. Online events (one on March 17, 2021 and one in summer 2021) will feature prospective discussions on the broad impacts of the pandemic on human health and global development; successes and missed opportunities; and key considerations that can be incorporated by the government, public health systems, private sector, and communities to enhance resilience and preparedness for future outbreaks.

Specifically, the workshops will feature invited presentations, panel discussions and breakout rooms. Topics include:

- The multifactorial nature of COVID-19 as a syndemic, including its amplification of existing health threats and the social determinants of health that impact disease outcomes in different communities (March 2021 webinar)
- The need for a nuanced, transdisciplinary approach to future emergent diseases, incorporating best practices learned from the COVID-19 experience around the world
- Collaboration, communication, and mutual reinforcement between government, public health, private sector, community, and scientific leadership
- The anticipated long-term impacts of emergent pandemics like COVID-19 on human health as an outcome of social behaviors, as well as public trust in authority and the public healthcare system, in the context of additional effects on private sector growth and economic development trajectories
- Impact and management of misinformation on public trust and improvement in social messaging to enhance uptake of evidence-based guidance
- Case-study analysis of various geographic, social and epidemiological data patterns around the world. For example: case-load curves, morbidity and mortality, public opinion polls, and behavioral indicators of public health.
- Higher-level takeaways from the COVID-19 experience that will inform decision makers on future risk management; balancing social, economic and public health considerations in a time of crisis; and improving communication and confidence in public leadership.

Speakers and discussants will contribute perspectives from government, academia, private and nonprofit sectors. Community voices from the US and abroad will also be represented. The global distribution of contributors to these workshops will reflect the global nature of the topics being addressed.

FIRST EVENT – WEDNESDAY, 17 March 2021
11:00 am – 1:00pm ET

Session I: The Syndemic Nature of COVID-19

Session I objectives:

- Explain in detail what syndemics are and what biological considerations and social determinants of health are involved in identifying and describing them
- Explore the reasons for and implications of denominating COVID-19 as a syndemic in particular geographic and community contexts
- Discuss why thinking about COVID-19 and other disease outbreaks through a syndemic lens is important for public health officials and the public at large
- Set the stage for the summer event by outlining long-term, cross-sectoral, global impacts of COVID-19 that can be anticipated by thinking about the pandemic through a syndemic lens – responses to which will be explored and evaluated later this year.

Welcome and Introduction

Planning Committee Co-Chairs

ELIZABETH HERMSEN

*Head, Global Antimicrobial Stewardship and Health Equity in Infectious Diseases
Merck & Co.*

RAFAEL OBREGÓN

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

11:00 AM
[10 min]

Session Chair and Moderator

LAURA HELMUTH

*Editor-in-Chief
Scientific American*

- Overview of the webinar and its role in the greater workshop series – topic statement and problem statement. Tie this event into the Forum’s greater goals.
- Set the stage for presentations and discussions – brief description of syndemics
- Introduce Emily Mendenhall (keynote speaker)

Topic Presentation

EMILY MENDENHALL

*Provost’s Distinguished Associate Professor in Science, Technology and International Affairs
Georgetown University*

11:10 AM
[20 min]

- Provide a detailed description of how public health officials and the public at large ought to understand a syndemic and its sociobiological conditions

MOVING PAST COVID-19 – LESSONS LEARNED FROM RESPONSES AROUND THE WORLD

- Discuss the importance of using the syndemic lens to understand disease outbreaks and responses to them
- Explain the syndemic nature of COVID-19, highlighting the importance of setting in such a designation, and what that means for recovery efforts

Panel Discussion

LAURA HELMUTH, *Moderator*

EMILY MENDENHALL, *Panelist*
Associate Professor, Georgetown University

JEFFREY DUCHIN, *Panelist*
Health Officer, Seattle & King County Public Health

CHIKWE IHEKWEAZU, *Panelist*
Director General, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control

11:30 AM
[40 min]

- Outline what we might learn, from looking at COVID-19 through the lens of a syndemic, about the long-term consequences that are likely to surface across society and around the world – settling on specific considerations for future analysis
- Evaluate the practical implications and applicability of using the syndemic lens, based on lived experience of public health leadership on the ground during COVID-19
- Discuss key actions and topics for deeper investigation when planning for long-term, resilient recovery from COVID-19

Q&A

LAURA HELMUTH, *Moderator*

- Questions will be asked of all panelists. Some questions will be prepared and others will be invited from members of the audience.

12:10 PM
[40 min]

Closing Thoughts

Planning Committee Co-Chairs

ELIZABETH HERMSEN
RAFAEL OBREGÓN

- Summary statement on key takeaways from the day's conversations
- Announcement about summer 2021 event(s) and outline of topics to be addressed

12:50 PM
[10 min]

1:00 PM

Adjourn