

## Unity in the fields of migration, ethnicity, race and health

In an era of financial austerity and rising racial tensions, it is imperative to preserve and enhance the progress made in the study of migration,<sup>1</sup> ethnicity, race,<sup>2</sup> and indigenous<sup>3</sup> and Roma<sup>4</sup> health. There are, however, danger signs at both the political level, such as the erection or threat of walls and fences across country boundaries, and the health level, such as the deterioration that occurs in the health status of migrants with increasing length of stay and across generations.<sup>5</sup>

Resources for these subjects are sparse and are routed through specific networks and services. Research and health interventions for recent migrants, for example, are mostly set up afresh and not integrated with long-established policies and strategies for settled populations, whether indigenous (eg, Maori), those established for centuries (eg, Roma in Europe and African Americans in the USA), or for ethnic minority populations who have largely become part of society (eg, Indians in the UK). This fragmentation is regrettable, particularly at a time when progress is threatened. The common ground between these subjects is extensive, such as in the quest for equity, social equality and an end to discrimination, fairness in the delivery services, and identification of ways to enable effective communication across language and cultural barriers.

To enhance progress and develop a new vision for common endeavour, the University of Edinburgh, European Public Health Association, and NHS Health Scotland have partnered to provide a global forum for dialogue and debate at the 1st World Congress on Migration, Ethnicity, Race and Health in Edinburgh to be held on May 17–19, 2018. Participants will endeavour, possibly for the first time, to integrate the concepts, theory, and

practice from the study of migration, ethnicity, and race with those for the health of indigenous and Roma populations. The congress will include a reflective and critical evaluation of whether a new international academic and professional society is needed to create a united front in anticipation of multiple future challenges. In moving from the idea of a multicultural city to a nearly universally multicultural world, the challenges might even be on a par with the connected issue of climate change,<sup>6</sup> since both are a product of globalisation.

I am the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the World Congress in Migration, Ethnicity, Race and Health and a director of the company set up to run it.

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