

Call for Proposals

European Conference on Health Communication 2019

Biannual Meeting of the Health Communication Temporary Working Group of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA)

Annual Conference of the Health Communication Division of the German Communication Association (DGPK)

13 to 15 November 2019,

University of Zurich (UZH), Department of Communication and Media Research (IKMZ)

The Department of Communication and Media Research at the University of Zurich (IKMZ) is delighted to host the European Conference on Health Communication (EHC) 2019 in Zurich, Switzerland, from 13 to 15 November 2019. The conference of the Health Communication Temporary Working Group of the ECREA and the Health Communication Division of the DGPK has a thematic focus on *social aspects of health communication*. It will provide a platform for discussing the interrelations between health, health communication, media, and people's social contexts on various levels and from diverse perspectives. With the aim to represent the full scope of current health communication research in Europe, the EHC also welcomes research on further issues of health communication.

Thematic panels on social aspects of health communication

Health and health-related behaviors are embedded in social contexts in various ways, which comprise both risks and opportunities for individual's health. Communicable (i.e., infectious) diseases, such as HIV or influenza, are spread through social contacts between persons, and unfavorable health behaviors (e.g., alcohol and drug abuse) might be reinforced by social influence. On the other hand, social support can ease the coping with diseases in everyday life (e.g., diabetes, depression), and social norms may promote favorable health behaviors (e.g., doing sports or eating healthily). Since social aspects—such as social influence, support, and norms—unfold their effect through communication, they deserve special attention by health communication scholars to protect, maintain, and improve individual and public health.

The conference aims to address the complexity of individuals' social contexts and the full breadth of communication—ranging from interpersonal communication to mass media, online to offline, intended to unintended etc. It therefore calls for proposals analyzing the interrelations between social aspects, different forms of health-related communication, and health at the individual, interpersonal, and societal level.

To illustrate the conference's scope, exemplary questions and concepts are provided in the following. Please note that these examples are not intended to limit the range of possible submissions. Proposals that do not explicitly address the following aspects but refer to social aspects of health communication in other ways are very welcome.

Individual level:

- Which health behaviors are especially susceptible to social influence (e.g., private vs. public health behavior) and what role do different means of communication play in these contexts?
- How are individual social-related characteristics, such as traits (e.g., need to belong), cognitions (e.g., perceived norms), and motives (e.g., need for social integration) associated with health behavior and health-related communication?
- How are media messages elaborated that address social aspects of health behavior (e.g., social frames)?

Interpersonal level:

- Which relevance do different settings have for health communication (e.g., family, colleagues, self-help groups)?
- Which role do different actors (e.g., doctors, patients, bystanders) and social roles (e.g., opinion leaders, influencers, followers) play in the context of health communication?
- How does health-related interpersonal communication differ depending on the channel and platform (e.g., face-to-face vs. mediated)?

Societal level:

- Which sociocultural aspects (e.g., collectivistic vs. individualistic societies) and characteristics of the media system are relevant regarding health and health communication?
- What kind of divides related to health communication exist in societies and what are their consequences (e.g., digital divides)?
- How can societal inequalities and health-related stigmatization be addressed by health communication and what guidelines are helpful for journalists to ease these issues?

The conference calls for basic research describing and explaining these aspects but also refers to applied research seeking to solve practical health communication issues. It is interested in theories, methods, and study designs that allow studying social aspects of health communication at different levels as well as the integration of various levels within a single approach.

Open panels

Besides submissions that address the thematic focus, the conference invites proposals presenting research on current issues of health communication. Especially welcome are contributions presenting a European perspective. This may include case studies from European countries, comparative studies, and Pan-European initiatives.

Submission format

The EHC invites empirical—quantitative or qualitative—, methodological, as well as theoretical contributions. In the case of empirical submissions, data collection should be completed, and (at least preliminary) results should be reported in the submission.

Proposals can be submitted as presentation and poster proposals. Both—presentation and posters proposals—should be submitted in the form of extended abstracts with a maximum length of 8.000 characters (incl. space characters, excl. references, tables and figures). Abstracts must be written in English and have to be submitted via the EHC 2019 submission platform until 15 June 2019. The submission system will open on 30 April 2019.

Please note that you will have to specify whether the submission is a proposal for the thematic or the open panel when submitting your abstract. Additionally, you will be asked to indicate whether the proposal is to be presented as a presentation or a poster in the case of acceptance, or whether both options are equally suitable for your proposal.

All submissions will be reviewed in an anonymous review process on the basis of the following criteria.

- Fit to the conference's theme (when submitted to the thematic panels)
- Contribution to health communication research and practice
- Quality of literature review and theoretical foundations
- Quality and appropriateness of the research methods or quality and appropriateness of arguments for propositions in a theory/review piece
- Quality, clarity, and rigor of argumentation

You will be informed about the acceptance of your submission by 31 August 2019.

Conference

The EHC 2019 will take place at the City Campus of the University of Zurich, located in the center of Zurich. Further information on the conference venues, accommodation possibilities, and the program will be announced on the EHC 2019 website in due time.

Timeline

Submission system opens: 30 April 2019

Submission deadline: 15 June 2019

Notification of acceptance: 31 August 2019

Registration deadline: 20 October 2019

Conference: 13 to 15 November 2019

On behalf of the

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