



## Interprofessional Education and Communication in Health Care: Experiences & Challenges in the U.S. & Greece

(November 20, 2023)

*Rutgers University and Democritus University of Thrace cordially invite you to their second in a series of joint e-symposia. This event will focus on "**Interprofessional Education and Communication in Health Care: Experiences and Challenges in the U.S.A. and Greece.**"*

The e-symposia series is part of an array of activities the two institutions are collaborating on in the context of the International Academic Partnership Program-Greece (IAPP-Greece), an academic incubator program sponsored in 2020 by the Greek Ministry of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Institute of International Education, among other organizations.

### OVERVIEW

The need for an interprofessional (IPE), coordinated approach to healthcare systems is a global issue. The World Health Organization defines IPE as the learning that "occurs when two or more professions (students, residents, health workers) learn with, about and from each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes" (World Health Organization, 2010). Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) and Rutgers University experts in IPE education, communication, clinical training, and research will be featured at this two-part global e-symposium.

In the *first session* of this e-symposium, panelists from Democritus University of Thrace and Rutgers' School of Health Professions and School of Communication & Information will discuss recent and enduring research findings on IPE and communication, as well as approaches and best practices for safer patient handoffs in clinical settings, including, for instance, the adoption and implementation of mnemonics such as the SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation).

The *second session* will address the current challenges of IPE in the U.S. and Greece. An interactive discussion between the speakers and the audience will follow each session.

Faculty from both Greece and the U.S. will present research and dialogue with participants about its implications for the future.

### **References**

<sup>1</sup>World Health Organization. *Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice*. Geneva: WHO; 2010.

## **e-Symposium Program**

### **Introductions (9:00 – 9:20 am ET in the U.S.; 16:00-16:20 Athens, Greece)**

#### *Moderator*

Dr. Riva Touger-Decker (Associate Dean of Global Affairs and Professor, Rutgers School of Health Professions & Rutgers School of Dental Medicine)

#### *Speakers*

Dr. Fotios Maris, Rector and Professor, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece)

Dr. Konstantinos Vadikolias (Head and Professor, Department of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece)

Dr. Alma Merians (Associate Dean of IPE and Professor, Rutgers School of Health Professions)

Dr. Dafna Lemish (Interim Dean & Distinguished Professor, Rutgers School of Communication & Information)

### **Part 1 (9:20 – 11:00 am ET in the U.S.; 16:20-18:00 Athens, Greece)**

#### ***Developing Healthcare Practices through Interprofessional Education & Communication***

#### *Moderators*

Dr. Aikaterini Alexiou-Chatzaki (Professor of Pharmacology, Democritus University of Thrace)

Dr. Matthew Matsaganis (Associate Professor, Rutgers School of Communication & Information)

#### *Presentations*

9:20-9:45 am ET / 16:20-16:45 in Greece

#### ***Interprofessional Communication in Healthcare***

Dr. Maria Venetis (Associate Professor, Rutgers School of Communication & Information)

9:45-10:10 am ET / 16:45-17:10 in Greece

**Diabetes Mellitus: The Need and the Opportunity for Multidisciplinary Collaboration through Appropriate Education**

Dr. Nikolaos Papanas (Professor, Department of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace)

10:10-10:35 am ET / 17:10-17:35 in Greece

**Teaching and Use of SBAR in IPE from a Health Professional Perspective in the U.S.**

Dipali Yeh (Physician Assistant & Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Health Professions)

10:35-11:00 am ET / 17:35-18:00 in Greece

**Panel Discussion, Question and Answer Session**

~~ **BRIEF BREAK:** 11:00-11:10 am ET / 18:00-18:10 in Greece ~~

**Part 2** (11:10 am – 12:15 pm ET in the U.S.; 18:10-19:15 Athens, Greece)

***Challenges in Interprofessional Education in the U.S. and Greece***

*Moderators*

Dr. Evangelia Nena (Associate Professor, Democritus University of Thrace)

Dr. Scott Parrott (Professor, Rutgers School of Health Professions & School of Public Health)

*Presentations*

11:15-11:40 am ET / 18:15-18:40 in Greece

***Interprofessional Education Challenges in the U.S.***

Dr. Alma Merians (Associate Dean of IPE and Professor, Rutgers School of Health Professions)

11:40 am -12:05 pm ET / 18:40-19:05 in Greece

**Interdisciplinary Approach to Physical Education and Sports**

Dr. Vasiliki Derri (Vice Dean & Professor, Department of Physical Education & Sports Sciences, Democritus University of Thrace)

12:05-12:15 pm ET / 19:05-19:15 in Greece

***Panel Discussion, Question and Answer Session***

**Part 3** (12:15-1:15 pm ET / 19:15-20:15 in Greece)

***Closed Session for Speakers & Invited Guests***

*Moderators*

Dr. Christos Kontogiorgis (Assistant Professor, School of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace)

Dr. Matthew Matsaganis (Associate Professor, Rutgers School of Communication & Information)

Dr. Riva Touger-Decker (Associate Dean of Global Affairs and Professor, Rutgers School of Health Professions & Rutgers School of Dental Medicine)

**Dr. Maria Venetis, PhD**

**Associate Professor, Rutgers School of Communication & Information, U.S.A.**



Dr. Venetis' research interests lie at the intersection of interpersonal and health communication; her research examines how individuals talk about health and the outcomes of these conversations. She examines patient-provider interactions and communicative practices within medical visits such as the connection between patient and companion question asking and stating of psychosocial outcomes such as satisfaction and adherence. Other work identifies specific patient disclosure strategies when sharing this medically relevant, non-visible, and potentially stigmatizing information. Venetis also studies how relational partners manage ongoing communication concerning cancer and other non-visible health conditions. Recent research includes communicative behaviors that promote resilience among relational partners and supportive communication during cancer care.

**Dr. Nikolaos Papanas, MD, PhD**

**Professor, Department of Medicine, DUTH**



Professor Nikolaos Papanas is Professor in Internal Medicine-Diabetes Mellitus at Democritus University of Thrace, Greece. He is Head of the Diabetes Centre-Diabetic Foot Clinic of the Second Department of Internal Medicine at Democritus University of Thrace. He has published more than 480 papers in peer-reviewed journals. He is the Editor-in-Chief of *The International Journal of Lower Extremity Wounds*. Moreover, he serves in the editorial board of other international journals (more than 90). He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Greek journal *A Review of Cardiometabolic Risk Factors*. He has been Guest Editor in 9 special

issues of international journals. He has also participated with numerous presentations in Greek and European medical congresses and repeatedly served as invited reviewer in medical journals. He has been invited to deliver lectures in 15 foreign countries. He has served in the Executive Committee of the Hellenic Society for Angiology. Furthermore, he is currently a member in the Executive Committee of the Study Group on Diabetes and Nervous System of the German Diabetes Association (DDG). He is also Vice President of the Greek Society for the Study of the Diabetic Foot. He has served as Secretary General and President of the Hellenic Diabetes Association (HDA), as well as President of its ethics committee. He is now Vice-President of HDA. Additionally, he is the President of the Diabetic Foot Study Group (DFSG, [www.dfsg.org](http://www.dfsg.org)). Until recently, he was also Vice-President of D-FOOT INTERNATIONAL (<https://d-foot.org/>). He is Visiting Professor in the German Diabetes Centre, Düsseldorf. Finally, he is an honorary member of the Cypriot Diabetes Association and of the Hungarian Diabetes Association.

**Dipali Yeh, MS, PA-C, CHSE**

**Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Health Professions**



Dipali Yeh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies. She joined the PA Program's faculty 15 years ago, where her teaching responsibilities include cardiology, skills and procedure labs, high fidelity simulation, medical errors, and root cause analysis and interprofessional education. She is a certified simulation health educator, trained at Harvard Med Sim. She is also responsible for coordinating simulation and interprofessional activities both at the program and school level. She is also a TeamSTEPPS Curriculum trainer, which is a team dynamics curriculum outlined by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. She continues to practice as Clinical Instructor at Robert

Wood Johnson University Hospital in the Department of Emergency Medicine, where she has been for 23 years. She is currently a doctoral candidate pursuing a PhD in Interdisciplinary Healthcare Studies. Her publications include board review books for licensed clinicians, emergency medicine books for students on rotation, and abstracts presented at various interprofessional conferences.

**Dr. Alma Merians, PhD, PT**

**Professor and Associate Dean of Interprofessional Education, Rutgers School of Health Professions**



Dr. Merians received her degree in Physical Therapy from Columbia University and did graduate studies at New York University, receiving a PhD in Pathokinesiology. She is a Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation and Movement Sciences. Her areas of teaching include motor control, motor learning, and scientific inquiry. Her research focus developed as a result of her clinical physical therapy practice with pediatric and adult clients with neurological deficits. She studies basic mechanisms underlying neuromuscular control of human movement and sensorimotor learning and utilizes technology-assisted rehabilitation to re-train people with neurological diseases like stroke or cerebral palsy. She

and her collaborators at NJIT have developed robotics and virtual reality gaming simulations to be used in the rehabilitation of hand and arm function after stroke. They completed a 4 year RO1 grant from NIH to test this type of intervention in patients in the chronic phase post-stroke and are funded to run a clinical study to further test the system in the acute phase post-stroke. In her faculty role, she is Associate Dean for Interprofessional Education and Practice. As such, she is responsible for IPE activities within the School of Health Professions as well as those integrated into the more encompassing Rutgers Behavioral Health Sciences.

**Dr. Vasiliki Derri, PhD**

**Professor & Vice Dean of Department of Physical Education & Sports Sciences,  
Democritus University of Thrace**



Dr. Derri is Associate Dean and Professor at the Department of Physical Education and Sports Science of Democritus University of Thrace, Greece. Her teaching and research work focuses on teacher evaluation and training, and on Physical Education programs that aim at lifelong exercise for health and quality of life. She was/is a scientific coordinator and principal investigator in several funded research and educational projects. She collaborates with the Institute of Educational Policy of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs on the creation, implementation and evaluation of the New Physical Education Curricula (2022) in the elementary school, as well as on the development of educational material and teachers' training. She is Vice President of the Hellenic Academy of Physical Education and former Director of the

Postgraduate Program "Creative and Adapted Physical Education". Her work has international impact and recognition. In her book "Physical Education at the beginning of the 21st century. Aims, goals, and objectives in elementary education" (2007), learning outcomes and corresponding lesson plans for learning to move and learning through movement were recorded for first time in Greece.

#### **Conference Moderators** *(alphabetically)*

##### **Dr. Aikaterini Alexiou-Chatzaki, PhD**

**Professor of Pharmacology, School of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece**



Dr. Alexiou-Chatzaki is Professor and Director of the Laboratory of Pharmacology at the Department of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace ([pharmacology.med.duth.gr/staff/chatzaki.html](http://pharmacology.med.duth.gr/staff/chatzaki.html)). She has also founded the biotech company ABCureD ([abcured.com](http://abcured.com)). Previously, she worked in academia and industry in the UK and USA. Her research focuses on Precision Medicine, with the discovery and validation of biomarkers and new pharmacological molecular targets, through the integration of artificial intelligence into biomedical research. Her work enjoys international recognition, with numerous publications, multiple citations in

international literature and many lectures to specialized and the general public, while she has received funding from national and international bodies.

##### **Dr. Evangelia Nena, MD**

**Associate Professor, School of Medicine, DUTH**



Dr. Nena is board certified by the Hellenic Medical Association in Occupational Medicine and in Public Health - Social Medicine. She currently serves as an Associate Professor of Social and Occupational Medicine at the Department of Medicine (School of Health Sciences) of the Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH), Alexandroupolis, Greece and is head of the Laboratory of Social Medicine. She is also affiliated with the Laboratory of Hygiene and Environmental Protection of the same institution.

Dr Nena graduated from the Medical School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Greece and received her PhD from the Department of Medicine of DUTH. Her postgraduate training focused on Occupational Epidemiology and on Health Promotion. She participates in the undergraduate program of DUTH, teaches in 9 postgraduate programs and is the supervising professor in 6 doctoral dissertations (1 completed). She currently enumerates 116 PubMed- indexed publications and is also the author of 8 medical book chapters. She is Associate Editor of the Archives of Environmental and Occupational Health (Taylor & Francis Eds) journal, and also a member of the Editorial Board of 3 other scientific journals. She participates in European scientific networks (OMEGA-NET, BURDEN-EU) and in nationally (Greek)- or EU- funded research projects, as well as in consulting committees/boards of the Hellenic Ministry of Health.

**Dr. Scott Parrott, PhD**

**Professor, Rutgers School of Health Professions & School of Public Health, U.S.A.**



Dr. Parrott has 30 years of experience working as a methodological and statistical consultant both within and outside the university setting in such areas as medical and healthcare research, veterans' health, public health, evidence-based medicine, childhood obesity, urban poverty, and international aid. His recent work focuses on evidence synthesis methods and statistical modeling of intervention and outcome and evaluation studies. For the past 14 years, he has worked as a professor at Rutgers School of Health Professions with appointments in the Departments of Clinical & Preventive Nutritional Sciences, Interdisciplinary Studies, and the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology in the School of Public Health. He is the Director of the SHP Methodology and Statistics Support Team, a center within the school to facilitate faculty research and grant writing. He teaches statistical methods and systematic review and meta-analysis to masters and doctoral students. He has mentored over 50 masters and 12 doctoral students on the statistical analyses for their research projects and shepherded many of these students toward publication in recognized peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Parrott has also worked with SHP and the Rutgers School of Dental Medicine as a methodologist and statistician for IPE intervention efforts.

**Symposium Planners (alphabetically)**

**Dr. Christos Kontogiorgis, PhD**

**Assistant Professor, School of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece**



Dr. Christos Kontogiorgis is a pharmacist by training and a faculty member at the Laboratory of Hygiene and Environmental Protection, Department of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace. He has published more than 80 papers in peer-reviewed journals publications and more than 200 presentations in National and International Conferences. He has participated in National and European research projects. His research interests include pharmacoepidemiology, nutritional epidemiology, public health, and natural products

**Dr. Matthew Matsaganis, PhD**

**Associate Professor, Rutgers School of Communication & Information, U.S.A.**

**Co-Director, Rutgers IAPP-Greece Initiative (<https://iapp-greece.rutgers.edu/>)**



Dr. Matsaganis is Associate Professor of Communication in Rutgers' School of Communication and Information. His research focuses on the role of communication as a determinant of health disparities (related to health care access, reproductive health, and environmental health) in urban communities, and also on how the well-being of neighborhoods can be transformed through communication-centered interventions. In this context, he also investigates how ethnic media can serve critical information needs, including health needs, of immigrant and ethnic communities in the digital age. He conducts research in Greece, collaborating with colleagues from Greek universities and research centers, municipalities, and local nonprofit organizations. His research has been supported by grants from U.S. federal funding agencies and private foundations. He is a co-author and co-editor of four books and

multiple peerreviewed publications. He is co-lead of the IAPP-Greece initiative (<https://iapp-greece.rutgers.edu/>).

**Dr. Riva Touger-Decker, PhD, RD, CDN**

**Professor & Associate Dean of Global Affairs, Rutgers School of Health Professions, U.S.A.**

**Professor, Rutgers School of Dental Medicine**

**Co-Director, Rutgers IAPP-Greece Initiative (<https://iapp-greece.rutgers.edu/>)**



Dr. Touger-Decker is a registered dietitian internationally recognized for her expertise and leadership in nutrition and oral health and dental education, nutrition-focused physical exam, and dietetics education. Her research has explored diet/nutrition and orofacial pain, tooth loss, and head and neck cancer, nutrition-focused physical exam practices of dietitians, and hybrid approaches to training health professionals globally. Dr. Touger-Decker has authored books and multiple peer-reviewed publications and is internationally recognized. Awards include the American Dietetic Association Medallion and Excellence in Dietetic Education Awards and the American Society for Clinical Nutrition Dannon Institute Award for Excellence in Medical/Dental Nutrition Education. She is a Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine, has held elected and appointed positions in multiple professional organizations, and is a past chair of the Commission on Dietetic Registration. She has collaborated on several international grants and is co-lead for the Rutgers IIE – International Academic Partnership Program-Greece initiative. Dr. Touger-Decker has worked with universities in Greece, Malaysia, Israel, Japan, and Tanzania on academic programs and training courses.