

## **Combatting Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare: A Case Study of Prostate and Breast Cancer**

Wednesday 9 April, 16:00-17:30CET (TBC)

An online webinar as part of [Global Public Health Week 7-11 April 2025](#)

### **Narrative**

Though there have been significant improvements in human health over the past decades, the same cannot be said for health equity. Whether looking at differences between countries, or between communities and individuals, disparities persist and prevent the realisation of the right to health for all. These inequities are caused by a wide range of factors, with non-medical factors – like our level of education, type of employment, or place we live – particularly influential; they are the social determinants of health. These determinants illustrate how systemic societal injustices profoundly impact our ability to be healthy. A 2022 Lancet series added a crucial consideration to this understanding by recognising racism, xenophobia, and discrimination as fundamental determinants of health [1].

The effects of these structural injustices become clear when zooming in on health outcomes at the community and individual level. Substantial scientific literature highlights how both social and fundamental determinants influence every stage of healthcare – such as access, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment – all of which drive disparities in disease burden. As one of the greatest public health concerns, cancer provides a critical lens to examine these inequities, particularly in relation to gender and ethnicity:

- Incidence rates for prostate cancer, myeloma, several gastrointestinal cancers, Hodgkin lymphoma, and thyroid cancers are 1.1 to 3.0 times higher among Black and Asian populations compared to White populations [2].
- Caribbean<sup>1</sup>, African and Asian women are more prone to late-stage diagnosis for breast, ovarian, uterine and colon cancer, as well as Caribbean men for colon cancer [3].
- In Europe, healthcare access for Black individuals is more difficult, with 9% having reported unmet medical needs (41% of which due to lack of affordability), double the EU average [4].

This webinar, co-organised by the **European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)** and the **European Cancer Organisation (ECO)**, explores ethnic health disparities through a lens of cancer inequities. Building on research from across the globe and drawing on experiences from European Union (EU) policy, it raises awareness of the nature of cancer inequities and explores ways to reduce them. In doing so, it addresses both the cancer burden and health disparities within a global context.

*Note: EPHA runs the [DisQo Stakeholder Network](#): anti-discrimination and health equity, to bring the voice of health to the EU's inclusion policy, notably the EU's Anti-racism Action Plan.*

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "Caribbean" and "African" are used here solely to reflect the disaggregation applied in the referenced study. It is important to note that these broad categories encompass highly diverse populations with distinct cultural, historical, and social identities. Their use as umbrella terms in this context should not obscure the significant heterogeneity that exists within and between these groups.

ECO is working to establish an ethnicity workstream under its [Inequalities Network](#) to bring together stakeholders interested in tackling these issues and foster stronger action.

### Event Objectives

- To raise awareness of the existing ethnic disparities in cancer care
- To connect initiatives from across the world related to health equity, ethnicity and gender
- To identify best practices and ways forward in combating racism and discrimination in health

### Draft Agenda

**Moderator:** Robert Greene, Chairman at the HungerNdThirst Foundation

<p><b>16:00-16:10</b></p> <p><b>Norbert Couespel</b> <i>Policy Research &amp; EU Projects Manager at the European Cancer Organisation</i></p> <p><b>Robert Greene</b> <i>President at the HungerNdThirst Foundation</i></p>	<p><b>Welcome and introduction</b></p> <p>The moderator opens the event, welcoming everyone, providing a brief description of the event's structure and goals</p>
<p><b>16:10-16:20</b></p> <p><b>Eva McGrowder and Rose Hall</b> <i>Institute of Cancer Research UK</i></p>	<p><b>Presentation: Ethnic disparities in prostate cancer</b></p> <p>The first expert presentation of the webinar covers the topic of ethnic disparities that exist when it comes to men. Taking the example of prostate cancer, Eva McGrowder and Rose Hall explore ethnic disparities, focusing on risk factors, targeted screening for high-risk groups, barriers to genetic research, and the role of community-led education in improving awareness and access to early detection.</p>
<p><b>16:20-16:30</b></p> <p><b>Toral Gathani</b> <i>Associate Professor and Consultant Breast Surgeon at University of Oxford</i></p>	<p><b>Presentation: Ethnicity and breast cancer incidence</b></p> <p>With the second expert presentation we expand our knowledge with a focus on ethnic disparities among women. Toral Gathani covers differences in the incidence rate of breast cancer observed in women of different ethnicities. She explains how further research is needed in large scale prospective studies to investigate these differences.</p>
<p><b>16:30-17:20</b></p> <p>Moderated by <b>Robert Greene</b> <i>Chairman at the HungerNdThirst Foundation</i></p>	<p><b>Panel: Combating ethnic disparities in healthcare: translating knowledge to action</b></p> <p>With an understanding of ethnic disparities based on the expert presentations, we move on to translating them into action. Ethnic disparities in</p>

<p><b>Erik Briers</b> <i>Europa Uomo</i></p> <p><b>Cristina Guerrero Paez</b> <i>Director at Borstkankervereniging Nederland, board member of Europa Donna</i></p> <p><b>Michaela Moua</b> <i>European Commission Anti-racism Coordinator</i></p> <p><b>Raman Bedi</b> <i>President Elect, World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA)</i></p> <p><b>Leigh Kamore Haynes</b> <i>Associate Professor of Practice, Simmons University</i></p>	<p>healthcare are multi-faceted, and what works in one country may not work in another. In this panel, we cover the topic through the perspective of different sectors and countries. By exploring good and bad practices and angles of action, we try to work towards solutions that address ethnic disparities in healthcare in as wide a context as possible.</p>
<p><b>17:20-17:30</b></p> <p><b>Milka Sokolović</b> <i>Director General at the European Public Health Alliance</i></p>	<p><b>Concluding remarks</b></p> <p>To conclude the event, we reflect on some of the main learnings of what was discussed. Based on this, we list some of the concrete actions that can be taken to ensure ethnic disparities in healthcare will be a thing of the past. After this summary, the event is concluded.</p>

## References

- [1] Devakumar D, Selvarajah S, Abubakar I, Kim S-S, McKee M, Sabharwal NS, Saini A, Achiume ET. Racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and the determination of health. *The Lancet* [Internet]. 2022;400(10368):2097–2108. Available from: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(22\)01972-9/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01972-9/abstract)
- [2] Delon C, Brown KF, Payne NWS, Kotrotsios Y, Vernon S, Shelton J. Differences in Cancer Incidence by Broad Ethnic Group in England, 2013–2017. *British Journal of Cancer* [Internet]. Available from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35233092/>
- [3] Fry A, White B, Nagarwalla D, Shelton J, Jack RH. Relationship between ethnicity and stage at diagnosis in England: a national analysis of six cancer sites. *BMJ Open* [Internet]. 2023 Jan 1;13(1):e062079. Available from: <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/13/1/e062079.abstract>
- [4] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Being Black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent [Internet]. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2023. Available from: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2023/being-black-eu>