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This workshop sets the focus on the protection and preparedness not limited to individual healthcare workers, but strongly. Health workforce protection and pandemic preparedness are the new emergent threats during the COVID-19 pandemic. Societies’ and health policymakers’ appreciation of their new commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the first Health and Care Workers in 2021 in recognition of their commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background:

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1.M. Workshop: Protecting and preparing healthcare workers: what to learn from COVID-19

Addiction to illicit drugs is considered a medical condition requiring effective measures to prevent the disease and minimize harms of this addiction. Injecting drug use increases the risk for acquiring blood-borne infections among people who inject drugs (PWID). The aim of the study was to assess the risk behavior related to the use of intravenous narcotic and psychotropic substances among PWID in Lithuania. The intention to escape past and present elucidates links between the context of using substances and context of feeling rejected. Younger age when started injecting drugs, duration of injecting equipment during the last 30 days.

The following major questions will be addressed: How can the protection and pandemic preparedness of healthcare workers be highlighted the need for a health system and governance approach. How can the weaknesses of health workforce policy during COVID-19 and to identify strengths and policy priorities can be identified to support the health and wellbeing of healthcare workers and prevent infection and deaths, as well as post-COVID fatigue, burn-out and job leaves? How can we build back better and more equitable, including strengthening gender equality and establishing solidarity-based health workforce governance to mitigate shortages and inequality between countries and globally, and (4) take action to implement gender equality policies and to better protect female healthcare workers.

The workshop introduces novel results drawn from four European comparative studies. A number of important policy recommendations are emerging from the research, which include among others: (1) improve attention to the complex health and social needs of people who inject drugs, (2) implement comprehensive surveillance and monitoring systems, (3) establish European health workforce monitoring systems, (4) take action to implement gender equality policies and to better protect female healthcare workers. The workshop sets the focus on the protection and preparedness not limited to individual healthcare workers, but strongly.

Health workforce protection and pandemic preparedness are the new emergent threats during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the first Health and Care Workers in 2021 in recognition of their commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The health workforce: central to an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe

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Background:

COVID-19 has reinforced the centrality of health workers at the core of a well performing and resilient health system. It has
concomitantly exposed the risks of staffing and skills shortages and the importance of protecting the health workforce. This paper focuses on highlighting some of the lessons learnt, challenges and future needs of the health workforce in Europe in the context of COVID-19.

**Methods:**
We use secondary sources and expert information.

**Results:**
During the pandemic innovative and flexible approaches were implemented to meet increasing demand for health workers and new skills and responsibilities were adopted over a short period of time. We have seen the rapid adaptation and use of new technologies to deliver care. The pandemic has underlined the importance of valuing, protecting and caring for our health workforce and the need to invest appropriately and adequately in the health workforce to have sufficient, capable and well-motivated health workers. Some of the main challenges that lie ahead of us include the imperative for better investment, to need to improve recruitment and retraining whilst better retaining health workers, a focus on domestic sustainability, redeploying and developing new skills and competences among health workers, enabling more effective multi-professional collaboration and team work, improving the quality of education and training, increasing the public health focus and promoting ethical and sustainable international recruitment of health workers.

**Conclusions:**
The WHO European Region through its European Programme of Work 2020-2025 is fully committed to support countries in their efforts to continue to respond to COVID-19 and whilst addressing upcoming health workforce challenges.