



**Join us for the WHO Social Determinants of Health Webinar No. 2**  
**“COVID-19, social determinants and violence”**

**Wednesday, 2 December 2020**  
**16h00 - 17h00 CET**

**Register:** [https://who.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_jiiwHbULQZejGLs9zlt9wg](https://who.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jiiwHbULQZejGLs9zlt9wg)

**Agenda**

- 16h00-16h05: Welcome & introductions: Dr Naoko Yamamoto, Assistant Director General, WHO Healthier Populations Division
- 16h05-16h15: Dr Mark Bellis, Bangor University
- 16h15-16h25: Dr Faith Mwangi-Powell, Girls Not Brides
- 16h25-16h35: Dr Manuel Eisner, Cambridge University
- 16h35-16h55: Q & A
- 16h55-17h00: Closure & thanks: Dr Etienne Krug, Director, WHO Department of Social Determinants of Health

**Rationale**

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended our world and exacerbated inequalities in many countries and communities. One of the consequences of COVID-19 and the societal responses to the virus has been an increase in some types of violence. This includes child maltreatment, youth violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and elder abuse. In addition to the immediate harms, these acts of violence will have pernicious, lifelong health effects on those affected and risk undermining their potential and ultimately impede social and economic development.

It is known that far from being randomly distributed, all forms of violence are strongly patterned by social determinants such as economic, social and gender inequalities; lack of occupational and educational opportunities; ease of access to alcohol, drugs and firearms; family dysfunction; and norms and values that shape the acceptability of violence. In turn, high levels of violence can themselves amplify these social determinants in a vicious circle.

This webinar will explore how violence is a significant contributor to human suffering and how the societal responses to COVID-19 such as stay-at-home measures, workplace and school closures, and restrictions on sales of alcohol highlight the interrelationships between social

determinants and violence. These complex interrelationships will be explored and their implications unpacked to suggest likely future trends in the prevalence of violence and its prevention.

- **Mark Bellis.** From before birth to older age, greater risks of experiencing violence are associated with increasing deprivation. The consequences of abuse, neglect and other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can result in immediate harms and lifelong impacts on health, behaviour and opportunities to experience prosperous lives – locking individuals, families and communities into multi-generational cycles of poverty and violence. This presentation considers how the emerging consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and efforts to control it may affect levels of violence and ACEs and their long-term impacts on population health and behaviour.
- **Faith Mwangi-Powell.** In Africa many of the complex factors that drive child marriage in stable environments have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic as family and community structures break down. These challenges have been heightened by loss of household income, lack of access to schooling and higher risk of violence in the home. This has resulted in an acceleration of child marriage and teenage pregnancy in many countries. It is therefore important to ensure that the welfare of adolescent girls is at the heart of the COVID-19 response and recovery. Government must make this issue priority policy so that adverse impacts on girls can be mitigated.
- **Manuel Eisner.** The effects of societal responses to COVID-19 on violence are an important topic for research. Examining these effects can help to better understand the processes that drive increases and decreases in violence. Using data from 25 across all regions of the world, this presentation examines how the various public health responses to COVID-19 had different short- and long-term effects on robbery, assault, and homicide rates, and reflects on what these findings may imply for the violence-related Sustainable Development Goals.

## Presenters

**Mark Bellis** is the Director of Policy and International Health for Public Health Wales and Professor of Public Health at Bangor University. Mark is the Head of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Well-being and WHO UK Focal Point for Violence and Injury Prevention. He is co-founder of the Wales national Violence Prevention Unit and its cross-governmental ACEs hub. Mark has undertaken substantive work in the fields of violence prevention; alcohol and drugs; and sexual health and continues to head an on-going research programme examining ACEs and their impact on health and behaviour across the life course.



**Faith Mwangi-Powell** currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer for Girls Not Brides; The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage. Formerly, Faith served as the Global Director for The Girl Generation, a social change communication initiative to end Female Genital Mutilation across 10 African countries, led by Options, UK. Faith is a public health expert with strong leadership skills acquired through her career spanning over 25 years.



**Manuel Eisner** is Wolfson Professor of Criminology and Director of the Violence Research Centre at the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge. His academic work revolves around research on macro-level historical and cross-national patterns of violence; individual development and the causes of aggressive behaviour over the life course; and the prevention of violence. He is principal investigator of the Zurich Project on the Social Development from Childhood to Adulthood, an ongoing cohort study of 1675 young people from age 7 to age 20. He is also principal investigator of Evidence for Better Lives, a research initiative to address violence against children.

