

EDITORIAL

Five years of the South Eastern European Journal of Public Health (SEEJPH): Focusing on health systems in transition and global health

Jens Holst¹, Jürgen Breckenkamp¹, Genc Burazeri¹, Jose M. Martin-Moreno¹, Peter Schröder-Bäck¹, Ulrich Laaser¹

¹ Editors, South Eastern European Journal of Public Health (SEEJPH).

Corresponding author: Ulrich Laaser

Section of International Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences BSPH, University of Bielefeld, Germany;

Address: POB 10 01 31, D-33501 Bielefeld, Germany;

Email: ulrich.laaser@uni-bielefeld.de

Five years ago, in the spring of 2014, the first volume of a new open access journal was published by Jacobs Company (1). It was conceptualized in the framework of the European Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, financed until 2010 by the German Academic Exchange Service. Yet, by that time, the project had supported the creation of schools of public health and public health training programmes in Albania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia, complementing the Andrija Stampar School of Public Health in Zagreb, Croatia, the oldest institution for teaching, research, and practice of public health in the region (since 1927).

The South Eastern European Journal of Public Health (SEEJPH) is an open access international peer-reviewed journal involving all areas of the health sciences and public health. SEEJPH welcomes submissions of scientists, researchers, and practitioners from all over the world, but particularly pertinent to transition countries.

In their introductory editorial, the editors wrote that: *“The need for scientific journals such as SEEJPH springs from the peculiar geopolitical history of the region. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the disintegration of the communist regimes in most of South Eastern Europe hastened the collapse - or at least enormous challenges - in the economies of the region”* (2). Since then, the journal steadily widened its array with a focus on the southern and eastern regions of the world which are currently experiencing a process of transition similar to South Eastern Europe.

As a consequence, we appointed regional editors for each of the World Health Organization (WHO) regions of Africa, the Americas, Europe, South East Asia, Western Pacific, and logically paying tribute to the genesis of the journal within South Eastern Europe (3). As the global dimension of the journal gained weight, the editors invited Professor Jens Holst as co-editor and chair of the regional editorial group, taking office with this tenth issue of the Journal.

In this context, we are determined to widen the field of interest beyond a historical national or local vision of public health to a global health perspective which, of course, in our understanding, has increasingly developed from a kind of cosmopolitan cousin into an overarching concept in the globalised world.

Current trends in global health include demographic and epidemiological transitions, the changing burden of disease, climate change, and the increasing awareness of both national and global disparities in health. The most frequently cited definition was crafted by Jeffrey Koplan and colleagues in 2009: *“Global health emphasises transnational health issues, determinants, and solutions; involves many disciplines within and beyond the health sciences and promotes interdisciplinary collaboration; and is a synthesis of population-based prevention with individual-level clinical care”* (4).

The concept of ‘global’ in global health goes beyond its geographic meaning. Like international health, global health links to health equity and cross-border solidarity. Apart from this, global health considers health from a human-rights perspective and as an explicitly social, economic, and political issue anywhere in the world (5).

In this understanding, the editors perceive ‘public’ in the journal title as ‘global’ health. Likewise, the term ‘South Eastern European’ is not limited to its geographic meaning, but rather refers to the Global South and some parts of the East in a developing world.

Starting with its 10th edition, SEEJPH will put a major focus on global health challenges and cover health issues that transcend national boundaries calling for action in the various sectors, which determine people’s health.

We believe that the challenges we are experiencing in this historical moment deserve such a commitment and we thank you in advance for your support to this initiative.

References

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