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Strengthening health systems: improving population health and being prepared for the unexpected

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ABSTRACT SUPPLEMENT

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction iii1
2. Plenary Sessions iii3
3. Parallel Programme iii6
4. Poster Walks iii312
5. Poster Displays iii414

Crisis like COVID-19, conflicts, poverty emphasize the need on improving the indicators in a transdisciplinary approach.

Lessons:

Investigating indicators taking the determinants of health into account is helpful. However, different characteristics of the countries make it difficult to propose a standard approach to overcome the problems. Developing “new” indicators with transdisciplinary work might be useful in this sense.

Key messages:

- Food (in)security and climate change have “complex” interactions.
- Transdisciplinary approach may facilitate proposing realistic solutions.

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Environmental Health Literacy: an index to study its relations with pro-environmental behaviors

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The citizen’s awareness about environmental health risks has been identified as an important determinant of citizens’ choices for the adoption of pro-environmental behaviors, but for its study simple measures to be applied in population studies are still lacking. The Environmental Health Literacy (EHL), is a recent sub-category of health literacy, including functional, critical and interactive dimensions, that can be applied in surveys on environmental health risk perception and behaviors. The aim of our study was to elaborate and validate an EHL Index (ELHI) using data from a large multicenter survey carried out among 4778 students of different disciplines in 15 Italian Universities, with a self-administered anonymous questionnaire investigating risk perceptions, attitudes and behaviors towards environmental health risks and including a simple Functional Health Literacy test (FHL). From the original questionnaire of 56 items three sets of questions were selected to represent the three dimensions of health literacy (Functional, Critical or Interactive) and their outcomes were compared with the answers about FHL test and pro-environmental behaviors. The Principal Component Analysis was used to select the most representative questions that were then grouped in the EHLI. The index was significantly associated with both FHL test and behaviors questions. The ROC curve indicated a satisfying accuracy and was used to identify the best cut-off for ELHI. In conclusion the constructed ELHI can be considered reliable and useful for further population surveys in similar target people to plan communication interventions about environmental health risks and their prevention through individual choices.

Key messages:

- An Environmental Health Literacy Index is proposed as simple measure to be used in population surveys.
- This measure resulted associated with behaviors and can be considered accurate and reliable.

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Results of a Qualitative Study on Disaster Nursing in a Coastal Region of Lower Saxony/Germany

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The increase in heavy rainfall in recent years shows the need to consider disaster preparedness also for persons in need of assistance and care who are cared for at home or in old people’s and nursing homes. Evacuation concepts in the event of a heavy rainfall event lasting several days with simultaneous power failure are hardly available for the vulnerable group so far. As part of the LifeGRID project funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the question is being investigated as to what regional challenges and requirements arise in the event of flooding and a prolonged power blackout in the Wesermarsch district. In addition, the question will be addressed as to how the current care situation of patients referred to electricity presents itself in such a situation. Within the framework of a qualitative design, expert interviews were conducted with care service managers in winter 2022. The four guided interviews were transcribed and their content analysed. In coping with the assumed catastrophic events, the interviewees see problem areas in the organisation, communication, form of care and target group, in addition to the regional characteristics. It became clear that there are not only unanswered questions regarding responsibilities in the event of a crisis, but also that the diversity of forms of care (e.g. private households) poses a particular challenge. The interviewees do not see any viable alternatives to secure communication in the event of a power failure and also see that respiratory patients, for example, have a special need for care (e.g. due to the limited battery life of the respiratory equipment). The results also show that the nursing experts have different views on how they should prepare for such a scenario. These range from passivity to proactivity. A clear need for action becomes visible for cooperation and networking of the relevant actors, promotion of disaster literacy as well as the necessity to adapt the training curricula.

Key messages:

- Climate change is exacerbating the demands for concepts that sustainably contribute to increasing disaster literacy. The results of the study underline this.
- Patients receiving outpatient care and residents of nursing homes for the elderly who depend on a continuous power supply have not yet been the focus of disaster management.

4.S. Epidemiology: socioeconomic risk factors

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Trends of socioeconomic inequalities in overweight and obesity in children and adolescents in Germany

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Background:

Overweight and obesity in early life are risk factors for chronic health conditions in the later life course. Children and adolescents from socioeconomically disadvantaged families are more likely to be overweight or obese than their better-off peers. This study examined post-millennial trends of socioeconomic inequalities in the prevalence of overweight and obesity among young people in Germany.