6.B. Workshop: Fostering population health research on COVID-19 to support policy making

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The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the urgent need for a structured European mechanism for COVID-19 exchange to organize and share accurate information between countries, especially in the area of population health, to inform decision-makers, researchers and the public. Within PHIRI (Population Health Information Research Infrastructure) the best available evidence for research on health and well-being of populations as impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic is generated and facilitated by a research infrastructure on population health. It supports research across Europe through the identification, access, assessment and reuse of population health and non-health data to underpin public health policy decisions. PHIRI lays the foundation for ultimately developing a distributed infrastructure on population health (DIPoH). In order to foster population health research on COVID-19, the access to and use of COVID-19 relevant population health information and health data should be facilitated, together with services and tools necessary for researchers to link different data sources and to use Pan-European data in a GDPR compliant, federated way. Furthermore, to tackle health information inequalities, capacity building is of eminent importance. Finally, a way to facilitate swift responses to research and policy questions that are raised in countries is needed to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. In this workshop, the tools and approaches gained within PHIRI are presented and showcased. The workshop will begin with a short presentation on the purpose of this research infrastructure and the prospective distributed infrastructure on population health. This will be followed by four presentations that highlight key activities in PHIRI: The first presentation showcases the Health
Information Portal, the one-stop-shop facilitating access to data sources, population health studies, training material and courses, considering ethical and legal aspects. The second presentation shows the technological substrate for the development of a federated research infrastructure. The third presentation demonstrates the European School on Health Information, that aims to contribute to increasing knowledge on availability and use of standardized Health Information methods to common practices in EU countries. The final presentation informs on the Rapid Exchange Forum, establishing a sustainable infrastructure to support rapid exchange between actors from competent authorities, their advisors, researchers and stakeholders in the joint efforts to handle the COVID-19 pandemic. Knowledge and expertise developed across Europe is shared in this workshop, supporting countries to address the COVID-19 crisis now and in its aftermath. Exchange with the audience will facilitate knowledge and opinion exchange through an interactive voting poll during the session. A poll will offer the delegates to share, in real time, their perspectives on selected questions based on the four presentations.

**Key messages:**
- This workshop will leverage the tools and methodologies that are developed in PHIRI to foster population health research across Europe to underpin public health policy decisions.
- The support of exchange of knowledge and expertise across Europe is key, and facilitated by capacity building on data management and research methodologies; and the rapid exchange of urgent questions.