

Report on the Activities of the ISEE European Chapter

Period March 2022 – May 2022

Organization

The European chapter, including elected and associated members, has continued its work with monthly conference calls and committee interactions.

Currently the Chapter consists of 7 elected members. We have increased our group of associated members to 16. We are constantly looking actively for new members, in particular to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.

Activities surrounding the revision of the EU directive for air quality

In close collaboration with the Policy committee, several council members and associate members continue to be very active in the activities surrounding the revision of the EU air quality directive. We have published a [joint statement](#) in March 2022 with the European Respiratory Society (ERS) to highlight the need to use the most updated health research, specifically the relevant European studies, to inform the exposure response functions used for the EU's health impact assessment (HIA), which is currently ongoing.

HIA and cost-benefit analyses play a major role in the ongoing revision of the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive, providing important estimates of disease burden of air pollution in Europe and its cost. Currently, the European Commission is using the linear relative risk estimates from the new 2021 WHO Air Quality Guideline systematic reviews for estimating the health impact. These relative risk estimates are based on studies from all areas of the world, including high exposure areas, and include studies up to and including 2018, missing out on the latest evidence.

During a stakeholder workshop organized by the European Commission in April 2022, members of the ISEE Europe Chapter, the ISEE Policy Committee, and the European Respiratory Society (ERS) Environment and Health Committee pointed out the rationale and importance of using the latest and most relevant information on the relationships between air pollutants and various mortality and morbidity outcomes from studies conducted at European levels of exposure.

This expert opinion was reinforced in a joint ISEE and ERS [letter](#) sent to DG Environment in May. In the letter, we have presented sensitivity analyses based on meta-analyses of PM_{2.5} and NO₂ estimates from the Effects of Low-Level Air Pollution: A Study in Europe (ELAPSE) study. Effect estimates from the ELAPSE study represent the largest and most relevant data for Europe to date. These analyses find substantially stronger associations of with all-cause mortality than those reported in the WHO meta-analyses, in line with other most recent European studies published since 2018. Furthermore, ISEE and ERS have offered to meet and discuss the rationale behind the presented strategy for sensitivity analyses with the Commission, hoping to ensure that the HIA, that will serve as basis for ongoing revision of Ambient Air Quality Directive, is based on the most updated and most relevant evidence for European context. An in-person meeting with DG environment and others is currently scheduled for early July.

2nd Eastern & South-Eastern European Networking Virtual Event

The ISEE Europe chapter continues to consistently work to integrate and promote more environmental health research from South-Eastern Europe. Last year we collaborated with

HEI on a series of workshops on this subject and also organized a networking event. We have now scheduled a new networking event on June 10th, 2022 which we hope will engage additional participants and encourage participation at ISEE Athens. We are offering 3 one-year memberships and annual conference registration fees as a prize for 3 randomly chosen participants to the networking event.

ISEE Europe – together with HEI - also have also an early morning session accepted at the ISEE 2022 in Athens entitled “Air Pollution and Health: The Case of Central and Southeast Europe”.

Webinar Series on Climate Change and Health

During the spring we completed our final session in this webinar series on climate change and health that we started in June 2021. This webinar series has given an overview on the latest developments in climate change epidemiology in terms of methods, data and approaches. It consists of three webinars: 1) New data sources and applications (June 22, 2021 from 3-4 CEST), 2) New methods and study designs: Case time series design for environmental epidemiology (A Gasparini) and Integrated causal-predictive machine learning models for tropical cyclone epidemiology (R Nethery), Chair E Samoli. (Dec 2, 2021), 3) New communication and visualization tools (May 3, 2022). The webinars were held in zoom and free registration to the event was required. Details were posted on the ISEE Europe Website and have been widely disseminated. All webinars have been recorded and are on the ISEE Global Education Youtube Channel. A link to the youtube recording of the last webinar is [here](#).

Preparing for the in-person conference in Athens

The ISEE Europe chapter is preparing a membership meeting during the ISEE Athens conference to briefly summarize and get feedback on our work. In addition to this we have been in contact with the conference organizers as well as the Policy Committee to discuss the possibility to arrange an informal networking and social interaction event in parallel with other committees. The aim would be for conference participants to quickly inform themselves about the various activities of the committees and encourage engagement.

Education and Communication

We published our Spring newsletter in May 2022. The newsletter was sent to all ISEE Europe members to keep them abreast of the latest activities. We continuously revamp our website to keep it up to date with the latest information.

A common theme is how to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in all of the Chapter's work. We continue to have this discussion and ISEE Europe is fully committed to do its part in addressing the longstanding exclusions that challenge our world and to promote inclusion in all of its work.