

EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON MULTICULTURALISM IN MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES MULTICULTIMED



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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MultiCultiMed



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**Multi
Culti
Med**

Edited by Linda Czeponis

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PROJEKT LEAD

Assoc. Prof.
Małgorzata Szkup
PhD, MSc, RN

Małgorzata Szkup is an Associate Professor (PhD, MSc, RN) at Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin, where she serves as Head of the Independent Department of Social Nursing and Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. She is the creator and coordinator of the MultiCultiMed project, an international initiative focused on multicultural education in healthcare.

With nearly two decades of professional experience, she combines academic work with clinical and educational practice. For over 15 years, her primary research interest has been transcultural nursing, particularly the development of cultural competence in healthcare professionals. She has authored more than 100 peer-reviewed scientific publications in national and international journals.

Her work focuses on integrating transcultural approaches into healthcare education and practice. Through research, teaching, and international collaboration, she contributes to advancing inclusive, culturally sensitive, and patient-centered healthcare systems across Europe.

Presentation

**MultiCultiMed: A New
Perspective on Education in
Medicine and Health
Sciences in a Multicultural
World**

Intercultural education is now a core component of medical and health sciences training. Future healthcare professionals must be prepared to address the needs of patients from diverse cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds, ensuring effective communication and equitable, patient-centered care.

The MultiCultiMed project introduces a comprehensive and practice-oriented approach to multicultural education. Implemented by six European universities, it targets students and educators in medicine and health sciences. The project aims to strengthen intercultural competencies, promote inclusion, and counteract discrimination in healthcare.

At the center of the project is the EMPOWER model, which focuses on reflective cultural competence, humility, professional well-being, and practical educational tools. Based on this framework, MultiCultiMed has developed a multilingual handbook (available in seven languages), an interactive e-learning platform, and a human library. The project also includes research on students' cultural competencies and on the mental health and functioning of vulnerable groups, including Ukrainian war refugees and internally displaced persons. By combining education, research, and applied tools, the project supports the development of inclusive healthcare practices.

MultiCultiMed provides an integrated model for multicultural education, preparing future healthcare professionals to respond to diversity in an ethical and competent way, ultimately contributing to more inclusive healthcare systems.



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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

MSc

Carmen van Daal-Vrolijk

Bachelor of Arts

Has over 30 years of experience as a nurse, including more than 27 years in youth health care. She is currently completing a master's degree in Cultural Studies, focusing on the cultural identity of nurses in relation to patients from culturally and ethnically minoritized groups. Her research examines how assumptions and biases operate within healthcare, and how discrimination and racism manifest in the provision of care.

She works as a project leader for diversity and inclusion at the Knowledge Institute of V&VN (Dutch Nurses' Association). Her work focuses on supporting nursing professionals in delivering inclusive and equitable care, with the aim of reducing health disparities among culturally and ethnically minoritized patient populations.



Contact information



**KnowledgeInstitute Dutch
professional association for
nurses, clinical nursing assistants
& nurse specialists (V&VN)
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Presentation

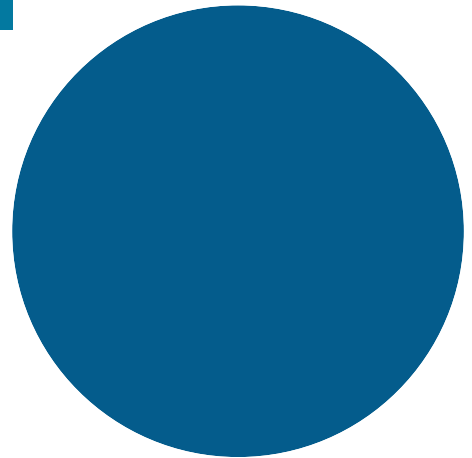
Empowering Nurses as Change Agents: Strengthening Cultural Humility and Inclusive Practice Through a National Ambassador Program

Health disparities, discrimination, and unequal access to care continue to affect diverse populations across Europe. Despite the availability of frameworks for culturally sensitive and inclusive practice, many nursing professionals report insufficient skills, confidence, and organizational support to address structural exclusion in daily care. In response, the Knowledge Institute Dutch professional association for nurses, clinical nursing assistants and nurse specialist (V&VN) developed an Ambassador Program for Diversity and Inclusion to translate theory into practice by strengthening cultural humility, advocacy, and leadership among nursing professionals. The program is grounded in the Papadopoulos Model for Cultural Competence and Compassion (2018) and focuses on four core competencies: self-reflection, cultural knowledge, attitudinal awareness, and action. The curriculum integrates experiential learning, peer networking, reflective practice, and workplace-based leadership tasks. Initial implementation shows increased confidence among participants in recognizing inequities, addressing bias, and applying inclusive care principles in clinical practice. Ambassadors report improved capacity to guide colleagues and embed inclusivity within team practice. The program demonstrates how theoretical frameworks can be effectively translated into practice through structured experiential learning. It supports nursing professionals in developing culturally responsive care and fostering more equitable healthcare delivery.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Costas Constantinou

Professor



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Dr Constantinou is Professor of Medical Sociology at the University of Nicosia Medical School, Cyprus. He has a BA in Psychology and Sociology from Simon Fraser University in Canada, a MA in Sociology from the University of Nicosia in Cyprus, and a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Bristol in the UK. He was awarded a PgCert in Healthcare and Biomedical Education from St George's, University of London, UK. He also holds a Cert DEI in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and he is a Certified Vocational Training Instructor for Adult Learners with focus on diversity and cultural competence. At the University of Nicosia Medical School, Professor Constantinou is the lead for the Social Sciences and Research courses, and he is the director of the Unit for Diversity Competence (UDC) in Healthcare and Healthcare Education.

He has published on illness experience, diversity and cultural competence, student-centred learning, teaching medical sociology, ageing, and qualitative research methodology, and he is the author of the book 'Applied Sociology of Health and Illness: a problem-based learning approach (2nd edition), Taylor and Francis (CRC press)'.

Presentation

Diversity And Cultural Competence In Healthcare: The Need For An Ecosystem

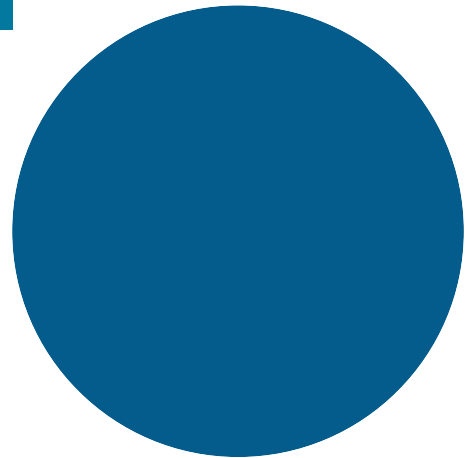
This keynote address highlights research demonstrating how cultural competence is associated with positive educational and healthcare outcomes, leading to its gradual integration into medical curricula and the training of healthcare professionals. The aim of this integration was not only to enhance doctor-patient relationships but also to address discrimination and reduce health disparities. However, evidence shows that health disparities persist, discrimination continues to occur, and building lasting, effective relationships between healthcare professionals and diverse patient populations remains challenging. The presentation concludes by emphasizing the need for an ecosystem of diversity and cultural competence in healthcare. In such an ecosystem, all participants involved in healthcare delivery are equipped with relevant knowledge and skills, and all sectors are interconnected—communicating and reinforcing one another—to foster a sustainable culture of inclusion, equality, belonging, and trust.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Monica Nikitara

PhD

Dr Monica Nikitara is an Assistant Professor in Nursing at the University of Nicosia. She holds a Diploma in Nursing from the Cyprus Nursing School, a BSc in Health Studies from the University of Wolverhampton, an MSc in Health Management and Policy from the University of Birmingham, and a PhD from the University of Nicosia. Dr Nikitara has established expertise in cultural competence and diversity in healthcare education, with a strong record of research and scholarly output in this area. She contributes to the design and delivery of educational initiatives on diversity and cultural competence and supports the integration and evaluation of these competencies within health curricula.



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Presentation

Diversity And Cultural Competence In Healthcare: The Need For An Ecosystem

This keynote address highlights research demonstrating how cultural competence is associated with positive educational and healthcare outcomes, leading to its gradual integration into medical curricula and the training of healthcare professionals. The aim of this integration was not only to enhance doctor-patient relationships but also to address discrimination and reduce health disparities. However, evidence shows that health disparities persist, discrimination continues to occur, and building lasting, effective relationships between healthcare professionals and diverse patient populations remains challenging. The presentation concludes by emphasizing the need for an ecosystem of diversity and cultural competence in healthcare. In such an ecosystem, all participants involved in healthcare delivery are equipped with relevant knowledge and skills, and all sectors are interconnected—communicating and reinforcing one another—to foster a sustainable culture of inclusion, equality, belonging, and trust.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Candan Öztürk

Professor



Prof. Dr. Candan Öztürk is a faculty member at the Near East University, Faculty of Nursing. She completed her undergraduate education in Nursing and holds both her Master's and PhD degrees in Pediatric Nursing. Her academic expertise includes Pediatric Nursing, Transcultural Nursing, and Nursing Education.

Prof. Dr. Öztürk has extensive national and international publications and has contributed to various research projects. She is actively involved in academic teaching, curriculum development, and student mentoring in nursing education. She also serves as the Student Exchange Programs Coordinator at her faculty.

She has been invited as a speaker at numerous scientific congresses and serves as a reviewer and contributor in academic publications. She is a founding member of the European Transcultural Nursing Association (ETNA) and the Türkiye representative of the association. She continues her academic work at Near East University, contributing to nursing education and research development.

Presentation

Engaging Diverse Students in Nursing Education: Experiences from Northern part of Cyprus

Nursing education is increasingly characterized by the diversity of student populations, including variations in cultural background, language, socioeconomic status, and prior educational experiences. This diversity offers both opportunities and challenges in designing effective, inclusive, and student-centered learning environments. This presentation explores strategies for engaging diverse nursing students, based on educational experiences in Northern Cyprus. It emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive teaching approaches, inclusive curriculum design, and supportive academic environments that enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Key strategies include the use of active learning methodologies, simulation-based education, mentorship and peer support systems, and reflective learning practices. These approaches aim to promote critical thinking, clinical competence, and professional identity development among nursing students. Furthermore, the presentation highlights the essential role of nurse educators in fostering equity, reducing barriers to learning, and supporting students' academic and personal development. Institutional practices that promote inclusivity and student participation are also discussed. Experiences from Northern Cyprus suggest that intentional and flexible pedagogical strategies significantly improve student motivation, engagement, and success in nursing education. In conclusion, effectively engaging diverse student populations requires a holistic, inclusive, and adaptive educational approach that values individual differences while ensuring the development of shared professional competencies.

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



MAIN SESSION

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SZCZECIN 2026 European Congress on Multiculturalism in
Medicine and Health Sciences MultiCultiMed

Kenya- Meru 2025: Third Medical Mission of Szczecin Doctors and PUM Students

Professor Elżbieta Petriczko

In September 2025, a medical mission involving doctors and students from the Pomeranian Medical University (PUM) took place in Meru, Kenya. Coordinated by Prof. Elżbieta Petriczko, the mission provided essential medical care to local populations, including dermatological examinations for 230 patients, approximately 300 ophthalmological consultations, and around 200 internal medicine consultations. Notably, nearly 360 children received assistance, with over 200 ultrasound exams and 100 surgical interventions conducted. Significant procedures included a gastric resection due to cancer and skin grafts for burn victims. The mission operated at Nkubu Hospital, which has limited resources, including only eight doctors, highlighting the critical need for such initiatives. Healthcare in Meru is severely constrained, with many residents unable to access even basic medical services. The high cost of care and the lack of healthcare professionals exacerbate the challenges faced by the local population. Participants performed numerous minor procedures and addressed wound care, particularly for pressure sores and burns. The team also facilitated online consultations and educational lectures for local medical professionals. The involvement of PUM students was crucial, as they organized medical supplies and fundraised for the mission, contributing significantly to the effort. Overall, the mission aimed to alleviate healthcare challenges in Kenya, where medical services are scarce and costly, with a doctor-to-population ratio significantly lower than in Poland.

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Biography

A pediatrician with over 30 years of professional experience, specializing in Pediatrics, Endocrinology, and Pediatric Diabetes. An academic teacher for over 30 years, serving as the Deputy Dean for the English-language Program at the Faculty of Medicine of Pomeranian Medical University (PUM) from 2016 to 2020.

Promoter of eight PhD candidates in medical sciences and one in health sciences. Author and co-author of 137 full-text publications and chapters in eight textbooks on pediatric endocrinology, with a total Impact Factor of 132 points.

****International Collaboration****

- Since 2017, leading multi-center research on obesity in children as part of a Polish-German consortium (grant NCN OPUS 21, no. 2021/41/B/NZ5/01676).
- Interreg Polish-German research on combating overweight and obesity in 5-6-year-old children in West Pomerania and Brandenburg (2021-2022, FMP-0502-21-C).
- Long-term collaboration with the Swedish center (Division of Pediatrics, Department of Clinical Science, Intervention, and Technology, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden).

****Charitable Activities and Medical Missions****

- January 8-15, 2017: St. Josef Hospital, Moshi, Tanzania.
- December 7-20, 2017: District Hospital of Sangmelima, Cameroon.
- March 14-20, 2018: Karaganda, Kazakhstan.
- October 27 - November 5, 2019: Meru, Kenya - work in orphanages, missionary trip.
- September 2-9, 2024: Meru, Kenya, Medics for Africa.
- November 30 - December 7, 2024: Cameroon, Hospital de Mbalmayo.
- September 1-9, 2025: Meru, Kenya, Medics for Africa.

Beyond Access: Addressing Health Inequalities Among LGBTQ Populations Through Inclusive Care Models

PhD Piotr Karniej, Assoc. Prof.

Despite formal guarantees of universal healthcare access, LGBTQ populations across Europe continue to experience substantial health inequalities driven by minority stress, discrimination, and the persistent invisibility of sexual and gender diversity within primary care. Mere availability of services does not translate into equitable care: structural heteronormativity, insufficient clinician preparedness, and the fragmentation between primary care and community-based supports perpetuate unmet needs in mental health, sexual health, and chronic disease management. This lecture examines how social prescribing – as an inclusive care model anchored in primary care – can move health systems beyond access toward equity for LGBTQ populations. The presentation draws on the Social Prescribing-EU (SP-EU) initiative, a Horizon Europe-funded project (2025–2029) advancing tailored social prescribing approaches for LGBTQ individuals, refugees, first-generation immigrants, and older adults living alone across eight European countries. Particular attention is given to the Polish component and its implications for adapting link-worker pathways, co-creation methodologies, and evaluation frameworks to national contexts characterised by nascent social prescribing infrastructure. Implications for research, workforce development, and primary care reform will be discussed, with emphasis on operationalising inclusive care without parallel service structures.

Contact information



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Biography

Associate Professor of medical and health sciences (discipline: health sciences), PhD in economics (discipline: management sciences, healthcare management). Public health specialist, sexologist, certified HIV/AIDS/STI counsellor at the National AIDS Centre, Master of Nursing, Executive MBA in Healthcare (Porto Business School). Coordinator of the INSIGHT Research Team (Inequalities and social determinants of health from a life-course and global health perspective) at the WSB MERITO University in Wrocław (Poland), member of the international GRUPAC Research Team at the University of La Rioja (Spain). Researcher on a project concerning clinical competencies and affirmative practices in healthcare for LGBTQ+ people in Poland and Spain, and participant in the HERE (Health Exclusion Research in Europe) project. Member of the Advisory Board for the Social Prescribing SP-EU PL project. Co-founder of the "Trzy Końce" Foundation in Katowice, member of the Voivodeship Council for the Implementation of the National Programme for HIV Prevention and the Fight against AIDS in Wrocław. Research areas: affirmative clinical competencies towards LGBTQ+ patients, public health, sexology, HIV/STI prevention, healthcare organisation.



Innovative Teaching Methods for Developing Cultural Competencies in Nursing Students

PhD, MSc, RN

Małgorzata Lesińska-Sawicka

Developing cultural competence among nursing students remains a key challenge in contemporary medical education, requiring the use of innovative teaching methods that go beyond traditional approaches. The aim of this paper is to analyse modern educational strategies that support the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for providing care in multicultural environments. Particular attention is given to active learning methods, such as graphic medicine (educational comics), AI-based clinical simulations, and experiential learning. Research findings indicate that visual and narrative tools enhance student engagement and facilitate the development of empathy and reflective thinking. In turn, AI-based simulations provide a safe environment for practicing intercultural communication, contributing to increased confidence and cultural awareness. Innovative teaching approaches support not only knowledge acquisition but also the development of soft skills, including communication, critical thinking, and adaptability. The conclusions highlight the need to integrate modern teaching methods into nursing curricula in order to better prepare students for working in culturally diverse healthcare settings.

Contact information



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Biography

Nurse, midwife, scientific skills trainer, and academic teacher. Author and co-author of scientific publications focused on nursing from an international, evidence-based, and medical education perspective. My interests include multiculturalism in health sciences, self-reflection, and the use of active learning methods in nursing education.



Multicultural Communication in Healthcare: Bridging Patient Perspectives and Professional Practice

Professor Karmen Erjavec

Ineffective communication in multicultural healthcare settings remains a significant challenge, often resulting in misunderstandings, reduced patient satisfaction, and disparities in health outcomes. As patient populations become increasingly diverse, healthcare professionals must navigate complex cultural differences that influence health beliefs, communication styles, and expectations of care. This qualitative study examines multicultural communication in healthcare across Poland, Slovenia, and Croatia, aiming to bridge patient perspectives and professional practice while identifying cross-country differences. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with patients and healthcare professionals (N = 32) from diverse cultural backgrounds and clinical settings. Thematic analysis identified shared challenges, including language barriers, cultural sensitivity, and trust-building, as well as notable national differences. In Poland, participants emphasised structural barriers and limited access to intercultural mediation. In Slovenia, communication challenges were often associated with increasing cultural diversity and the need for systematic training. In Croatia, participants highlighted relational aspects of care, with greater reliance on informal communication strategies and interpersonal trust. Patients in all countries emphasised the importance of culturally responsive communication, while professionals reported time constraints and insufficient training. The findings indicate that, although challenges are shared, contextual differences influence communication practices. Tailored, context-sensitive approaches are therefore essential to strengthen intercultural competencies and improve patient-centred care in diverse healthcare systems.

Contact information



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Biography

The author is a professor and researcher in the social sciences, specialising in communication processes within healthcare and wider societal contexts. Their academic work is shaped by a sustained interest in how communication influences perceptions, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships in complex and culturally diverse environments. Particular research focuses include multicultural communication in healthcare, health literacy, and the experiences of patients and healthcare professionals.

The author's research is primarily grounded in qualitative methodologies, enabling in-depth exploration of lived experiences, meanings, and interactions in healthcare settings. Participation in national and international research projects has centred on long-term care, health inequalities, and workforce challenges across European healthcare systems. This work contributes to interdisciplinary knowledge development and supports evidence-based policy and practice.

Alongside research activities, the author is actively involved in higher education teaching and mentoring at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Emphasis is placed on fostering critical thinking, ethical reflection, and analytical skills among students, equipping them to address contemporary societal and healthcare challenges.

The author's academic approach is guided by principles of scientific rigour, inclusivity, and collaboration, with the overarching aim of advancing equitable, culturally sensitive, and patient-centred healthcare practices.



Between Exclusion and Support: Staying in a Warming Center for People Experiencing Homelessness from a Public Health Perspective

MSc Adriana Brzeźniak-Misiuro

This presentation addresses homelessness not only as a social issue, but also as an important public health challenge. It focuses on the role of a warming shelter as a low-threshold form of support for people experiencing homelessness, based on the perspective of a person managing such a facility within the Szczecin Center for Addiction Prevention. The presentation will show that a warming shelter is not merely a place of temporary refuge from cold, but often the first point of contact with institutional support, health protection, and crisis intervention. Particular attention will be paid to the complex health, psychological, and social needs of people staying in the shelter, including chronic illness, mental health difficulties, addiction, trauma, and social exclusion. The presentation will also discuss practical and ethical challenges involved in managing a low-threshold facility, including balancing accessibility, safety, and dignity-based support. The aim is to highlight the importance of warming shelters within a broader, integrated approach to homelessness that takes into account health inequalities, vulnerability, and the need for coordinated interdisciplinary assistance.

Contact information



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Biography

Adriana Sylwia Brzeźniak-Misiuro holds Master's degrees in Law and Sociology (specialization: psychosocial counseling) and completed postgraduate studies in Psycho-oncology. She is the Director of the Szczecin Center for Addiction Prevention (SCPU) in Szczecin, Poland, where she oversees interdisciplinary support services for people in crisis, including a warming shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness. Her professional interests include public health, social exclusion, homelessness, addiction prevention, crisis intervention, and dignity-based institutional support. She provides psychological support to vulnerable and marginalized groups, including the LGBTQ+ community. She is also engaged in educational and training activities for professionals working in social services, prevention, and mental health support. In addition, she cooperates with the Deaf community, promoting accessibility, effective communication, and inclusive forms of assistance for people with hearing impairments.



Understanding Multicultural Care: Perspectives of Undergraduate Nursing Students

PhD Martin Červený

Multicultural care is an essential component of patient-centered nursing practice; however, evidence on how nursing students in Slovakia perceive and experience it remains limited. The aim of this study was to explore nursing students' perceptions of multicultural care, focusing on their knowledge, attitudes, experiences, and perceived challenges when caring for patients from diverse cultural backgrounds. A qualitative study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with seven undergraduate nursing students from three Slovak universities. Data were analyzed using inductive qualitative content analysis. Four main themes emerged: perceptions of multicultural care, experiences in providing care, challenges in culturally diverse settings, and suggestions for improvement. Students perceived multicultural care as essential for holistic and respectful practice but reported insufficient preparedness. Key challenges included language barriers, limited cultural knowledge, and uncertainty in patient interactions. Experiences were described as both challenging and professionally enriching. The findings indicate a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical readiness, associated with limited emphasis on experiential learning. Nursing students recognize the importance of multicultural care but feel inadequately prepared to deliver it. Strengthening education is essential to enhance cultural competence in nursing practice.

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Biography

PhDr. Martin Červený, PhD, is an assistant professor at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Faculty of Medicine. He serves as the country representative for Slovakia in the European Transcultural Nursing Association and is a Fellow of the association, as well as a member of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. He received the Sigma European Region Early Career Researcher Award (2026) and was a guest editor for the Journal of Nursing Management (2024–2026). He has been a guest lecturer at Nazarbayev University, Medical Faculty. His doctoral research focused on cultural competence in nursing practice. His scientific work centers on transcultural nursing, nursing theories and models, and patient safety. He teaches evidence-based practice and research methodology and actively publishes and reviews in international nursing journals.



Health Inequalities in Multicultural Europe in Light of Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Data

PhD Artur Kotwas

Health inequalities remain a major public health challenge in Europe, despite overall improvements in population health indicators. The aim of this study is to assess the scale and determinants of these inequalities in a multicultural context, using data from the Global Burden of Disease study. The analysis is based on selected measures of disease burden, including Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), Years of Life Lost (YLL), and Years Lived with Disability (YLD), presented as age-standardized rates per 100,000 population. The study covers the period 1990–2023 and includes comparisons across European regions (Western, Central, and Eastern Europe), with stratification by sex, age, and Socio-Demographic Index (SDI). Particular attention is given to major disease groups and modifiable risk factors, such as smoking, alcohol use, and high body mass index. The findings indicate persistent disparities in disease burden, with higher DALY rates observed in Central and Eastern Europe, primarily driven by premature mortality and lifestyle-related risk factors. Multicultural factors, including migration, socioeconomic inequalities, and unequal access to healthcare, may further contribute to these differences. These results highlight the need for targeted, culturally sensitive public health interventions aimed at reducing health inequalities across Europe.

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Biography

Artur Kotwas is a PhD in health sciences whose research interests focus on research methodology, biostatistics, and data analysis in public health. In his work, he applies a data-driven approach, conducting epidemiological analyses, including cross-sectional studies and modeling relationships using advanced statistical methods. He pays particular attention to assessing health inequalities, the impact of socio-economic factors on population health, and the functioning of vulnerable and socially excluded groups.

He is affiliated with the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin, where he teaches research methodology and biostatistics and serves as the Head of the Independent Research and Biostatistics Laboratory. He is actively involved in scientific and educational projects, international collaboration, and the development of modern analytical tools in healthcare.



The Challenges Of Intercultural Education In A Post-Conflict Society

MSc Sanja Stanisavljević

Analysing the post-conflict social context in Serbia, the paper highlights the educational challenges arising from a society that only proclaims the right to diversity in a declaratory manner. Two decades after the war conflicts in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, ethnocentrism, nationalism and xenophobia are still present. In such circumstances, educational institutions necessarily assume the role of facilitators in developing students' intercultural competences, advocating respect for diversity, rejecting stereotypes and prejudices, prohibiting discrimination, and fostering empathy. After a brief presentation of legal and strategic regulations in the field of intercultural education in Serbia, primary importance is given to the psychological dimension in understanding post-conflict social relations. The necessity of expanding the theoretical framework of knowledge to enable students to understand the adaptive function of emotions, cultural patterns of aggression, and the way individuals react to stress and trauma is emphasised. At the same time, the paper provides general guidelines for responding in crisis situations and recommendations for developing the skill of decentering as a basis for empathy.

Keywords: post-conflict social context, intercultural education, decentering skill

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Biography

Graduate defectologist, master's degree in defectology in the field of prevention and resocialization of persons with social behaviour disorders, and professional nurse specialist in the field of public health and clinical care. Doctoral student in the field of Public Health at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Belgrade.

She gained professional experience in health care and education, working as a professional nurse and a health care teacher at a secondary school and a high school of health. Since 2009, she has been employed at the College of Health, Academy of Professional Studies in Belgrade. He is currently a lecturer in Health Education and Health Care in Internal Medicine.

She is the author of the national textbook Health Care 1 for students of secondary medical schools in Serbia. He is the author and co-author of over 60 professional and scientific works. Member of the European professional organisations FINE, ETNA and UDINE C group.



The Patient I Do Not Understand: Psychological Gender Identity and Sexuality in a Cultural Context and Their Importance for Healthcare Practice

MSc Magdalena Stankiewicz

Contemporary healthcare practice is increasingly confronted with patients whose experiences related to gender identity and sexuality extend beyond dominant cultural norms. Such situations may lead to a sense of misunderstanding on the part of healthcare professionals, affecting the quality of communication, the diagnostic process, and the effectiveness of treatment. The aim of this presentation is to analyze the role of psychological gender identity and sexuality in a cultural context and to demonstrate their impact on the patient-provider relationship. Particular attention will be paid to the mechanisms underlying misunderstandings resulting from cultural differences, social norms, and individual beliefs about gender and sexuality. Based on a review of current literature and clinical experience, the most common challenges arising in contact with patients will be presented, along with their implications for clinical practice. Practical strategies for enhancing cultural competence and building relationships based on trust and psychological safety will also be discussed. The conclusions indicate that recognizing diversity in gender identity and sexuality is not an optional aspect of care, but a fundamental component of professional, ethical, and effective healthcare practice.

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Biography

Magdalena Zofia Stankiewicz, MA, is a sociologist, psychologist, psychotherapist, and academic teacher at the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin, where she is pursuing her doctoral research entitled "Sense of Gender Identity in the Context of Selected Psychosocial Factors." She is currently completing postgraduate studies in clinical sexology and forensic assessment at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

Her research focuses on the psychosocial and cultural determinants of gender identity, particularly parental attitudes, emotional functioning, and life attitudes. She is also interested in motivation and emotional processes in the context of health and illness.

In clinical practice, she works with individuals in psychological crisis, including psychotic patients and couples, as well as transgender individuals and members of the LGBTQ+ community, integrating clinical and culturally sensitive approaches.



Global Health Challenges: Migration, Refugees, Climate Change & Pandemics

PhD, MSc, RN
Panagiota Ellina

Global health is increasingly shaped by complex and interconnected challenges, including migration, forced displacement, climate change, and pandemics. Refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers face disproportionate health risks due to social, economic, and structural inequalities. This study aims to explore the impact of migration, climate change, and pandemics on health, while highlighting the importance of culturally competent and equitable approaches in global health systems. A narrative synthesis approach was employed, drawing on international reports and existing literature to examine key health challenges affecting diverse populations, with a focus on barriers to care and social determinants of health. Findings indicate that migrants and refugees experience significant barriers, including low health literacy, language difficulties, cultural differences, and discrimination, leading to poorer health outcomes. Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder are highly prevalent. Climate change and pandemics further exacerbate existing inequalities, increasing risks related to infectious diseases, food and water insecurity, and psychosocial stress. Addressing global health challenges requires integrated, equity-focused strategies and culturally competent care. Strengthening international collaboration and resilient health systems is essential to ensure inclusive and effective healthcare for all populations.

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Biography

Panagiota Ellina, PhD, is a Registered Nurse and Postdoctoral Researcher at the Cyprus University of Technology. She holds a BSc in Nursing, an MSc as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Community, and a PhD focusing on social inequalities in health and quality of life. She currently works at the State Health Services Organization (OKYpY) in Nicosia, combining clinical practice with research activity.

Dr. Ellina has extensive experience in European research projects (ERASMUS+), with a focus on multicultural healthcare, health inequalities, and health-related quality of life. She has contributed to several peer-reviewed international publications in public health and epidemiology.

Her academic and research interests include cultural competence, health inequalities, community health, and the promotion of health literacy within diverse populations.



Problems of vaccinating children during wartime

11



Professor
Olha Fedortsiv

This article examines the challenges of childhood vaccination in Ukraine amid the war. It demonstrates that the primary challenge facing childhood vaccination in Ukraine today is low vaccination coverage, caused by the war, migration, and parental hesitancy. Risks have now increased in Ukraine due to missed routine vaccinations, leading to a rise in cases of whooping cough and diphtheria. Infectious diseases pose the greatest danger to unvaccinated children, which is why catch-up vaccinations are necessary. According to data from the Ukrainian Ministry of Health, “9 out of 10 unvaccinated people who come into contact with an infected person will become infected.” Poor nutrition, overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and the destruction of existing healthcare infrastructure are barriers to accessing routine medical services, including vaccination. The reasons for low vaccination rates in Ukraine are: 1. Aggressive anti-vaccination propaganda from Russia; 2. Disruptions to vaccine delivery logistics and access during the war; Staff shortages 3. Internal migration and overcrowding, 4. Lack of water supply, forcing people to use water that may be contaminated—risk of cholera and typhoid outbreaks. Stress and poor nutrition weaken the immune system, increasing susceptibility to infections; 5. Many children fled abroad due to the Russian Federation’s aggression and missed their scheduled vaccinations. Due to low vaccination rates, Ukraine saw a sharp increase in measles cases in 2025 (11 to 20 times higher than in 2024), low vaccination coverage against polio (42.3%), against diphtheria and tetanus (44.3%), and against measles, mumps, and rubella (47.7%).

To achieve herd immunity against vaccine-preventable infectious diseases, at least 95% of the population must be vaccinated. Vaccination coverage rates in Ukraine during the war have not reached the required levels. Preventive vaccinations are the most effective means of combating infectious diseases.

Biography

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Olga Fedortsiv is the author of over 300 scientific papers, 2 monographs, a textbook in English, 11 manuals, 10 information sheets, 7 patents, 10 research proposals. For 19 years she was the head of the Department of Pediatric Diseases with Pediatric Surgery, currently holds the position of Professor of this Department. Under her supervision, 10 research theses have been successfully defended for the degree of Candidate of Medical Sciences. She served as a member of specialized academic councils for the defense of candidate dissertations at Lviv National Medical University and Bukovyna State Medical University. She is currently a member of the specialized academic council for the defense of doctoral dissertations at Ternopil National Medical University. For many years, she served as chair of the Ternopil branch of the Ukrainian Association of Pediatricians. She is a member of the editorial board of the journals “Achievements in Clinical and Experimental Medicine”, “Current Issues in Pediatrics, Obstetrics, and Gynecology,” the international editorial board of the journal “Medical Science Pulse” (Opole), and the scientific committee of the journal “Family Medicine & Primary Care Review” (Wrocław). She served as the coordinator of cooperation between the Silesian Medical Academy, the University of Wrocław, and Ternopil Medical University; she is currently the coordinator of cooperation between the Medical University and the Higher Medical School in Białystok, Białystok Medical University, and Ternopil National Medical University.

She is the lead representative and contact person for the I.Y. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine in the implementation of the MultiCultiMed Project—modern multicultural education for medical and health science students.

Implementation of multiculturalism in patient care and among employees as exemplified by UKE Eppendorf in Hamburg

PhD, MSc
Pilch Dorota

Globalization and migration worldwide have led to multiculturalism in nursing affecting both patients and healthcare workers. In Germany, 30.1% of the population has a migration background, and in Hamburg, this figure reaches 40%. For many years, the UKE (Eppendorf) has been implementing programs that pose a health risk, and patient care involves medical infections with a cultural background. The result is a preventive structure, monitoring, and follow-up to prevent burnout and absenteeism, and to ensure access to high-quality healthcare services.

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Biography

Ph.D., M.Sc. in Nursing; Midwife, specializing in anesthesiology and intensive care nursing; IBCLC, NBAS, Basale Stimulation® and postgraduate studies: Maternity Education and Care and Neurocognitive Science of Adulthood.

I have extensive professional experience gained in Poland and Germany in the field of obstetrics and anesthesiology, as well as in teaching nursing and midwifery students.

Blended Intensive Programmes as a Platform for Interdisciplinary Learning: The Case of Mental Health in Migrants and Minorities

PhD, MSc

Tânia Marlene Gonçalves Lourenço

This communication presents a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) developed within the Erasmus+ framework, focusing on mental health among migrants and minorities. Delivered at master level (MAPSY4450), the course brings together students and faculty from health and social sciences in an interdisciplinary and cross-national learning environment, including participants from Portugal, Norway, Finland, Malta, and Italy. BIPs combine virtual learning with short-term physical mobility, promoting active participation, collaboration, and intercultural exchange. The programme addresses key dimensions of migration and mental health, including epidemiological and theoretical perspectives, trauma and rehabilitation, and the impact of socio-cultural, economic, and structural determinants such as gender, age, housing, and social participation. Particular emphasis is placed on cultural competence, ethical issues, and communication in multicultural settings, including the use of interpreters. Through student-centred methodologies—lectures, group work, field visits, and reflective activities—participants develop critical thinking and the ability to analyse complex interactions between migration, mental health, and substance use. The course fosters skills in promoting well-being, social inclusion, and equitable, culturally sensitive care across diverse contexts. This case study highlights the potential of BIPs as innovative platforms for interdisciplinary education, enhancing intercultural competence and preparing future professionals to address global mental health challenges in increasingly diverse societies.

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Biography

Lecturer in Mental Health Nursing with over 20 years of experience in undergraduate and postgraduate education, contributing to the development of highly qualified nursing professionals. Active researcher focusing on the reduction of coercive practices in psychiatry, the promotion of human rights in mental health care, and the ethical dimensions of care for individuals with chronic and palliative conditions. Author of peer-reviewed publications and an active participant in national and international conferences and research projects. Currently serves as Coordinator of the Master's Degree in Mental Health Nursing and is responsible for internationalisation and research at the Nursing School of São José de Cluny (Madeira, Portugal), fostering global academic collaboration and innovation in nursing education and research.



Different Cultures, One Life: Challenges in Neonatology and Obstetrics in a Multicultural Society

PhD

Małgorzata Zimny

Contemporary societies are increasingly characterized by cultural diversity, which poses new challenges for healthcare systems, particularly in the fields of obstetrics and neonatology. The aim of this presentation is to discuss key difficulties arising in the care of patients and newborns from diverse cultural backgrounds. Special attention is given to communication barriers, differences in perceptions of pregnancy and childbirth, the influence of religion on medical decision-making, and inequalities in access to healthcare. The presentation emphasizes the importance of cultural competence among healthcare professionals and the need to implement systemic solutions, such as access to medical interpreters, intercultural education, and adaptation of care standards to the needs of diverse populations. Examples of good practices that can improve the quality of care and the safety of both mother and child are also discussed. The conclusions indicate that taking cultural context into account not only reduces the risk of misunderstandings and medical errors, but also contributes to building trust and more effective cooperation between patients and healthcare providers. Multiculturalism in medicine represents a challenge, but also an opportunity to develop a more inclusive and effective healthcare system.

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Biography

Midwife and Assistant Professor at the Department of Obstetrics and Pregnancy Pathology. Author of numerous scientific publications and monographs in the field of obstetrics and neonatology. Her academic and teaching work focuses on care for women and newborns in various clinical and social contexts.

Chair of the Academic Division of the Polish Midwives Association in Szczecin. She is also the author and coordinator of numerous educational programs for women, covering topics such as puberty, menstruation, and women's health prevention.

Her clinical interests include perinatal care, with particular emphasis on child development from the moment of conception.



Cultural Barriers in Pediatric Emergency Care: Communication, Trust, and Clinical Decision-Making through EPALS Simulation-Based Training

PhD

Emilia Burbela, Assoc. Prof.

Cultural diversity in pediatric emergency care introduces challenges that may affect communication, trust, and the timeliness of critical interventions. To assess the impact of culturally influenced parental trust on the timing of key steps in pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). A simulation-based study was conducted during an elective course, "Basic Life Support in Children of Different Ages." Three groups of paramedic students participated. In a standardized infant CPR scenario, two conditions were compared: absence of a parent and presence of a mother demonstrating strong distrust toward paramedics due to religious beliefs. Two randomly selected students acted as paramedics, while others served as observers using structured checklists based on European Resuscitation Council (ERC) algorithms, including time-to-action metrics. The presence of a distrustful parent was associated with delays in initiating the first five rescue breaths and chest compressions across all groups, compared to scenarios without parental interference or with a cooperative parent. Culturally driven distrust may increase cognitive load, disrupt team performance, and delay life-saving interventions. Integrating culturally complex scenarios into simulation-based training and applying structured communication strategies may improve clinical performance and reduce delays in pediatric emergencies.

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Emilia Burbela, MD, PhD is an Associate Professor at I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University and a practicing pediatrician with over 12 years of clinical experience. Areas of expertise include pediatric emergency medicine, neonatal resuscitation, and simulation-based medical education. Leads the design and implementation of high-fidelity simulation training and contributes to curriculum development and standardized assessment in clinical decision-making.

Active participant in international projects, including the Erasmus+ MultiCultiMed initiative (2024–2026), focused on integrating multicultural competencies into medical education, and the Ukrainian-Swiss "Medical Education Development" project, promoting structured feedback and debriefing methodologies.

Certified EPALS and PBLs instructor with over five years of teaching experience. Author and co-author of more than 65 scientific publications (11 in the last 5 years). Indexed in Scopus and Google Scholar (Scopus Author ID: 57219272483; ORCID: 0000-0002-8439-2966). Co-author of national textbooks and educational manuals in pediatrics.



Medical Simulation in Obstetrics as a Method of Reducing Cultural Barriers

PhD Iwona Gładysz

Increasing cultural diversity among pregnant women presents significant challenges for healthcare professionals, including communication barriers, differing beliefs about pregnancy and childbirth, and reduced trust in medical staff. These factors may adversely affect the quality and safety of care. The aim of this study was to evaluate medical simulation as a tool for reducing cultural barriers and enhancing intercultural competencies in maternity care. This study is based on a review of the literature and the authors' educational experience with simulation-based training. The developed simulation scenarios involved culturally diverse pregnant patients and incorporated differences in health beliefs, language barriers, and expectations regarding medical procedures. Particular emphasis was placed on communication skills, cultural sensitivity, and patient-centered care. Medical simulation provides a safe and controlled environment for practicing complex clinical and communication scenarios. Participants demonstrated improved communication skills, increased cultural awareness, and greater readiness to care for culturally diverse patients. Simulation also facilitated the identification of communication errors and the development of effective strategies to address them. Medical simulation is an effective educational approach for enhancing intercultural competencies in maternity care and may contribute to reducing cultural barriers, improving the quality of care, and increasing patient safety.

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Biography

Iwona Gładysz is a midwife, academic teacher, and researcher specializing in midwifery and medical simulation. Since 2022, she has been Head of the Midwifery Department at the John Paul II University in Biała Podlaska and has served as an Assistant Professor since 2017. Previously, she worked as a Senior Lecturer (2001–2017). She began her professional career as a clinical midwife at the Provincial Specialist Hospital in Biała Podlaska.

She holds a Doctor of Health Sciences degree (2015) and a Master of Science in Midwifery (2017), and is a certified Medical Simulation Instructor (2016). She also completed postgraduate studies in pedagogy and holds degrees in midwifery and law.

Her research interests focus on medical simulation and innovative teaching methods in healthcare education. She actively participates in international scientific conferences and is affiliated with the Polish Hygiene Society.





Multiculturalism in Portugal: Challenges for Contemporary Healthcare

PhD Rita Fernandes

Multiculturalism has become an increasingly salient feature of contemporary Portuguese society, reflecting recent migration trends and the growing demographic relevance of foreign residents. This transformation has significant implications for healthcare, as services are expected to respond effectively to diverse linguistic, cultural, and social needs while preserving equity, accessibility, and quality of care. In Portugal, although the legal and policy framework formally recognises access to healthcare as a universal right, important challenges persist in the practical delivery of care. These include communication barriers, limited cultural responsiveness, administrative complexity, and uneven institutional preparedness across services. Such tensions are consistent with wider European concerns regarding the gap between formal entitlement and effective inclusion in healthcare systems. The Portuguese case highlights multiculturalism not merely as a demographic reality, but as a structural issue for public health governance and service organisation. Addressing these pressures requires a shift from nominal universality to culturally competent, person-centred, and institutionally coordinated care. Greater investment in professional training, clearer operational procedures, intersectoral coordination, and strategies to reduce structural barriers is essential. In this context, multiculturalism should be understood as a central dimension of healthcare quality, health equity, and democratic inclusion in contemporary Portugal.

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Biography

Rita Fernandes is an Assistant Professor at the Nursing School of the University of Porto, an integrated researcher at RISE Health, and Portugal's Country Representative at the European Transcultural Nursing Association. She holds a PhD in Nursing and works in paediatric nursing, health technologies, clinical supervision, and critical thinking, combining clinical experience, teaching, and research. She worked for more than two decades as a nurse at São João Local Health Unit and subsequently took on academic and coordination roles in higher education. She has been involved in research projects, scientific publications, book chapters, supervision of academic work, and national and international scientific events. Her academic and research work focuses on transcultural nursing, person-centred care, inclusion in multicultural contexts, and health-related research involving vulnerable populations.



Cultural Diversity in Business Teams: Emotional and Social Determinants of Collaboration and Their Impact on Employee Well-Being

MSc Marlena Bryczkowska

Contemporary organizations increasingly operate in environments characterized by growing cultural diversity within teams, which creates both new opportunities and significant challenges for effective collaboration. The aim of this presentation is to analyze the emotional and social determinants of functioning in multicultural teams and to assess their impact on employee well-being. The study is based on a literature review, drawing on research in management, occupational psychology, and intercultural communication. Key emotional factors are considered, including empathy, emotion regulation, and psychological safety, as well as social factors such as cultural norms, communication styles, and the presence of stereotypes and biases. The findings indicate that the quality of collaboration in multicultural teams largely depends on the level of emotional and intercultural competencies and on how diversity is managed. Insufficient attention to these aspects may lead to conflicts, reduced engagement, and decreased employee well-being. In contrast, a work environment based on trust, inclusiveness, and open communication fosters higher job satisfaction and team effectiveness. The conclusions highlight the need to develop soft skills and implement diversity management strategies that support both organizational performance and employee well-being.

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Marlena Bryczkowska is a specialist in management, finance, and modern technologies, combining academic work with business practice in an international environment. She holds a Master's degree in Management (specialization: Financial Management) from WSB University in Poznań, as well as an engineering degree in Management and Production Engineering and a degree in Finance and Accounting from the University of Szczecin. She further developed her competencies through postgraduate studies in accounting and corporate finance.

Since 2022, she has been an academic teacher at the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin, where she teaches courses in management, marketing, and entrepreneurship. She is also a lecturer in the postgraduate program "Data Analysis and Clinical Research Management."

In parallel, she develops her professional career as a Senior Project Leader at Metro Global Solution Center, where she plays a key role in the implementation of SAP S/4 HANA across 25 countries within the METRO Group. As the Accounts Receivable module lead, she collaborates with international teams, combining expert knowledge with strong organizational skills. Her potential has been recognized through her participation in the prestigious "Next Generation Finance" program, designed for future finance leaders. She is also actively engaged in social initiatives, supporting the development of cultural education.



Cultural sensitivity in the healthcare system and patients' rights

PhD, RM, BMSc, MA, FETNA

Małgorzata Nagórska

Cultural competencies are increasingly recognized as a key dimension of healthcare quality and an important condition for the effective implementation of patients' rights. This paper presents good practices in Poland showing how culturally sensitive care supports the protection of dignity, autonomy, equality, and access to appropriate health services. Based on an analysis of Polish legal regulations, particularly the Act on Patients' Rights and the Patients' Rights Ombudsman, as well as practices implemented in the healthcare system, several areas of culturally competent care were identified. These include ensuring understandable information through interpreters and language support, respecting religious and philosophical beliefs, protecting intimacy through same-sex care where possible, considering culturally determined nutritional needs, and strengthening education in intercultural communication and transcultural medicine among healthcare professionals.

Although cultural competence is not explicitly defined in Polish law, it is reflected in the practical implementation of patients' rights and emerging institutional solutions. Integrating cultural competencies into care organizations and professional education contributes to improved quality of care, increased patient trust, and better health outcomes. Systemic implementation of culturally sensitive practices should be considered an important strategy for promoting equity in healthcare and strengthening patients' rights in culturally diverse societies.

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Diversity in Nursing Education and Practice: The Case of Germany

Professor Maria Marchwacka

Professor Gunter Meyer

Nursing in Germany is undergoing a profound transformation. Growing diversity among patients and care teams – shaped by international migration, multilingualism, and intersecting social inequalities – opens new opportunities for nursing practice and education alike. At the same time, this transformation raises fundamental questions about how care institutions and educational settings can respond adequately and equitably to the complexity it entails.

Drawing on intersectionality theory and Bourdieu's concept of habitus, this presentation argues that diversity in nursing spans two interconnected domains – care practice and professional education – and cannot be reduced to cultural difference alone. It is shaped by intersecting axes of inequality, including migration background, class, language, and prior educational socialization .

In nursing practice, diverse patient populations and internationally experienced colleagues challenge teams to develop culturally sensitive, equity-oriented modes of care. At the same time, nursing schools in Germany are increasingly attended by trainees from diverse international backgrounds completing their full vocational training. This growing heterogeneity places substantial new demands on nurse educators, who must navigate differing learning biographies and professional socializations while conveying shared professional and ethical standards.

Drawing on empirical data from both nursing practice and the German nursing education system, we discuss what equity-sensitive, diversity-competent nurse teacher education must look like – in schools and in clinical settings – to enable all practitioners and trainees to succeed and develop professionally.

Biography

Prof. Dr. Maria A. Marchwacka is a Professor of Education and Didactics of Health Professions and Organisational Development at Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences in Wolfsburg, Lower Saxony, Germany.

An educational scientist and communication scholar, her research focuses on teaching and learning in healthcare contexts, with particular emphasis on professionalism, health promotion, digitalisation, and intercultural communication. She brings over 25 years of experience in higher education, with teaching and research across a range of fields including Medical Education, Health Education, Nursing Didactics, and Vocational Education for Health Professions.

She serves as Chair of the Section on Education of the German Society for Nursing Science (DGP), Chair of the Section on Teaching within the German Society for Public Health (DGPH), and is a Board Member of the Interdisciplinary Society for Didactics and Health (IFDG).

Prof. Dr. Günter Mayer is a Professor of Psychiatric Nursing and Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences, Wolfenbüttel, Lower Saxony, Germany. A trained nurse and qualified nursing manager by profession, he combines clinical expertise with academic leadership and entrepreneurial experience. Since 1995, he has been owner and director of the nursing Foundation Meyer & Kratzsch in Berlin, which supports projects aimed at improving the quality of life of people in need of care – including initiatives addressing the integration of internationally trained nursing professionals.

He holds a Dr. phil. from Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, where his doctoral research examined the concept of dementia – reflecting his long-standing interest in the history of nursing and psychiatric care. His teaching and research focus on psychiatric nursing, historical nursing research, and health services management.

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Disparities in the Burden of Disease Across Diverse Populations: From Evidence to Educational Response

MD, PhD, MPH
Tomislav Meštrović

Health disparities in the burden of disease remain a persistent global challenge, reflecting unequal distribution of risk factors, access to care and broader social determinants of health. Drawing on large-scale epidemiological analyses, marked inequalities across populations are highlighted in this research. One example are age-standardized disability-adjusted life year (DALY) rates in low-Socio-demographic Index (SDI) settings, which are often more than double those in high-SDI regions, while life expectancy gaps between countries can exceed 20 years. Non-communicable diseases account for over 70% of global deaths, yet premature mortality remains disproportionately concentrated in low- and middle-income countries, where up to 80% of such deaths occur. Beyond describing disparities, translating evidence into actionable educational responses is needed. Health professional education must evolve to incorporate equity-focused frameworks, interdisciplinary training and context-sensitive decision-making. Integrating life-course prevention and culturally competent care into curricula can better prepare practitioners to address these inequalities. Reducing the unequal burden of disease requires not only robust data and policy action, but also transformative changes in education. Bridging evidence and training is essential for building resilient, equitable health systems capable of responding to diverse population needs.

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Biography

Associate Professor Dr. Tomislav Meštrović is a physician and scientist specializing in clinical microbiology, epidemiology and global health, with a strong focus on burden of disease health metrics. He serves as Director of the University Health Metrics Centre at University North, where he advances evidence-based public health through the integration of burden of disease data into policy, education and practice.

He is also an Affiliate Associate Professor at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington and a member of the Global Burden of Disease Scientific Council. Beyond research, he is actively engaged in global health policy, education and science communication, mentoring students, contributing to international initiatives, and promoting interdisciplinary approaches to address complex health challenges and inequalities worldwide. He is a recipient of the Fulbright Award, National Science Prize and the Annual Award of the Croatian Medical Chamber for 2025 for his scientific contributions.



Medical Simulation as a Tool for Preparing Medical Students to Work in a Multicultural Environment

PhD Aleksandra Brodowska

Contemporary healthcare increasingly takes place in multicultural settings, where professionals encounter patients with diverse values, health beliefs, and communication styles. Preparing medical students for such complexity remains a major educational challenge. This presentation explores medical simulation as an effective approach to developing cultural competence, including tolerance, openness, self-awareness, and communication skills. Simulation offers a psychologically safe environment in which students can engage with culturally sensitive clinical scenarios, experience emotional responses, and practice communication without risk to patients. A key focus is placed on reflective learning, particularly the role of debriefing in fostering insight into personal attitudes, biases, and behavioral patterns. Through guided reflection, students move beyond technical performance toward deeper understanding and adaptive professional behavior. The EMPOWER model is presented as a structured framework supporting this process. It integrates relational engagement, emotional awareness, perspective-taking, and collaborative communication, enabling learners to respond more effectively to culturally diverse patients. The findings suggest that well-designed simulation not only enhances clinical competence but also facilitates the development of essential interpersonal and cultural skills. As a result, it plays a crucial role in preparing future healthcare professionals for delivering patient-centered care in increasingly diverse healthcare environments.

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Biography

Dr Aleksandra Brodowska, PhD, Professor at UMMSC – academic lecturer and trainer in medical simulation and clinical communication. Professor at the Maria Skłodowska-Curie Medical University in Warsaw.

She specializes in the design and implementation of modern simulation-based educational programs aimed at developing communication competencies and preparing both medical students and academic staff for work in complex and multicultural clinical environments.

She is the author and facilitator of training programs for healthcare professionals, focused on building therapeutic relationships, effective communication in challenging situations, and burnout prevention. She has extensive experience in educating faculty members and students in the field of medical simulation, including the design and implementation of OSCE examinations, development of educational scenarios, and creation of assessment tools such as checklists.

Originally trained as a nurse and a specialist in internal nursing, she combines her clinical expertise with academic practice. She is a graduate of the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin and postgraduate studies in psycho-oncology at SWPS University in Warsaw. She is currently undergoing certification training in Simonton Therapy.



Challenges and strategies of intercultural competence development through the education of nurses in the republic of Serbia

MSc Marijana Dabic

Globalization and migration flows have led to cultural diversity of multiple actors in the health care system. Nurses, who are in direct contact with patients, face the need to develop intercultural competence in order to provide quality, safe and culturally congruent care. The key challenges in the development of intercultural competences in the education of nurses in the Republic of Serbia are related to the lack of multicultural contents integrated in the curricula, language barriers and insufficient education of teachers for implementation teaching contents in a foreign language. The introduction of courses based on multiculturalism, simulations and case studies, continuous education of teachers and international exchanges would represent effective strategies for the development of intercultural competence, the systematic development of which contributes to the improvement of the quality of health care and the promotion of equality in a multicultural society. To present intercultural competencies, identify challenges in the education of nurses in the Republic of Serbia and to present strategies for its development with special emphasis the role of teachers of nursing care in the process. The paper is an overview character and based on descriptive analysis of relevant literature and theoretical models.

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Biography

Marijana Dabic is a teacher at Department of Health Care, The College of Health Sciences, Academy of Applied Sciences Belgrade. She holds a Master's degree in Public Health and is pursuing doctoral studies in Preventive Medicine. Her areas of professional expertise includes Nursing Care, Health Education, Preventive Health and Teaching methodology in Nursing. With over two decades of experience in nursing education and research, she has taught nursing practice across internal medicine, infectology, pediatrics and neonatology and health education as well. She has published scientific papers, contributed to textbooks, and actively participates in national and international conferences.



Multicultural Education and Organ Donation and Transplantation: Religious and Cultural Perspectives

PhD Marzena Mikła

Organ donation and transplantation are life-saving procedures, yet their acceptance is influenced by religious, cultural, linguistic, and social factors. Most religions permit organ donation when ethical principles are respected, including donor autonomy, appropriate determination of death, and bodily integrity. To present perspectives of selected religions and cultural groups on organ donation and transplantation, identify socio-cultural barriers and facilitators, and propose educational implications for medical and health sciences students. A narrative review of recent literature was conducted, including systematic reviews, educational studies, and institutional documents. Sources covered Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roma communities, and migrant populations. Most major religions support organ donation as an act of altruism and compassion. However, nuances exist: some Muslim communities require better access to religious guidance; debates persist in Judaism and Islam regarding determination of death; Jehovah's Witnesses accept transplantation with strict restrictions on blood; and some Roma communities emphasise bodily integrity after death. Barriers often arise from interpretation differences, limited knowledge, mistrust, and communication challenges rather than explicit prohibitions. Culturally tailored education, interpreters, cultural mediators, and collaboration with community leaders, alongside cultural humility, are essential to improve understanding and consent. Multicultural education should recognise diversity within religions and cultures. Cultural competence and humility training can reduce barriers, strengthen trust, and support informed, respectful decision-making in organ donation.

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Biography

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Nurse at the Reina Sofía University General Hospital in Murcia, Spain.

Member of Research Group E063-04 'Advanced Care Research' at the University of Murcia and of the Advanced Nursing Care Research Group (ENFERAVANZA) at the Murcian Institute for Biomedical Research (IMIB-Pascual Parrilla), El Palmar, Spain.

Her research focuses on the psychosocial and cultural factors that influence healthcare decision-making, particularly in organ donation and transplantation, integrating innovation in healthcare through emerging technologies and improving the quality of care.

She is co-owner of a trademark registered with the Spanish Patent and Trademark Office (No. 4,186,783). Author of numerous scientific articles.



Communication Competencies of Nursing Students in Multicultural Patient Care

MSc Sabina Krsnik

Effective communication in multicultural healthcare contexts is a critical competency for nursing students, directly affecting the quality and safety of patient care. However, students often encounter challenges in adapting their communication to culturally diverse patients, which can hinder the development of patient-centred practices. This qualitative study examines the communication competencies of nursing students in multicultural patient care across Poland, Slovenia, and Croatia, focusing on the perspectives of clinical mentors. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with clinical mentors involved in nursing education and supervision (N = 32) across various clinical training environments. Thematic analysis identified shared themes, including students' awareness of cultural differences, language-related challenges, emotional responsiveness, and the importance of experiential learning, as well as notable cross-country variations. Mentors in Poland emphasised structural limitations and limited formal intercultural training. In Slovenia, mentors highlighted the need for systematic integration of intercultural competencies into curricula. In Croatia, there was greater emphasis on relational communication and experiential learning in clinical settings. Across all contexts, mentors observed that nursing students possess basic communication skills but often lack confidence in culturally sensitive situations. The findings highlight the importance of context-specific educational strategies, strengthened mentorship, and structured intercultural training to enhance communication competencies and support patient-centred care in multicultural healthcare environments.

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Biography

Sabina Krsnik holds a Master's degree in Business and Administrative Sciences and is the Head of the International and Project Office, where she coordinates development and research activities. She is also involved as a junior researcher and provides administrative and communication support in national and international projects.

Her research interests focus on sustainability communication, healthcare economics, and business economics. She has contributed to several research and development initiatives and is the author of multiple scientific and professional articles.

From Dissonance to Harmony: Multiculturalism in the Symphony Orchestra and the Psychological Well-Being of Musicians

MSc Dorota Aneta Jaśkiewicz

As a complex social structure, a symphony orchestra serves as a unique space where diverse cultural identities, musical practices, and communication styles coexist. In the context of increasing artist mobility and the internationalization of cultural institutions, multiculturalism has become an integral part of musicians' daily work, influencing both the quality of collaboration and their psychological well-being. Although it constitutes a significant artistic resource, it also generates tensions related to communication, identity, and emotions. In this speech, multiculturalism is framed as an ambivalent process – simultaneously generating tensions (dissonances) and the potential for creative integration (harmony). By combining a theoretical approach (cultural sociology, music psychology, and research on artistic organizations) with the autoethnographic experiences of a double bassist, an attempt will be made to analyze the mechanisms regulating relationships within a multicultural musical ensemble. Particular attention will be devoted to the role of nonverbal communication, the negotiation of interpretive meanings, and strategies for coping with tension. The aim of the presentation is to demonstrate how the process of achieving musical cohesion influences the mental well-being of musicians – strengthening their sense of belonging, reducing tension, and promoting emotional regulation. The orchestra is presented here as a unique space for social integration, where diversity becomes a prerequisite for creative cooperation.

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Biography

She conducts research on cultural participation, activities of musical institutions and role of musical professions in contemporary society. Her academic interests also include the social responsibility of cultural institutions and musical socialization.

She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in sociology from the University of Szczecin and her bachelor's and master's degrees in instrumental studies, with a specialization in double bass, from the Academy of Art in Szczecin. She also studied at primary and secondary music schools.

She actively participates in national and international research, cultural, and artistic projects. She carries out projects funded by the National Science Centre, engages in fieldwork, data analysis, and organizational work for academic conferences. She regularly presents her research findings at national and international scientific conferences. At the same time, she pursues an artistic career as a double bassist, collaborating with numerous cultural institutions.



Quality of Life in Diverse and Ageing Populations

PhD Marijana Neuberg

Quality of life in diverse and ageing populations is a multidimensional construct shaped by health status, social participation, economic security and access to services. This research explores these dimensions among older adults in Varaždin County, comparing mobile and mobility-limited populations using two cross-sectional surveys and the OPQOL-BRIEF instrument. A total of 1,127 mobile and 220 mobility-limited older adults were included. Mean quality of life was higher among mobile participants (3.4) than among those with limited mobility (2.8), indicating pronounced disparities within ageing populations. Mobility-limited individuals reported substantial challenges related to physical health, transport and financial resources, with over 70% experiencing breathlessness during activity and reduced social engagement. Among mobile participants, wellbeing varied significantly by healthcare access, income, and housing satisfaction. Across both groups, financial stability, accessibility of health services and opportunities for participation emerged as central determinants, highlighting priorities for inclusive, age-friendly policy responses.

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Biography

Associate Professor Marijana Neuberg is a nurse, educator and researcher specializing in gerontology, nursing, palliative care and health system organization. She currently serves as Vice-Rector for Teaching and Student Affairs at University North, where she plays a key role in advancing academic programmes, curriculum development and student-centred education. Previously, she was Head of the Nursing Department, contributing significantly to the development and modernization of nursing education in Croatia.

Her academic background includes a PhD in Social Gerontology, complemented by extensive teaching and mentorship experience across undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels. She has supervised hundreds of theses and coordinated numerous courses in nursing, palliative care and healthcare management. Her work integrates education, research, and community engagement, with a focus on ageing, quality of life and vulnerable populations. Through leadership in projects and institutional initiatives, she actively contributes to strengthening healthcare education and practice.



Superstitions in Nursing: A Review of the International Literature and Preliminary Findings from the Authors' Own Research

PhD Magdalena Kuczyńska

A superstition may be defined as a belief in supernatural relationships between events, or a conviction that certain objects, words, or gestures possess a fateful or magical power. Societies have developed a wide range of superstitions that are cultivated exclusively within particular regions of the world. Others, in their general meaning, are present across distant cultures—for example, the attribution of significance to the number 13 in European culture and to the number 4 in parts of Asia. Distinctive superstitions are also found within specific social and professional groups. The belief in an unfortunate shift during a full moon, the avoidance of the word “quiet” when referring to an ongoing shift, and the notion that patient deaths “come in threes” are examples of superstitions held by nurses in various parts of the world. The subject of the present study is the awareness and observance of superstitions among nurses in Poland. The research employed a diagnostic survey method, using the KOP20 Beliefs Assessment Questionnaire (with the consent of its authors, M. Wiech and T. Sosnowski), as well as a bespoke questionnaire containing selected superstitions observed in nursing practice. A total of 345 individuals participated in the study. On a five-point scale measuring the intensity of superstition, nearly 40% of respondents indicated a level of 3. Approximately 45% of respondents reported having heard of superstitions in nursing. The greatest concern among participants was associated with wishing someone a quiet shift or stating that a shift is quiet before it has concluded. It is also not uncommon for nurses to open a window following a patient’s death, in order to allow the soul to leave the room in which the patient passed away. Superstitions remain a living and persistent element within the nursing community under study

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Biography

I hold a primary qualification in nursing and postgraduate qualifications in ethics, bioethics, and gerontology. My professional interests are focused primarily on issues within medical ethics, particularly the moral dimensions of end-of-life care and transplantation.

My academic research also encompasses broadly defined socio-humanistic aspects of medicine, including its history, the principles of patient education, and interpersonal communication both within the therapeutic team and in the patient–healthcare professional relationship. The role of superstitions in nursing is a topic I have undertaken with a degree of light-heartedness, yet with genuine interest.

In my private life, I am an admirer of the work of Michelangelo Buonarroti and of literature which, in my view, represents a high standard. Maintaining contact with my animals, crocheting, and engaging in practical DIY work—often with a drill in hand—help me to preserve a healthy balance in life.



Is There a Magic Spell for a Good Birth?

Professor Agnieszka Kleszcz

Is there a “magic formula” for a good birth? This presentation critically explores this question from the perspective of contemporary, evidence-based midwifery practice. It examines which factors genuinely contribute to a positive birth experience, both from the perspective of the woman and from a professional standpoint. Drawing on current scientific evidence, key aspects such as the role of patience in the birth process, the significance of the latent phase and the second stage of labour, and the reflective use of interventions such as episiotomy and fundal pressure are discussed. The presentation highlights that a “good birth” is not determined by isolated interventions, but rather by individualized, situation-specific, and evidence-based care. The theoretical discussion is complemented by personal clinical experiences that illustrate the complexity of obstetric care and emphasize the importance of communication, empathy, and professional attitude. It becomes clear that even challenging births can be experienced positively when women feel well supported and respected. The presentation concludes that there is no universal “magic formula.” Instead, a good birth emerges from the interplay of professional competence, interprofessional collaboration, and a respectful, woman-centered approach to care.

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Biography

Prof. Dr. Agnieszka Kleszcz is a Professor of Applied Midwifery Science and Programme Director of the Bachelor's degree in Midwifery at the University of Health Professions in Eberswalde, Germany. She has gained extensive clinical experience as a midwife, having worked both in delivery rooms and neonatal care units. Her professional practice spans healthcare systems in both Poland and Germany, providing her with a broad intercultural and clinical perspective.

Her academic work focuses on evidence-based midwifery care, the development of high-quality maternity services, and the advancement of midwifery education. She is particularly committed to strengthening woman-centred care and improving childbirth experiences through reflective practice and interprofessional collaboration.

Driven by a clear professional vision, she strives to contribute to the development of best possible care for women and their families. Her work bridges the gap between theory and practice, combining scientific knowledge with compassion, dedication, and a strong commitment to professional excellence.



Balancing Values: Human Rights in Multicultural Nursing Practice

PhD Elena Rousou, Ass. Prof.

The workshop is about inequality and ethical decision-making in healthcare through two interactive activities. In the first activity, participants are assigned anonymous identity profiles reflecting diverse social, economic, and health conditions. Through a “step forward” exercise, they physically experience differences in access, opportunity, and inclusion, highlighting the impact of social determinants such as age, disability, socioeconomic status, migration, and sexuality.

The second activity presents an ethical dilemma: in a context of severe economic and healthcare crisis, participants must decide which six fundamental human rights to retain while all others are suspended. This task challenges them to prioritize values, make difficult decisions under constraint, and reflect on fairness and responsibility.

Through guided reflection, participants explore emotional responses, moral discomfort, and professional accountability.

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- Recognize how social factors influence healthcare access and outcomes
- Reflect on inequality, bias, and personal assumptions
- Analyze ethical dilemmas involving limited resources and rights
- Identify moral conflict in decision-making
- Evaluate how choices may differ for vulnerable populations
- Develop awareness of their role in promoting equity and ethical practice in healthcare

Biography

Dr Elena Rousou is an Assistant Professor in Community Nursing at the Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Cyprus University of Technology. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Nursing from Anglia Polytechnic University, UK, and a Master's degree in Healthcare Management from the Open University of Cyprus. In 2015, she completed her doctoral studies at the Cyprus University of Technology, specialising in Community-Family Nursing and Public Health. Dr Rousou teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Community Nursing and Transcultural Nursing, with a strong emphasis on culturally competent, family-centred, and community-oriented care. Throughout her career, Dr Rousou has been actively engaged in numerous research initiatives, with primary interests in community nursing, transcultural healthcare, and gender-related health issues affecting minority and vulnerable population groups. She has participated in multiple European projects, including IENE 4, - 11, and MultiCultiMed project, which focus on promoting culturally competent and compassionate healthcare. She has also contributed to the FEM-United project, aimed at preventing intimate partner violence, domestic violence, and femicide in Europe, as well as the FGM e-Campus project, which provides comprehensive interdisciplinary training for professionals working with FGM-affected individuals and communities. In addition, she served as a member of the Management Committee for the COST Actions IS1206 “Femicide Across Europe” and CA15208 “RANCARE – Rationing in Nursing Care.”

Since June 2023, she has served as Vice Chair of the European Transcultural Nurses Association (ETNA).



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Balancing Values: Human Rights in Multicultural Nursing Practice

PhDc Paraskevi Charitou

The workshop is about inequality and ethical decision-making in healthcare through two interactive activities. In the first activity, participants are assigned anonymous identity profiles reflecting diverse social, economic, and health conditions. Through a “step forward” exercise, they physically experience differences in access, opportunity, and inclusion, highlighting the impact of social determinants such as age, disability, socioeconomic status, migration, and sexuality.

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- Analyze ethical dilemmas involving limited resources and rights
- Identify moral conflict in decision-making
- Evaluate how choices may differ for vulnerable populations
- Develop awareness of their role in promoting equity and ethical practice in healthcare

Biography

Mrs Paraskevi Charitou is a registered nurse with over 20 years of experience in healthcare, including 12 years in community nursing, providing home-based care through the Community Nursing Services of the Cyprus State Health Services Organization.

She holds a BSc in Nursing and an MSc in Advanced Nursing and Community Health Care from the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) and is currently a PhD candidate, focusing on improving home care of people with Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

She has substantial experience in European-funded projects (ERASMUS+), including SAVE, IENE 5, IENE 10, IENE 11, OP.E.N, MultiCultiMed, and PROMOCON, contributing as a research associate, MOOC facilitator, and member of scientific committees. Her work involves curriculum development, intercultural health education, ethical competence enhancement in nursing, and knowledge dissemination across transnational partnerships.

She has co-authored peer-reviewed scientific articles and contributed to educational books and good practice guides related to nursing ethics, intercultural education, and safeguarding in community settings.

Her research interests focus on empowerment of family caregivers of people with dementia, promotion of quality of life in community care, and the development and implementation of culturally competent care approaches that respond to the diverse needs of populations living within the community.

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Multicultural Perspectives on Physiological and Functional Aging: A Geriatric Simulation and AGE Reader

PhD Katarzyna Zgutka

Aging is biologically universal yet culturally diverse. Variations in diet, lifestyle, and cultural perceptions significantly influence aging and functional decline.

This workshop integrates subjective perceptions of aging with objective biological data and immersive simulations to enhance clinical empathy.

The session follows a three-stage experiential model:

- **Attitude Exploration:** Interactive polling identifies cultural stereotypes and perceptions of aging.
- **Functional Immersion:** Participants utilize geriatric simulation suits to experience age-related sensory and motor deficits, such as visual impairment and restricted mobility. This highlights daily challenges faced by elderly patients in diverse social contexts.
- **Biological Verification:** Non-invasive skin autofluorescence measurement via the AGE Reader assesses Advanced Glycation End- products (AGEs) to determine risk of cardiovascular disease.

The workshop concludes with a panel on "Healthy Aging," synthesizing cultural insights with modern science. Linking immersive simulation with biochemical data provides a holistic framework for personalized, culturally sensitive geriatric care.

Keywords: aging, geriatric simulation, AGE Reader, Advanced Glycation End- products, multiculturalism.

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Biography

Katarzyna Zgutka, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Physiology in Health Sciences at the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin. She earned her doctorate in medical biology and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Stem Cells Institute, University of Louisville, USA.

For over 20 years, she has served as a dedicated educator, teaching physiology, the physiology of aging, and longevity to students at the Pomeranian Medical University. She is the author of 72 publications, including 48 with an impact factor (total IF: 135.119), as well as 18 conference abstracts presented at national and international scientific meetings. Her work focuses on the pathophysiology and biological mechanisms of aging. Dr. Zgutka is a recipient of the Szczecin Scientific Society Award – the Medal Amicus Scientiae et Veritatis, recognizing her contributions to science.

In addition to her research and teaching activities, Dr. Zgutka is actively involved in science communication and educational program development. As the Deputy Project Manager for the "Modern Ageing" project (FEPZ.05.03-IZ.00-0004/24), co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the European Funds for Western Pomerania programme, she designs and conducts specialized workshops on aging tailored to diverse age groups—from children to seniors.



YOUNG SCIENTIST SESSION



Caring for Ageing Turkish Guest Workers: Implications for Nursing Education

MA Melike Ozturk, Prof. Dr. Bianca Steiner

The growing population of aging Turkish guest workers in Germany presents specific challenges for nursing care and education, stemming from cultural, linguistic, and biographical factors. This study examines the requirement for culturally sensitive nursing care when caring for older first-generation Turkish 'guest workers' and derives implications for vocational nursing education. A qualitative exploratory design incorporating semi-structured interviews with ten first-generation Turkish migrants and six expert interviews with registered nurses was employed. Data were analysed using qualitative content analysis according to Mayring. The findings emphasise the importance of culturally sensitive care, particularly with regard to communication, dignity and intimacy. Barriers include limited mutual understanding due to the use of professional language, inadequate clarification strategies, and low health literacy. Family members often act as informal mediators, raising questions of autonomy and role boundaries. Structural constraints, such as time pressure, staff shortages and a lack of professional interpreting services, also hinder implementation. These results also emphasise the importance of making nursing education more inclusive and culturally responsive in order to improve care for aging migrant populations. This includes strategies to promote understanding, the ethical handling of intimacy, as well as the development of culturally sensitive competencies as a core element of professional practice.



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Biography

Melike Öztürk is a registered nurse and nursing education researcher in Germany. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Medical Education and a Master's degree in Vocational Education for Health Professions, both from Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences. Her academic and professional work focuses on diversity, discrimination and culturally sensitive care in nursing education. Her current research uses qualitative research methods to analyse the pedagogical implications of providing professional care for older patients from the Turkish 'guest worker' generation who migrated to Germany in the 1970s, as well as the experiences and support needs of nursing students. Alongside her academic work, Ms Öztürk is actively involved in community projects and non-profit initiatives.

An Exploratory Study of the Need for Diversity-Sensitive Care in General Nursing Education

MA Paula Weigand

The presented work examines the need for a dedicated module on diversity-sensitive nursing within generalist nursing education, with a particular focus on the LGBTQIA+ community. It addresses the growing gap between increasing societal diversity and a nursing curriculum that remains largely heteronormative. In clinical practice, this gap may contribute to discriminatory experiences for queer individuals and can negatively impact the quality and safety of care. The project follows an exploratory qualitative design using Mayring's content analysis. Data were collected through group discussions and semi-structured interviews with nursing students and teaching staff at a nursing school affiliated with the Municipal Hospital of Braunschweig. The findings indicate a clear need for more structured and in-depth integration of diversity-related content. Currently, diversity is often addressed only superficially or within the broader framework of transcultural nursing. Both students and educators emphasize the need for more comprehensive theoretical input, practical learning materials, and opportunities for interprofessional exchange. Regarding teaching approaches, participants highlight the value of interactive methods such as role-playing, case-based learning, and the inclusion of experts as well as individuals with lived experience. Overall, the work suggests that integrating diversity-sensitive content into nursing education strengthens professional competencies and contributes to improved patient safety, care quality, and patient satisfaction in increasingly diverse healthcare settings.



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Biography

I completed my Abitur in 2016 and subsequently began my training as a Registered Nurse in 2017, which I successfully completed in 2020. Since then, I have been continuously working in the healthcare sector.

From 2020 to 2022, I worked as a Registered Nurse at Vivantes Hospital in Spandau, followed by employment at the Municipal Hospital in Braunschweig until 2025. In addition to my clinical work, I pursued my academic development and completed a Bachelor of Arts in Pedagogy in Healthcare at Akkon University of Applied Sciences in Berlin (2021–2025).

Since October 2025, I have been working as a lecturer at the Vocational School for Nursing at Peine Hospital. In March 2026, I began my Master's degree in Vocational Education in Healthcare at Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences in Wolfsburg, which I am currently pursuing.



The prevalence of depressive symptoms among early adolescents in Cyprus and their association with sociodemographic characteristics: A cross-sectional study

George Alesandrou

Depressive symptoms in early adolescence represent a growing public health concern, influenced by a range of individual and family-related factors. However, limited data are available for early adolescents in Cyprus.

The aim of the present study was a) to examine the prevalence of depressive symptoms among early adolescents in Cyprus and b) to explore potential associations between the individual and family characteristics of participants and depressive symptoms. A cross-sectional descriptive correlational study with random sampling. Depressive symptoms were assessed using the Children's Depression Inventory-2 (CDI-2). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and multivariate analyses to explore associations between depressive symptoms and participants' sociodemographic characteristics. Of the 552 participants included in the study, 14.3% exhibited depressive symptoms. Girls, children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and children with foreign fathers had significantly higher rates of depressive symptoms. The study highlights the impact of sociodemographic factors and sex differences on depression in early adolescents in Cyprus, revealing important disparities that underscore the need for systematic mental health screening and targeted interventions. Specifically, mental health strategies should address gender disparities and the elevated risk faced by children with pre-existing mental health conditions or those from immigrant families.

Keywords: Depressive symptoms, early adolescence, sociodemographic characteristics, Cyprus



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Biography

George Alexandrou is a Mental Health Nurse and holder of a PhD, with over ten (10) years of clinical experience in the field of mental health. He is currently working at the Adolescent Inpatient Mental Health Unit at Archbishop Makarios III Hospital, providing specialized care to adolescents with mental health disorders. He also has previous clinical experience in oncology and rehabilitation settings. He has been elected and appointed by the Council of Ministers as Secretary of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Cyprus, actively contributing to the development of policies and regulatory frameworks for the nursing profession. He also serves as President of the Mental Health Sector of the Pancyprrian Association of Nurses and Midwives, having previously held several key positions within the Association, including Treasurer of the Advanced Nursing Practice Sector and Vice President of the Mental Health Sector. In recent years, he has been actively involved in the education of nursing students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as in his role as a clinical mentor. His educational work focuses on bridging theory and clinical practice, promoting student-centered learning, and fostering clinical judgment and professional competencies. He has contributed to scientific publications in international peer-reviewed journals and has presented his research at national and international conferences, actively contributing to the advancement and dissemination of scientific knowledge. His research interests focus on the relationship between depressive symptoms, school bullying, self-esteem, and self-harm among children and adolescents, with particular emphasis on psychosocial functioning and the prevention of mental health disorders in school populations.

Evidence-based interventions for the integration of internationally trained nurses into the German healthcare system

MA, BSc

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Biography

Adrian Kuhnke is a lecturer for scientific nursing practice at Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences, Germany. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Arts in Health Care Management. His professional background includes clinical nursing, nursing education, and leadership roles in hospital management. He has extensive experience in coordinating nursing education and developing practice-based learning environments. His academic work focuses on simulation-based education, clinical reasoning, and team dynamics in interprofessional healthcare settings. In addition, he is involved in teaching, curriculum development, and research in evidence-based nursing. His current research explores role formation and team coordination in simulation-based emergency training, with a particular interest in patient safety and interprofessional collaboration.

This study and poster analyses the effectiveness of specific measures and organisational frameworks that significantly promote the professional integration of internationally recruited nurses within clinical care contexts. Both structural induction programmes such as preceptorships and mentoring, as well as language and specialist training, and a comprehensive culture of welcome at ward level are considered (Klauber, Wasem, Beivers, & Mostert, 2023, p. 115; Kurze, 2016, p. 70; Roth et al., 2025; Zulfiqar et al., 2023). The aim is to provide an overview of effective strategies that enable sustainable integration and contribute to reducing staff turnover (Roth, Berger, Krug, Mahler, & Wensing, 2021, p. 13). Specialised programmes to improve language skills and cultural competencies are also highlighted, supporting successful adaptation to local healthcare practices (Karrebæk, Sørensen, & Sommer, 2024, p. 26; Zulfiqar et al., 2023, p. 15). Based on a systematic literature analysis, the identified interventions and strategies are evaluated in terms of their strength of evidence and their impact on professional integration and employee retention. It is also demonstrated how specific approaches such as structured mentoring programmes and preceptorships can substantially support the transition of internationally trained nurses (Cruz, Tay, Bradley, & Baxter, 2025; Martin-Misener, 2023, p. 2).



AI Meets Diversity: New Perspectives for Nursing Education

Patricia Schöner,
Carolyn Junker

The increasing diversity of learners poses significant challenges for teachers in nursing education, particularly with regard to differences in performance and language proficiency. At the same time, the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) opens up new possibilities for supporting individualized learning processes. The aim of this contribution is to systematically analyze the potentials of AI described in current educational research in addressing performance- and language-related heterogeneity and to transfer these findings to theoretical instruction in nursing education. The study is based on a structured literature review guided by the principles of systematic reviews. National and international publications on AI in education as well as on diversity in educational contexts were analyzed and related. The findings indicate that AI offers particular potential in the early identification of individual learning levels, the personalization of learning processes, and the provision of adaptive feedback. Furthermore, AI-based applications enable new forms of language support and differentiation. At the same time, limitations regarding data protection, transparency, and pedagogical responsibility become evident. The results suggest that AI can serve as a supportive tool in addressing diverse learner groups; however, its effective use requires careful didactic integration and the development of corresponding competencies among educators.



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Biography

Patricia Schöner is a Master's student in Vocational Education for Health Professions at Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences, Germany. She previously completed a Bachelor's degree in Vocational Education for Nursing.

Alongside her studies, she works as a registered nurse on an internal medicine and palliative care ward in a hospital. In addition to her nursing role, she is also employed as a practice instructor, where she contributes to the clinical education of nursing students, particularly by guiding and supporting them in their practical training.

Her academic and professional background integrates hands-on nursing experience with expertise in vocational education. Her interests lie in the digitalization of nursing education and in advancing technological change within educational settings. She is particularly interested in developing and implementing innovative digital teaching and learning approaches in nursing education.

Carolyn Junker is a Master's student in Vocational Education for Health Professions at Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences, Germany. She previously completed a Bachelor's degree in Vocational Education for Nursing.

Alongside her studies, she works as a registered nurse on a visceral surgery ward in a hospital. In addition, in her role as a practice instructor, she assumes key responsibilities in clinical training, particularly in the supervision and mentoring of nursing students in the clinical setting.

Her academic and professional background combines nursing practice with vocational pedagogical expertise. Her interests lie in the design and further development of teaching and learning processes in nursing education. She is particularly interested in addressing diversity in educational settings and in developing approaches to support heterogeneous groups of learners.

Transition to Practice and Staff Retention Following Nursing Training and Degree Programmes: A Systematic Qualitative Review of Factors Influencing National and International Nursing Graduates

BSc Christina Nkwonkam

The transition from training or academic studies to nursing practice is considered a critical phase for professional stabilization and staff retention. The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to systematically synthesize qualitative evidence regarding the experiences, stressors, and factors influencing retention among national and international nursing graduates. Methodologically, a systematic qualitative evidence synthesis was conducted. Following a structured literature search, screening according to PRISMA, and quality assessment based on CASP, 13 studies were thematically evaluated. The synthesis shows that the transition to practice must be understood as a complex process of professional socialization and identity development. Key stressors include high levels of responsibility, time pressure, role uncertainty, staff shortages, and discrepancies between educational expectations and the reality of practice. Employee retention arises less from individual adaptation efforts alone and more from organizational and social conditions: structured career entry programs, reliable mentoring or preceptorship, appreciative leadership, team membership, a culture of feedback, and realistic working conditions. International nursing graduates additionally face linguistic, cultural, and integration-related challenges that require migration-sensitive support. The results illustrate that sustainable retention during career entry requires a combination of competency development, social integration, and organizational support. Hospitals should mandatorily evaluate transition programs and specifically link them to team culture, leadership, and work organization.

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Biography

My name is Christina Nkwonkam. I completed my nursing training in 2000. Since then, I have worked in various departments at Vinzenzkrankenhaus in Hanover. From 2003 to 2021, I gained experience as the assistant ward manager in the gastroenterology department. In January 2020, I earned my certification as a specialist in geriatric and rehabilitative care, and since 2021 I have been the lead team manager of the geriatric ward. In 2021, I completed the course "Intercultural Competence – Xpert Culture Communication Skills® Basic" at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Hanover. In 2022, I attended and successfully completed the course "Intercultural Competence – Xpert Culture Communication Skills® Professional" at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Hanover. In 2023, I began my studies in Vocational Education and Management in Nursing with a focus on management and successfully completed the program in April 2026.

Digitalisation of healthcare and cultural inequalities – socio-cultural challenges in providing care involving the use of digital technologies

MSc Patrycja Krężel

The digitalisation of healthcare is providing an increasing number of tools for diagnosing, treating and monitoring patients, and is making it much easier to provide patient care and for patients to access various healthcare services remotely. However, alongside these new opportunities, there are also associated challenges and inequalities, including those of a socio-cultural nature. A literature review was conducted to identify these issues and how they relate to the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of available digital methods. Based on the analysed data, the review presents various difficulties in delivering digitalised healthcare and explores how the digitalisation process can further support the provision of personalised care in a multicultural society, rather than exacerbating differences and inequalities.



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Biography

Patrycja Krężel, holds a master's degree in nursing and works as an assistant at the Department of Specialist Nursing at the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin. Additionally, works as a nurse in the Electrophysiology and Electrotherapy Unit at the Independent Public Regional Hospital in Szczecin. Research interests: cardiology, public health, validation of research tools, nursing competencies.

Experiences of Intersectional Discrimination in Nursing Education and Their Impact on Learning and Professional Identity

MSc Edita Kurz

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Biography

Edita Kurz holds a Master of Arts in Vocational Education for Nursing and Health. She has a professional background in geriatric nursing and worked in direct patient care. Her Master's thesis focused on discrimination in the school context. She currently works as a lecturer in the field of nursing and health education.

Discrimination remains a significant issue in education and healthcare, yet its role in nursing education has received limited empirical attention. This study explores how nursing students perceive experiences of discrimination within the school-based context of generalist nursing education and how these experiences influence their learning and professional identity development.

A qualitative research design was applied. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with nursing students and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Theoretical perspectives included intersectionality and Bourdieu's concept of habitus.

The findings show that experiences of discrimination are closely linked to biographical background, social positioning, and structural conditions in the educational context. Language-related challenges and group dynamics were identified as key factors influencing inclusion and exclusion. These experiences affected learning and professional identity in different ways, ranging from reduced motivation to increased resilience and professional reflection.

Identifying Factors Associated with the Severity of Depressive and Anxiety Symptoms Among People Forced to Leave Their Place of Residence Due to War

MSc, RN

Linda Czeponis

Armed conflict, insecurity, and forced displacement are extreme stressors that significantly affect the mental and physical health of refugees. Individual responses vary depending on personal and contextual factors, including social support, psychological resilience, and prior life experiences. The study aimed to assess the prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms among Ukrainian war refugees. The study included 390 Ukrainian refugees residing in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship in 2024, of whom 70% were women. Data were collected using an author-designed questionnaire and the Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25. Emotional distress was identified in 38.21% of participants. The same proportion reported anxiety symptoms, while depressive symptoms occurred in 34.87%. Gender was a significant determinant ($p < 0.001$), with women more frequently affected. Other variables, including age, education, residence, employment, and caregiving responsibilities, were not significantly associated ($p > 0.05$). Direct exposure to conflict and having a partner in Ukraine increased depressive symptoms. Negative self-rated health was strongly associated with all outcomes. Social support, family ties, and good economic conditions were protective factors.

High prevalence of mental health problems indicates the need for systematic monitoring and psychological support for war refugees.

Keywords:

war, Ukraine, depression, anxiety, HSCL-25



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Biography

I am a registered nurse with professional experience in clinical practice, actively engaged in the healthcare sector. In 2025, I completed my Master's degree in nursing at the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin, Poland. In addition to my clinical work, I am involved in academic teaching within the Subdepartment of Social Nursing, Department of Health Sciences, Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin, Poland. My teaching activities focus on multiculturalism in healthcare and the international perspective in nursing practice. My academic and professional interests include the impact of cultural diversity on patient care, health inequalities, and the challenges associated with providing healthcare to migrant and refugee populations. I am particularly committed to promoting culturally competent care and enhancing communication between healthcare professionals and patients from diverse cultural backgrounds. Through the integration of clinical practice and academic engagement, I aim to combine practical experience with evidence-based knowledge, contributing to the development of inclusive, equitable, and patient-centered healthcare systems in a globalized context.

Presentation of Ongoing Research on the Level of Resilience Among Pregnant Patients from Ukraine Who Left Their Country Due to the War

MSc Karolina Matysiak

Forced migration due to the war in Ukraine constitutes a significant psychological burden for pregnant women. Resilience may act as a protective factor against stress and experiences of discrimination. The aim of this study was to assess the level of resilience and analyze its relationship with perceived stress and everyday discrimination in this population. The study included 111 pregnant women from Ukraine. The following standardized instruments were used: the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS), and the Resilience Scale (RS-25). Descriptive statistics and correlation analyses were performed. The mean age of the participants was 30.35 ± 5.84 years. The mean perceived stress score (PSS-10) was 20.25 ± 2.90 , the level of experienced discrimination (EDS) was 5.50 ± 6.53 , and the resilience level (RS-25) was 144.37 ± 15.92 . No statistically significant relationships were found between resilience and perceived stress or experienced discrimination. The findings indicate moderate levels of resilience and stress in the studied group. The lack of significant correlations suggests a multifactorial nature of resilience determinants among pregnant women affected by war-related migration. Further research should include a broader range of psychosocial and environmental factors.

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Biography

Master of Midwifery, specialist in gynecological and obstetric nursing. Lecturer at the Department of Midwifery and Pregnancy Pathology, Faculty of Health Sciences, Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin. Member of the Polish Midwives Association, Academic Branch in Szczecin. Employed as a midwife at the University Clinical Hospital No. 2 in Szczecin, in the delivery and operating unit. Research interests focus on identifying factors influencing the level of resilience among pregnant women from Ukraine who were forced to leave their place of residence due to war-related events.



Perinatal Traditions in Different Cultures and Midwifery Practice in Polish Healthcare Facilities

Alickun Joanna

Perinatal traditions constitute a significant element of cultural heritage and influence the perception of pregnancy, childbirth, and newborn care. The aim of this study is to analyze selected practices and beliefs related to the perinatal period in various cultures and assess their significance for contemporary obstetric practice in Polish healthcare facilities. The study discusses, among other things, rituals, social roles, and approaches to labor pain and postpartum care in a cross-cultural context. These are compared with current standards of medical care in Poland, highlighting the challenges resulting from the increasing cultural diversity of patients. The analysis highlights the need to incorporate cultural competencies into the work of medical personnel and to tailor care to individual women's needs while maintaining medical safety. The conclusions emphasize the importance of intercultural dialogue and education in improving the quality of perinatal care.

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32 years old, midwifery student, active member of the student scientific club, privately wife and mother of two children.



Coping strategies for stress among war refugees from Ukraine

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Biography

I am a graduate of Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin, where I obtained a Bachelor's degree in Midwifery from the Faculty of Health Sciences in 2017. I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Midwifery and have developed a growing interest in the academic and research aspects of midwifery practice. Since completing my undergraduate studies, I have consistently expanded my professional qualifications through participation in specialist and postgraduate training courses.

I have eight years of clinical experience as a midwife, which has provided a solid foundation for integrating professional practice with academic reflection. My professional and academic interests include evidence-based midwifery, patient-centred care, interdisciplinary collaboration, and cultural sensitivity in healthcare. I am committed to continuous professional development and to contributing to improvements in the quality, safety, and inclusivity of maternal and perinatal healthcare.



Factors influencing the level of intercultural competence and intelligence

PhD, MSc, RN
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PhD in health sciences and a specialist in pediatric nursing. She works as a lecturer at the Department and Division of Pediatric Diseases and Pediatric Nursing, and is also affiliated with the Clinic of Pediatrics, Endocrinology, Diabetology, Metabolic Diseases, and Cardiology of Developmental Age, combining academic teaching with clinical practice. Her research interests focus on the development of competencies and intercultural intelligence among nurses. In 2025, she defended her doctoral dissertation entitled "Exploring factors influencing the development of competencies and intercultural intelligence among nurses working in Poland."

Nurses with higher levels of intercultural competence are characterized by good knowledge of foreign languages, higher education, experience working with people from different cultures, and a lack of fear of discrimination and communication barriers. Nurses' own religiosity does not significantly influence the level of these competences, but personality plays a key role, especially in the emotional aspect, including, for example, motivations for pursuing a career in nursing. Nurses with high levels of neuroticism demonstrate lower levels of intercultural competence. The development of intercultural competences is supported by training in this area, which is particularly important, especially in the context of increasing global migration.



Analysis of the Determinants of Mental Health in Ukrainian Refugee Children and Their Parents

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Biography

I am a Master of Science in Nursing and a specialist in internal medicine nursing with five years of professional experience. I also work as an academic lecturer, combining clinical practice with teaching. My interests include patient care and the development of nursing competencies.

The mental health of refugee children is an important public health issue in the context of forced migration caused by armed conflict. Ukrainian refugee children may experience psychological difficulties related to exposure to stress and trauma, as well as challenges in adapting to a new environment.

The aim of the study is to assess the psychological functioning of Ukrainian children and adolescents and to identify individual, family, and social factors associated with their mental health.

The study includes children and adolescents as well as their parents. The following instruments were used: a self-developed questionnaire and standardized tools including the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), the Child Revised Impact of Event Scale (CRIES-13), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-28). For parents, a self-developed questionnaire and the Parenting Stress Index (PSI or PSI-RN) were applied.

Preliminary findings suggest the presence of psychological difficulties in a proportion of children, associated with levels of stress exposure, perceived social support, and resilience. Parental stress may also influence child functioning.

The results highlight the importance of a multilevel approach to assessing refugee children's mental health, considering both individual and family-related factors. The findings may inform the development of targeted supportive interventions.



How should multiculturalism be studied? An overview of tools for assessing multiculturalism in the attitudes of healthcare staff

MSc Marcin Grajek

The growing mobility of populations and the resulting ethnic and cultural diversity among patients are placing new demands on healthcare staff in terms of communication, cultural competence, and the quality of care they provide. This study aimed to present and organise standardised research tools used to assess healthcare workers' attitudes towards multiculturalism.

A review of literature from the last 10 years was conducted. Full-text publications concerning healthcare workers were included, covering topics such as cultural competence, cultural intelligence, and communication, as well as the use of standardised research tools. Thirty research tools were identified. These were grouped into four categories: Scales that directly assess the cultural competence of healthcare staff, Tools that assess universal cultural competence, adapted for the healthcare sector, Scales that examine intercultural communication and functioning, Tools that assess attitudes towards immigrants. There is no single, universal tool that allows for comprehensive measurement of all dimensions of functioning in a multicultural environment. An accurate assessment requires the selection of an appropriate instrument for the research objective, as well as the supplementation of self-report measures with qualitative and observational methods. This review may provide practical support for planning future research and educational activities in healthcare.



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Biography

Marcin Grajek is a member of the research and teaching staff at the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin. His research focuses on public health, epidemiology, and the analysis of social and behavioural factors that influence population health. He is the author and co-author of numerous scientific publications, including articles on the health behaviours of young adults and the factors that influence health-promoting decisions.

He plays an active role in academic life by taking part in national and international conferences and carrying out research projects. His activities also include teaching and collaborating on interdisciplinary research projects.

Outside of work, he is passionate about Polish folk culture, particularly that of Central Poland, and is a dancer in a folk dance group.

Culture and Religion in Xenotransplantation

Nuria Molina Sánchez¹, Gideon Osayande Adagbonyin Efonayi¹, María Fuensanta Morales Plasencia¹, Marta Guadalupe Martínez Delgado¹,
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Xenotransplantation, that is, the transplantation of cells, tissues, or organs between species, represents a potential solution to the shortage of human organs. However, its acceptance depends not only on medical factors, but above all on ethical interpretation, the level of public trust, and communication adapted to cultural and religious contexts. To examine the influence of cultural and religious perspectives on the acceptance of xenotransplantation and to identify implications for the education of healthcare professionals in multicultural settings.

A narrative literature review was conducted on xenotransplantation, ethics, religion, and culture, covering major religions and diverse cultural communities. Most religions do not explicitly prohibit xenotransplantation, but they emphasise ethical principles such as respect for dignity, minimising animal suffering, and saving lives. Acceptance of the procedure depends more on individual and communal moral interpretation than on a universal religious ban. A lack of knowledge, limited dialogue, and poor transparency in communication may lead to mistrust, especially in culturally and religiously sensitive groups. Multicultural education and collaboration with religious and community leaders may increase acceptance and support informed decision-making.

Acceptance of xenotransplantation depends primarily on ethical, cultural, and religious factors, rather than on an unequivocal universal religious prohibition. Culturally sensitive communication, trust-building, and education based on competence and cultural humility are essential in multicultural clinical practice.



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Associate Professor at the Faculty of Nursing, University of Murcia. Graduate of the Medical University of Łódź, Poland. PhD from the University of Murcia, awarded with honours (Cum Laude) and the University of Murcia's Special PhD Award.

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Her research focuses on the psychosocial and cultural factors that influence healthcare decision-making, particularly in organ donation and transplantation, integrating innovation in healthcare through emerging technologies and improving the quality of care.

She is co-owner of a trademark registered with the Spanish Patent and Trademark Office (No. 4,186,783). Author of numerous scientific articles.

Multiculturalism in Penitentiary Institutions - Challenges for the Rehabilitation System in Poland

MSc Marcin Czutko

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Biography

Marcin Czutko is an academic teacher at the Independent Research and Biostatistics Laboratory of the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin. He holds an educational background in the social sciences, including political science and applied sociology, which forms the foundation of his research interests in social analysis and research methodology.

In 2007, he obtained a Bachelor's degree in political science, preparing a thesis on human rights protection institutions within the system of the United Nations. In 2009, he completed his Master's degree with a thesis focused on the impact of political decisions on the fate of religious buildings in Western Pomerania. Subsequently, in 2011, he graduated in applied sociology, preparing a Master's thesis on identity in the context of the post-war exodus of the Jewish community from Szczecin.

He gained professional experience in both the cultural sector and public security, including involvement in the organization of cultural events and serving as a research coordinator in a cultural diagnosis project in Szczecin, carried out as part of the city's efforts to obtain the title of European Capital of Culture 2016. Since 2022, he has been engaged in teaching activities, combining practical experience with analytical competencies in the field of social sciences.



Research tools used to assess attitudes towards immigrants in a multicultural medical setting – a literature review

MSc Krzysztof Dąbrowski

Increasing population mobility and cultural diversity pose challenges for healthcare professionals in communication and quality of care. Assessing attitudes toward immigrants is an important aspect of functioning in multicultural settings. This topic is part of a broader literature review on research tools measuring attitudes toward multiculturalism among healthcare workers; the presentation focuses on instruments assessing attitudes toward immigrants as one of its key components.

A literature review of the last 10 years was conducted, including studies involving healthcare professionals and standardized tools. Selected instruments were analyzed in terms of structure, scope, and methodological properties, with particular attention to their applicability in medical settings.

Three main tools were identified: ATAS, ATRS, and the Xenophobia Scale. They differ in length, level of detail, and constructs measured—from multidimensional attitudes to xenophobia. All are self-report measures, suitable for large samples but prone to declarative bias and social desirability effects.

The diversity of available tools requires careful, context-sensitive selection. Combining quantitative scales with qualitative and observational methods may enhance validity and provide a more comprehensive picture of clinical practice in multicultural healthcare environments.



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Biography

Krzysztof Dąbrowski is a research and teaching staff member at the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin. His academic and professional work focuses on social communication, with particular emphasis on marketing communication. His research explores its impact on shaping health-related behaviors, habits, and practices within populations, as well as the role of media messages and communication strategies in health promotion and preventive efforts.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism and Social Communication from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and a master's degree in Public Institution Management and Public Relations from the University of Szczecin. Privately, he is an enthusiast of Polish folk culture and a member of the Song and Dance Ensemble of the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin, where he is responsible for image and communication activities, including co-developing promotional strategies, managing communication channels, and supporting the ensemble's visibility and outreach.

Pilot exploration of depressive symptoms and risky health behaviors among informal dementia caregivers in Cyprus

PhD Sokratis Sokratous

Dementia, the seventh leading cause of death and among the major contributing factors to disability and dependency in older people, places a significant burden on health and social care. It primarily affects older adults, often coexisting with depressive symptoms. This study examined the prevalence of depressive symptoms among informal caregivers, often without formal healthcare training, and explored their associations with sociodemographic characteristics. Additionally, it investigated the relationship between depressive symptoms and the use of tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs, and illicit substances. A descriptive, cross-sectional, correlational design was used. The sample comprised 42 informal caregivers of individuals with dementia, with a response rate of 87.5%. Questionnaires were administered to assess three dimensions. Descriptive statistics, comparing means, variable correlation methods, χ^2 tests, non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis, and Mann-Whitney tests were used. Fifteen (42%) of participants reported depressive symptoms. Marital status was associated with the presence of depressive symptoms, as most participants ($N=31$, 73.8%) were married. Participants with higher education reported greater alcohol consumption than those with secondary education ($H(3)=10.861$, $p=0.013$). Informal caregivers without children exhibited significantly higher alcohol use than their counterparts with children ($U=223.500$, $p=0.006$, $r=0.422$). Informal caregivers of patients with Alzheimer's disease revealed significantly higher problematic alcohol use (56.3%) than those caring for other dementia types (43.8%) ($p=0.031$). No statistically significant differences were observed for alcohol or tobacco use regarding depressive symptoms. Conclusions: These findings highlight the association among marital status, caregiver role, mental health, and alcohol consumption, emphasizing the need for targeted support interventions for informal caregivers. Keywords: Dementia, Depressive Symptoms, Informal caregivers, Mental Health, Nursing.



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Biography

Sokrates Sokratous is an Assistant Professor in Mental Health Nursing at the Department of Nursing, School of Health Sciences, Cyprus University of Technology. He holds a PhD in Mental Health Nursing and a strong multidisciplinary academic background, including qualifications in nursing, education, primary education, and health management from institutions in Cyprus, the United Kingdom, and Greece.

He joined the Cyprus University of Technology in 2008 as a Lecturer, was later promoted to Senior Lecturer, and currently serves as Assistant Professor. He is also the Erasmus Coordinator of the Department of Nursing. Prior to his academic appointment, he worked for several years as a Lecturer at the Nursing School of the Ministry of Health in Cyprus and gained extensive clinical experience in emergency care, orthopedics, and geriatric nursing.

His teaching spans undergraduate and postgraduate programs, with a focus on mental health nursing, addictive disorders, and child and adolescent mental health. He has extensive experience in clinical education, student supervision, and curriculum development.

His research interests focus on mental health across the lifespan, particularly on the early detection and management of depressive symptoms, the evaluation of mental health services, and occupational health among healthcare professionals, aiming to improve quality of care and patient outcomes.



The Impact of Cultural Differences on Midwife–Patient Communication

Natalia Szczepkowska

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Biography

I am a midwifery student engaged in both academic and practical development in the field of women's health. I actively participate in a midwifery scientific research club, where I expand my knowledge, take part in research projects, and co-create educational initiatives aimed at women and the medical community. My main interests include prevention and health promotion, which is why I regularly write scientific papers and deepen my understanding of perinatal and gynecological care.

In my activities, I work directly with women, supporting them in gaining knowledge about their own bodies and health. I place particular emphasis on education regarding breast self-examination and cervical cancer prevention, as I believe that awareness in these areas truly saves lives.

I believe that women are capable, aware, and should be actively included in decision-making processes regarding their health. I oppose their marginalization within the healthcare system and strive to ensure that health education is accessible, reliable, and supportive of patient autonomy.

The aim of this study is to analyze the impact of cultural differences on the communication process between a midwife and a patient, and to identify the key factors determining the quality of this relationship in the context of perinatal care. Contemporary healthcare systems increasingly operate in a multicultural environment, which poses new communication, ethical, and organizational challenges for medical staff.

The study discusses the importance of midwives' cultural competencies, including awareness of linguistic, religious, and customary differences, as well as varying models of perceiving health and childbirth. Attention is given to communication barriers resulting from cultural misunderstandings, which may affect the quality of care, the level of trust, and patient satisfaction.

A literature review indicates that effective communication in an intercultural environment requires not only medical knowledge but also empathy, openness, and the ability to adapt communication to the individual needs of the patient. The role of medical interpreters and intercultural education in minimizing the risk of communication errors is also emphasized.

The conclusions indicate that the development of cultural competencies among midwifery staff is crucial for ensuring high-quality care and building relationships based on trust and respect.



Stigma and Acceptance: A Cultural Perspective on Down Syndrome

Mariia Malchevsk

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of societal perceptions regarding Down syndrome, tracing the transition from the Soviet paradigm of isolation to contemporary inclusive practices. The study investigates the socio-cultural transformation of attitudes toward individuals with Trisomy 21 within the context of historical and geopolitical shifts. It examines the impact of stigmatization on the psychosomatic state of mothers and identifies a correlation between social support levels and the life expectancy of patients. Based on statistical data, the effectiveness of early intervention is demonstrated, showing an average increase of 20 IQ points and a significant extension of life expectancy for individuals with the syndrome.

Special attention is devoted to criticizing the paternalistic approach and analyzing linguistic constructs that shape social prejudice. The research compares international experiences and identifies social entrepreneurship as a key factor in rehabilitation. The study concludes with the necessity of implementing a socio-ecological model of acceptance, particularly regarding the development of a barrier-free environment in Ukraine.

Keywords: Down syndrome, inclusion, stigmatization, Trisomy 21, social adaptation.



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Biography

My name is Mariia Malchevska, and I am a fifth-year medical student at I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University (TNMU). I began my journey in medicine at a medical college, from which I graduated with honors, providing me with a solid foundation for my future clinical practice.

During the early years of my university education, I was actively involved in teaching tactical medicine, driven by a desire to provide practical support to the community. Since 2025, I have focused on scientific research, which has become a vital part of my development as a physician. My research covers complex issues in neurology and genetics, ranging from depressive and cognitive impairments in patients with epilepsy to rare manifestations of camptodactyly, such as Bethlem myopathy and Clerc-Lévy-Cristesco syndrome.

My professional philosophy is built upon the values of humanism and inclusivity. I firmly believe that modern medicine must be barrier-free and accessible to every patient. My goal is to combine rigorous scientific expertise with the implementation of high social standards in daily medical practice.

Migration transformations of society and multiculturalism

Mariia Solomakhina, Sofiia Beregulyak

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Authors Information: Mariia Solomakhina and Sofiia Berehuliak are 5th-year medical students at I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University, Ministry of Health of Ukraine. They are active members of the Student Scientific Society of TNMU. Their academic interests include public health, social medicine, and the impact of societal transformations on healthcare systems. They are engaged in research activities aimed at improving medical education, promoting interdisciplinary approaches, and addressing current challenges in healthcare within a globalized and multicultural context.

Migration transformations have become a defining feature of contemporary society, driven by globalization, political instability, and armed conflicts. These processes reshape social structures and increase cultural diversity, directly affecting healthcare systems and interactions between patients and providers. To examine how migration and multicultural contexts influence healthcare delivery and to emphasize the need for culturally responsive medical practice. A narrative review of recent interdisciplinary literature on migration, multiculturalism, and healthcare adaptation was performed. Migration fosters multicultural societies where different values, beliefs, and health behaviors coexist. In healthcare, this diversity presents both obstacles and opportunities. Language barriers, unequal access, and differing health perceptions can worsen outcomes. However, integrating culturally aware approaches supports patient-centered care, strengthens communication, and helps reduce disparities. Developing cultural competence among healthcare professionals and adapting systems to diverse populations are essential for improving quality and accessibility of services. Migration and multiculturalism jointly shape modern medicine. Expanding multicultural education and implementing culturally sensitive practices are crucial for equity, better outcomes, and stronger trust between patients and healthcare providers. Additionally, sustained policy support, community engagement, and inclusive health strategies are required to ensure long-term system resilience and effective care for increasingly diverse populations worldwide.



Alternative healing methods around the world

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Biography

I am a second-year speech therapy student with occupational therapy at PUM.

Interculturalism in medicine is a significant area of research, particularly in the context of globalization and the growing mobility of populations. The aim of this poster is to analyze unconventional treatment methods as an element of cultural differences in approaches to health and illness across various regions of the world. In many communities, therapeutic practices extend beyond the framework of evidence-based medicine, encompassing traditional healing systems such as folk medicine, spiritual rituals, and therapies based on religious and philosophical beliefs. This paper discusses selected examples of alternative treatment methods, including Ayurveda, shamanic practices (e.g., Limpia), the use of natural medicine such as bee venom (apitherapy), virtual reality (VR) therapy, and the echostimulation method, highlighting their cultural and social significance. Their origins and development across various cultural circles are presented, along with their basic principles and practical applications. The paper describes how individual methods have been transmitted through tradition and what therapeutic techniques they employ. Attention is drawn to their diversity and the specific characteristics resulting from the different systems of knowledge and healing traditions around the world. The conclusions indicate that non-conventional treatment methods constitute an important element of the cultural heritage of various societies and reflect different ways of understanding health and illness, which is significant for effective doctor-patient communication. An analysis of these approaches allows for a better understanding of how culture influences the perception of health and illness and how diverse treatment methods can be around the world. Some of these practices are now being integrated into conventional medicine, which demonstrates the growing importance of an interdisciplinary approach in healthcare.



Breastfeeding- cross- cultural differences**Iga Pawelec, Aleksandra Penksa****24**

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Breastfeeding offers many long-term benefits for both infants and mothers. It supports the development of the infant's immune system, reduces the risk of chronic diseases later in life, and helps build an emotional bond. Breastfeeding lowers the risk of conditions such as breast and ovarian cancer in the mother and also supports the restoration of hormonal balance after childbirth. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), exclusive breastfeeding should continue until the child is six months old, and then—with the simultaneous introduction of complementary foods—until the child is approximately two years old. The aim of this study was to review the literature on cross-cultural differences in breastfeeding practices. The analysis shows that despite WHO recommendations, the duration of breastfeeding, factors influencing mothers' feeding decisions, and the level of social acceptance vary by region of the world. In some cultures, mothers are strongly encouraged and supported in shaping their breastfeeding practices, while in others they are subject to customary restrictions, social and religious norms. The reviewed literature indicates a significant influence of cultural factors on mothers' decisions regarding breastfeeding. Understanding these differences is crucial for conducting effective health education and ensuring culturally appropriate medical and lactation care in multicultural societies.

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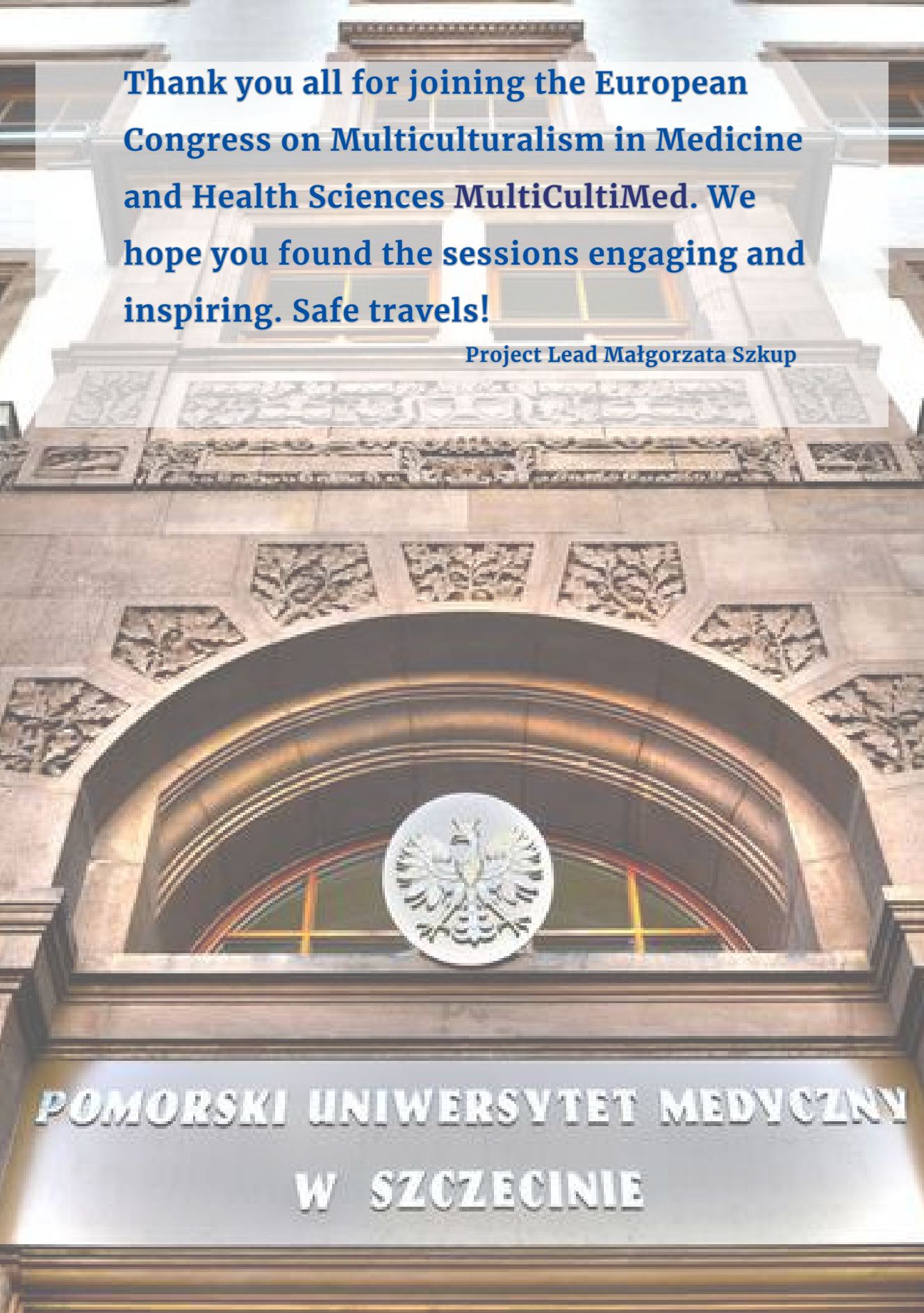
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Thank you all for joining the European Congress on Multiculturalism in Medicine and Health Sciences MultiCultiMed. We hope you found the sessions engaging and inspiring. Safe travels!

Project Lead Małgorzata Szkup



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