The fifteenth Summer Institute on Migration and Global Health, organized by the University of California (UC) Berkeley Health Initiative of the Americas, took place virtually from September 1st to 24th, 2020. This year the focus was on assessing the effects of pandemics on migrants and refugees, and how to protect these populations.

Although migration is a natural phenomenon that have always been an integral part of human history, it has substantially increased in recent years as a result of economic disparities, violence, climate change, and globalization, among other factors. Policies, regulations and debates about migration have intensified in recent years, in many cases jeopardizing the health of the migrants and the people around them.

The goal of the Summer Institute is to provide an academic space dedicated to present and analyze the interrelation between migration, the health of migrants, and global health from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

It provides researchers, faculty, graduate students, and professionals working with migrant communities around the world, a unique opportunity to learn about different health issues that affect mobile populations.

In its 15th year of existence, the Summer Institute has gained national and international recognition, reaching many countries across several continents. This year participants had the opportunity to hear from experts about national and international policies and practices related to COVID-19 and the impact on migrant and refugee populations in Europe, the Americas, and other world regions. There were 97 people attending from 15 countries in attendance, including 28 speakers representing international and national organizations such as the World Health Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the University of California Berkeley, and the University of Barcelona among others.
COVID-19 posed great challenges to our traditional way of offering our conference but also a great opportunity to gain the perspective of speakers we would not have had in-person as well as participants joining virtually from six continents. We were also able to offer a simultaneous interpretation in English and Spanish allowing more people, especially from Latin America, to participate in this wonderful event.

Current topics and inspiring presentations

There were 8 live sessions every Tuesday and Thursday from 9 am - 11 am (PST). During this time, speakers had the opportunity to receive and answer questions from the audience. The Summer Institute also offered registered participants access to a virtual classroom in a UC Berkeley CANVAS platform, where they had the opportunity to watch the recordings of the presentations, as well as supplemental materials for every topic covered through the sessions, and discussion boards to motivate reflection and exchange of ideas and experiences among participants.

The eight sessions covered diverse topics, incorporating the latest information about policies that affect the health of migrants, and highlighting successful programs that address those problems. The main topics were:

- COVID-19 and Migrant Populations in Latin-America
- COVID-19 and Migrants in the United States
- Mobile Populations in a Pandemic Response Plan
- Climate Change, Refugees, and COVID-19
- Addressing Mental Health among Migrants during a Pandemic
- Implications of COVID-19 Among Migrants to Access Healthcare
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Outreach and Equity Health for Migrants

The 15th Summer Institute of Migration and Global Health was organized by the UC Berkeley Health Initiative of the Americas, with the financial support from Molina Healthcare.

Thank you to our sponsors and partners