



Dear Colleagues and Students,

It is with great pleasure that my colleague and collaborator from the School of Health Professions (SHP), Professor and SHP Associate Dean of Global Affairs Riva Touger-Decker, and I invite you to the third e-symposium that we are hosting in collaboration with one of our institutional partners in Greece, Democritus University of Thrace (website in English: <https://duth.gr/en>). The event will focus on ***“Substance Use in Greece and the U.S.A.: Underlying Mechanisms, Usage Patterns, Treatment, and Policy,”*** and will take place in two parts from 11 am to 2 pm ET on Thursday, March 10, 2022.

The e-symposium will feature speakers from Rutgers and Democritus University, including **Dr. Itzhak Yanovitzky** (SC&I), **Dr. Suchismita Ray** (SHP), and **Dr. Petros Levounis** (RNJMS). RBHS Chancellor **Dr. Brian Strom** and Democritus University’s Rector, **Dr. Alexandros Polychronidis**, will offer opening remarks.

AGENDA, REGISTRATION & OTHER EVENT-RELATED INFORMATION

Date: Thursday, March 10, 2022

Time: 11 am - 2 pm ET / 6 pm – 9 pm (Greece)

Registration: To participate, please register by Wednesday evening, March 9 using this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/substance-use-in-the-usa-and-greece-registration-273508089057>

You can also find the event's program here:

<https://comminfo.rutgers.edu/events/march-10-e-symposium-substance-use-usa-and-greece>

▪ **OPENING REMARKS (11:00 – 11:20 am ET / 18:00 – 18:20 in Greece)**



Alexandros Polychronidis, MD
Rector, Democritus University of Thrace;
Professor of Surgery, School of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace



Brian Strom, MD, MPH
Inaugural Chancellor of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences;
Executive Vice President for Health Affairs, Rutgers University



Michael Koukourakis, MD
Professor and Chair, Department of Radiotherapy & Oncology,
School of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace

▪ **SESSION 1 (11:20 am – 12:20 pm ET / 18:20-19:20 in Greece)**

Session Chairs

Riva Touger-Decker, PhD, RD, Associate Dean of Global Affairs; Professor, School of Health Professions; and Professor, Rutgers School of Dental Medicine



Bio: Dr. Riva Touger-Decker's research has explored diet/nutrition and orofacial pain, tooth loss, and head and neck cancer, nutrition-focused physical exam practices of dietitians, advanced practice education and training for dietitians and hybrid approaches to training health professionals globally. Her global efforts focus on workforce expansion and capacity building in the health professions, including nutrition and dietetics. She has been involved in such initiatives globally in Japan, Israel, Malaysia, Singapore, and Tanzania. Touger-Decker and her collaborators use a hybrid approach of in-person and technology-based teaching and training methods. Their efforts have resulted in expanded scopes of practice for dietitians. They also have worked with universities and health ministries to help workforce expansion. She is the author of multiple peer reviewed publications and a co-editor of four books. She is co-lead of the IIE-IAPP Greece initiative.

Ekaterini Alexiou-Chatzaki, PhD, *Professor of Pharmacology, School of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace; Director, Agri-Health Institute, Hellenic Mediterranean University*



Bio: Dr. Ekaterini Alexiou-Chatzaki is Professor of Pharmacology in the Medical School of the Democritus University of Thrace and Director of the Institute Agri-Health of the Hellenic Mediterranean University Research Centre Greece. Her research focuses on precision pharmacotherapy, using liquid biopsies and epigenetic biomarkers, incorporating automated machine learning in her studies' pipeline for biomarker discovery. She has over 30 years of experience in pharmacology research and a long and recognized publication record of scientific articles. Her research has received funding primarily from the EEC, the Greek Government, and the industry.

Presentations

Neurocognitive Mechanisms Underlying Opioid Addiction

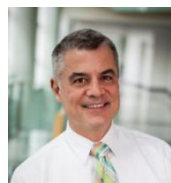
Suchismita Ray, PhD, *Associate Professor, Health Informatics, School of Health Professions, Rutgers University*



Bio: Dr. Suchismita (Mita) Ray received her Ph.D. degree in Cognitive Psychology from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey in Newark. She has over 15 years of experience working in the field of drug addiction. Dr. Ray's research mission is to examine the cognitive, behavioral, and brain mechanisms underlying drug addiction in the vulnerable population including pregnant and new mothers in the community, and to develop new effective interventions to improve the health outcomes of these individuals. She presented her work at a New Jersey Opioid Symposium organized by Integrity House and Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in November 2019 and proposed that a mindfulness-based behavioral intervention will be very effective in improving the drug use outcomes in individuals with substance use disorder. Dr. Ray's research on opioid addiction has been highlighted on Rutgers news and New Jersey's 101.5 radio channel.

Pharmacological Treatments for Opioid Use Disorder

Petros Levounis, MD, MA, *Professor & Chair, Department of Psychiatry, New Jersey Medical School, Rutgers University*

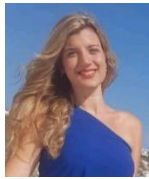


Bio: Dr. Petros Levounis, MD, MA is Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Associate Dean for Professional Development at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Stanford University, he studied chemistry and biophysics before receiving his medical education at Stanford and the Medical College of Pennsylvania. He trained in Psychiatry at Columbia University and further specialized in Addiction Psychiatry at NYU. Dr. Levounis served as director of the Addiction Institute of New York from 2002 to 2013 and, in 2017,

was elected as an honorary member of the World Psychiatric Association. Dr. Levounis has published 14 books including the textbook of “Substance Dependence and Co-Occurring Psychiatric Disorders” the “Pocket Guide to LGBTQ Mental Health: Understanding the Spectrum of Gender and Sexuality,” and “Technological Addictions.” His books have been translated into French, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish. Dr. Levounis will also be the next President of the American Psychiatric Association.

Use of Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) of Natural Origin: A Survey

Elena Deligianni, PhD Candidate, MA, *Aristotle University of Thessaloniki & University of Hertfordshire*



Bio: Elena Deligianni is a pharmacologist who graduated from the University of Hertfordshire in the United Kingdom. She has been an external research collaborator in the Psychopharmacology, Drug Misuse, and Novel Psychoactive Substance research unit of the University of Hertfordshire. Elena specializes in Clinical Research (Translational Medicine) and Epidemiology at Imperial College London and the Medical School of the National & Kapodistrian University of Athens. She is currently pursuing her doctoral studies (PhD) in Clinical Pharmacology and Addiction Medicine at the Medical School of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in association with the University of Hertfordshire, investigating novel psychoactive substance use, experiences and risk awareness.

Christos Kontogiorgis, PhD, *Assistant Professor, Laboratory of Hygiene & Environmental Protection, School of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace*



Bio: Dr. Christos Kontogiorgis is a pharmacist by training and a faculty member at the Laboratory of Hygiene and Environmental Protection, Department of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace. He has published more than 80 papers in peer-reviewed journals publications and more than 200 presentations in National and International Conferences. He has participated in National and European research projects. His research interests include pharmacoepidemiology, nutritional epidemiology, public health, and natural products.

~ **Brief Break** ~

▪ **SESSION 2 (12:30 pm – 1:10 pm ET / 19:30 – 20:10 in Greece)**

Session Chairs

Matthew Matsaganis, PhD, *Associate Professor, School of Communication & Information, Rutgers University*



Bio: Matthew Matsaganis is Associate Professor of Communication in Rutgers’ School of Communication and Information. His research focuses on the role of communication as a determinant of health disparities (related to health care access, reproductive health, and environmental health) in urban communities, and also on how the well-being of neighborhoods can be transformed through communication-centered interventions. In this context, he also investigates how ethnic media can serve critical information needs, including health needs, of immigrant and ethnic communities in the digital age. He conducts research in Greece, collaborating with colleagues from Greek universities and research centers, municipalities, and local nonprofit organizations. His research has been supported by grants from U.S. federal funding agencies and private foundations. He is a co-author and co-editor of four books and multiple peer-reviewed publications. He is co-lead of the IIE-IAPP Greece initiative.

Christos Detsaridis, PhD, *Associate Professor, School of Law, Democritus University of Thrace*



Bio: Dr. Christos Destaridis graduated from the School of Law, Democritus University of Thrace and is currently Associate Professor in the same school. He teaches administrative law, administrative procedural law, and the law of public procurement at the Faculty of Law at Democritus University. He also teaches administrative law and administrative procedural law in the post-graduate Program in Public Law and Political Science of DUT’s Faculty of Law. He has authored monographs, and also numerous studies and comments to court decisions in Greek and foreign legal journals.

▪ **Presentations**

Policy on Opioids & Psychoactives

Evangelia Nena, MD, PhD, *Associate Professor, School of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace*



Bio: Dr. Evangelia Nena is trained in Occupational Medicine. She is Associate Professor at the Medical School of Democritus University of Thrace, and Head of the Laboratory of Social Medicine and Sociology. She is also an Associate Editor of the journal, *Archives of Environmental and Occupational Health*. She is the author of 97 peer-reviewed publications and has participated in numerous

funded research projects. She is a member of international scientific networks in the field of Public Health and Epidemiology/Occupational epidemiology. Her research interests involve Public Health, Social Medicine, and Sleep Medicine.

Opioid Crisis: Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Challenges to Public Health
Itzhak Yanovitzky, PhD, Professor and Chair of Health & Wellness Cluster, School of Communication & Information, Rutgers University



Bio: Dr. Itzhak Yanovitzky is Professor of Communication at Rutgers University, Chair of the Health Communication Division of the International Communication Association, and a member of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine’s Standing Committee on Advancing Science Communication. He is an expert in the areas of behavior change, public policymaking, translational research, and program evaluation.

Professor Yanovitzky’s program of research explores effective mechanisms for improving the use of research evidence in policy and practice and building the capacity of communities to apply communication strategies and tools to promote population health and wellness.

- **DISCUSSION (1:10 – 1:40 pm ET / 20:10 – 20:40 in Greece)**
- **CLOSING REMARKS (1:40 – 1:50 pm ET / 20:40 – 20:50 in Greece)**

Certificate of Participation

A *certificate of participation* will be provided to all registered participants in the public event who express interest in receiving one. Participants will be able to indicate their interest right after the event when the organizers will follow up with them.