10.Q. Oral presentations: Migrant health in Europe

Othering in public health using the example of Covid-19 management in German asylum camps

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Issue/problem:
In 2020, several German reception centers and asylum camps were imposed mass quarantine after single residents had been infected with SARS-CoV-2. Civil and research networks criticized this measure, as crowded housing conditions limited the implementation of infection protection measures, and mass quarantine further increased the risk of infection. This raised the question why public health (PH) measures in these settings differed from those implemented in the general population, and which implications for future PH approaches can be identified.

Problem description:
Considering the epidemiological evidence and ethical perspectives on the PH strategies described above, we applied the concepts of “Exclusionary Othering” and “Inclusionary Othering” to PH. We further discussed the Covid-19 management in German reception centers and asylum camps.

Results:
We identified three conceptual approaches: 1) exclusionary, 2) inclusionary, and 3) diversity-sensitive approaches to PH. Exclusionary PH is characterized by an exclusion of less powerful groups despite negative health consequences. Inclusive approaches seek to empower less powerful groups in order to understand each other’s needs, build cooperations, protect everyone and to prevent the development of “hot spots”. Diversity-sensitive PH approaches avoid otherting and seek to implement measures for everyone, taking into account diverse needs, conditions, and resources.

Lessons:
We propose a paradigm shift towards inclusionary and diversity-sensitive PH that benefits the entire population, including those forced to flee other countries. This requires a critical reflection of power dynamics and discrimination. The proposed concepts can be transferred to other social groups, regions, and areas of PH.
Key messages:
- Public health needs to shift its perspective from exclusion and subordination to inclusion and involvement.
- Inclusionary and diversity-sensitive PH approaches promote health equity.