

Report on the Activities of the ISEE European Chapter

Period July 2021 – November 2021

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 and recently Petter Ljungman rotated in as co-chair in place of Tamara Schikowski who has chosen to continue as an associated member. Hanna Boogaard was re-elected and will remain as co-chair and Maria Foraster from ISGlobal was newly elected as council member this fall. We have increased our group of associated members to 15 including new members, specifically Alexandra Schneider from the Helmholtz Zentrum in Munich, Michelle Turner from ISGlobal, Adjani Peralta from Utrecht University, and Maciek Strak from National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Netherlands. We are constantly looking actively for new members, in particular to advance diversity, equity and inclusion. For example, we have just launched our first networking event to increase ISEE participation in Europe, see below.

Activities surrounding the release of the new WHO air quality guidelines

In close collaboration with the Policy committee, several council members and associate members have been very active in the activities surrounding the WHO AQG release including participating and organizing media training sessions in collaboration with Imperial College and consultants. We have organized a joint statement with the European Respiratory Society (ERS) that has included endorsements from a broad host of other societies and organizations worldwide and was published on the ISEE website and in the International Journal of Public Health, which was translated into more than 20 different languages. . Furthermore in the continued activity to provide relevant and up to date evidence to inform the revision of the EU directive for air quality several members of the Chapter have participated and presented at the EU Clean Air Forum in Europe hosted in Madrid in November. Our council members have also participated in the Cop26 meeting in Glasgow.

Virtual workshop on October 1st on Air pollution and Health in Southeast Europe

Continuing our engagement in activities to improve research and environmental health regarding the high air pollution levels in Eastern Europe –an overarching aim of the Chapter - we have continued to collaborate with HEI in the organization in a series of webinars during the fall and following spring. The first workshop was in June, 2021, then on October 1 and are planning a third webinar on Dec 1. The aims are to review the status of current evidence on health effects of air pollution in the Southeast European region and its interlinkage to current policy debate and actions, provide a platform to address major air quality and health-related questions in SE Europe, and finally to discuss the accessibility and usability of the air quality and health data streams to enable use in research and build a regional evidence base. Work in this particular region is important as fine particulate matter (PM2.5) levels in Southeast Europe have remained higher than in those of Western Europe for decades, public and governmental interest in the topic increases, and the demand for data and evidence on air pollution levels and trends as well as health effects is growing.

For more details on the webinars in this series please visit

<https://www.healtheffects.org/meeting/webinar-series-air-pollution-and-health-se-europe>

The workshop is open to the public. We encourage participation from colleagues across the Southeast Europe region from academic/research institutes, healthcare organizations, professional societies, national and regional nonprofit groups, bi- and multi-lateral organizations, federal and local government agencies, ministries, and other organizations.

Webinar Series on Climate Change and Health

This webinar series give 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 (Feb 2021). The webinars are held in zoom and free registration to the event is required. Details are posted on the ISEE Europe Website and will be widely disseminated.

Details and registration available at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/2nd-isee-webinar-series-on-climate-change-and-health-tickets-207877586457>

ISEE Europe Chapter Online Networking Event

We hosted an online networking event on November 24th to encourage greater interaction, inclusion and a conversation about how the ISEE might be a useful and interesting resource for current and future members. The event was open to all participants and we had 40 registered participants of which 27 attended. The ISEE president M Nieuwenhuijsen and our co-chair made some opening statements. We included both plenary sessions and break-out rooms making room for informal introductions between participants as well as discussions around prepared questions. Participants included both current and established researchers and members as well as persons coming into contact with ISEE for the first time. We are planning regular networking events going forward in these unusual times.

Education and Communication

We published our Fall newsletter in November 2021. 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.

Other Activities

In close collaboration with the main Policy Committee, and other organizations including ERS, WHO and HEI, we are in the early planning stage of a meeting next year with policy makers and stakeholders regarding the air quality guidelines and showcasing the latest data since the WHO review in demonstrating the health effects of low-level air pollution. This meeting would be of a similar structure as the very successful meeting we had in January 2020. Please find a summary of that meeting in the ERS journal <https://erj.ersjournals.com/content/56/5/2002575.article-info>

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.