

JOURNAL

of Health Inequalities

Dear Colleagues,

We are very pleased to present you with the latest issue of the *Journal of Health Inequalities*. One of the key topics of this issue is the ongoing health crisis resulting from the continuously increasing burden of alcohol-attributable diseases in Poland. While this problem has been documented in recent papers published elsewhere (e.g. Zatoński WA, Zatoński MZ, Janik-Koncewicz K, McKee M. *Alcohol-related liver cirrhosis in Poland: the reservoir effect*. *Lancet Gastroenterol Hepatol* 2020; 5 (12): 1035; Zatoński WA, Zatoński M, Janik-Koncewicz K, Wojtyła A. *Alcohol-related deaths in Poland during a period of weakening alcohol control measures*. *JAMA* 2021; 325 (11): 1108-1109), it still appears to be poorly recognised by the Polish research community (for example see the article by Gańczak M, Miazgowski T, Kozybska M, et al. *Changes in disease burden in Poland between 1990-2017 in comparison with other Central European countries: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017*. *PLoS One* 2020; 15 (3): e0226766) and, which is particularly worrying, in the official health documents of the state administration.

This issue of the *Journal of Health Inequalities* attempts to set the record straight, presenting an epidemiological analysis, suggesting that the doubling of alcohol consumption in the Polish population from 6.5 litres in 2002 to almost 10 litres per capita per year in 2017 is one of the key reasons behind stopping health growth in Poland, reversing the trend of all-cause mortality, and in recent years, leading to a life expectancy decline (see article: *Health decline in Poland after 2002: response to a recent analysis of the changes in disease burden in Poland* on pages: 2-6).

The next group of articles by Frode Foreland, Zuzanna Opolska, Łukasz Gruszczyński, Maciej Zatoński and Janusz Szyborski documents the alarming course of the coronavirus pandemic, especially in the second half of 2020. The coronavirus outbreak in Poland reached one of the highest levels in the world in mid-November. This stands in contrast with the case of Norway, illustrated by the article of Frode Foreland, one of the main strategists of the response against the coronavirus in Norway, where the death rate from coronavirus has been reduced to one of the lowest rates in Europe. As an illustration of this, the 2020 coronavirus outbreak in Norway resulted in a total of 789 deaths. For comparison, on just one day – November 7, 2020, number of excess deaths in Poland due to coronavirus was 1249.

Other articles in this issue discuss the problem of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) use in Poland, which mainly affects children, and is much less popular in the adult population (pages: 26-51), but also tackle important public health problems in Indonesia (pages: 40-51), the United States (pages: 52-56), Turkey (pages: 57-62), and Poland (pages: 63-69).

This is already the 11th issue of the Journal prepared and published by our team. In the last 6 years we have published more than 200 articles by renowned public health experts and young researchers from Poland, Central and Eastern Europe, and globally. The aim of our editorial team is to raise continually the scientific level of the journal, to acquire the papers of well-known, highly-cited scientists from Poland and abroad, to create a platform for students and young scientists, and to disseminate the scientific content previously published in the Journal. Once again, we would like to thank all authors and collaborators who contributed to the present and past issues of the Journal.

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