

Speaker Bios

Mrs Elizabeth Iro, WHO Chief Nurse



Mrs Iro is the Chief Nurse of the WHO, appointed by WHO Director General, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus in 2017. She is from the Cook Islands, where she worked as Secretary of Health (2012-2017). She was the first woman and nurse/midwife to be appointed to this position in this country. Her top goals in this role were legislative reforms to enhance the country's health system, as well as the development of National Health Strategic Plans (2012-2016, 2017-2021) and a National Health Road Map (2017-2036). Mrs. Iro has an MHSc in Nursing and an MBA and was educated as a nurse and midwife in New Zealand. She worked as a nurse in different capacities, including Chief Nursing Officer (2011-2012), Registrar of the Nursing Council (2000-2007), and President of the Cook Islands Nurses Association (2002-2010).

Dr Neelam Dhringa- Kumar MD



Dr Neelam DHINGRA, MD, heads the WHO Transformative Flagship Initiative “A Decade of Patient Safety 2021-2030” at WHO HQ, Geneva, Switzerland. In this role, Dr DHINGRA leads WHO’s global efforts in providing strategic leadership on patient safety within the context of UHC. This includes implementation of 2019 WHA resolution ‘Global Action on Patient Safety’, World Patient Safety Day, 2021 WHA approved ‘Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030’, Global Patient Safety Challenge: *Medication Without Harm*; Global Patient Safety Network; Leadership and Safety Culture; Patients for Patient Safety; Education and Training; and Reporting and Learning. Dr DHINGRA led the WHO Blood Safety unit after joining WHO HQ/Geneva in 2000 till 2014. Since 2015, Dr DHINGRA is coordinating WHO global efforts in the areas of patient safety and risk management. Prior to joining WHO, Dr DHINGRA served as a faculty in tertiary university hospital in New Delhi, India for 14 years, also coordinating transfusion services, after medical and specialist qualifications from New Delhi and UK fellowships.

Dr Alpana Mair



Alpana is responsible for coordinating delivery of Governments work programme, advising Ministers on Quality, Prescribing, safety and effective use of medicines. She is the project principle investigator and coordinator of EU funded project iSIMPATY and SIMPATY. She is responsible for development of National Polypharmacy guidance, and quality prescribing guidelines, patient app and shared decision-making tools. Alpana leads work for WHO on Polypharmacy and an expert adviser for WHO on patient and medication safety. For International Foundation of Integrated Care (IFIC), she coordinates the Special Interest Group on Appropriate polypharmacy & Adherence and is EU coordinator for work on Active and Healthy Aging on polypharmacy and adherence to treatment. She is Associate Professor at Edinburgh Napier University, Honorary Clinical Fellow, and affiliate of the Usher institute Edinburgh University and. She was previously the Deputy Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for Scotland

Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy



Priyadarshani Galappatthy is Senior Professor and Chair Professor of Pharmacology and Head of the Department of Medical Humanities at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is a Specialist in General Internal Medicine with training in Sri Lanka and in the UK. She is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London, UK and Fellow of the Ceylon College of Physicians, Sri Lanka. She was a member of the WHO consultative team from 2016, supporting the development and launch of the global patient safety challenge on '*Medication Without Harm*'. She gave leadership to develop the national action plan on medication safety for Sri Lanka, launched on the World Patient Safety Day in 2021. Currently she is working for the WHO as a consultant in the field of medication safety.

Professor Kok Hian TAN (MBBS, MBA, MRCOG, MMED, FAMS, FRCOG)

Senior Associate Dean, Office of Academic & Clinical Development (OACD), Duke-NUS

Group Director, Institute for Patient Safety & Quality (IPSQ), SingHealth



Prof Tan is Group Director & Senior Associate Dean, SingHealth Duke-NUS Institute for Patient Safety & Quality (IPSQ). He was formerly KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) Campus Director of Patient Safety and Quality and now serves as Advisor to KKH Patient Safety & Risk Council. He is a senior consultant in the Maternal Fetal Medicine Department in KKH and is the Head of Perinatal Audit & Epidemiology in KKH.

He was the inaugural Chair of National Quality Council from 2017 to 2021, which served as the national advisory panel to Singapore MOH on health quality priorities and strategies. He is currently a member of the Singapore MOH National Performance Steering Committee (NPSC) and is the Cluster Deployment Lead (CDL) for SingHealth in Singapore Ensure Safer System (ESS) Framework. He initiated the SingHealth Patient Advocacy Network (SPAN) in 2017 and currently serve as an advisor. He initiated and leads the Academic Medicine – Enhancing Performance, Improving Care (AM-EPIC) Framework, in SingHealth which is an education and professional development framework that comprises a portfolio of programs aimed at upskilling and uplifting the Patient Safety, Quality and Innovation capabilities of staff and patients.

Prof Tan is conferred the Benjamin Henry Sheares Professorship by Duke-NUS for his outstanding contributions in the field of Obstetrics and Gynaecology since 2019. He received the WHO United Arab Emirates (WHO-UAE) Health Foundation Prize 2009 as Integrated Perinatal Care Project Team Leader for KKH and was awarded the Singapore Inaugural National Outstanding Clinical Quality Activist Award 2010. Prof Tan is a member of the expert group on Patient Safety for World Health Organization and has served as a consultant in patient safety and healthcare quality for MOH in Sri Lanka and Maldives.



Mr Rasul Baghirov of Azerbaijan has more than 25 years of experience in human development sectors, including supporting reforms in health systems, education and social protection. He helped counties in response to natural and man-made disasters as well as building communities' resilience to withstand them. He is currently serving as Head of Country Strategy and Support unit at World Health Organization headquarters in Geneva, where he leads a diverse portfolio aimed at strengthening WHO country presence. Prior to his current role, he led WHO multi-country office in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. His UN career started with World Bank in his home country. Throughout his assignments, Dr Baghirov has worked closely with governments, service providers, civil society organizations, partners, and donor community in designing and implementing evidence-based policies and services. Among other achievements, he helped to end the Measles outbreak in Samoa in 2019 and led preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic in selected countries of the Pacific. Dr Baghirov has professional degrees in medicine, management, and health economics from universities in Baku, London, Nottingham and Aberdeen. Married with 3 children. A professional chess player.

Howard Catton, CEO, International Council of Nurses

Howard was appointed the Chief Executive Officer of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) in February 2019. He is committed to ensure that ICN effectively represents nursing worldwide, advances the nursing profession, promotes the wellbeing of nurses and advocates for health in all policies.

Throughout his career Howard has worked and written extensively on issues relating to the Nursing and Healthcare Workforce and he co-chaired the first ever State of the World's Nursing Report. He has led ICN's work to respond to and support nurses globally during the pandemic and has been at the forefront of advocating for the protection of and investment in the nursing profession.

Howard joined ICN in April 2016 as the Director, Nursing, Policy and Programmes. His team led the development of ICN policy and position statements. He also co-ordinated ICN Programmes and projects and oversaw the development of scientific programmes for ICN events.

Howard qualified as a Registered Nurse in 1988 and held a variety of nursing posts in England and the United States and worked for the New Zealand Nurses Organisation. He studied Social Policy at Cardiff University (BSc Econ Hons) and Industrial Relations at Warwick University (MA) and then worked as a Personnel and Organizational Change Manager in the National Health Service in the UK. For 10 years Howard was Head of Policy & International Affairs at the Royal College of Nursing in the UK.

Dr Emily McWhirter - Moderator



Emily is a senior nurse from the UK working as a Consultant in the Chief Nursing Office at WHO HQ.

Emily has a midwifery degree and a PhD in nursing leadership and has held senior positions in the NHS, independent and charity sector. At WHO Emily works on the development of the Nursing and Midwifery Global Community of Practice to strengthen nursing and midwifery through connection, networking and collaboration.