

## **SPEAKERS BIOSKETCHES**

### **“COVID19 introduction & Acceptance”**

**Webinars Session 1 & Session 2 - March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

#### **The Mérieux Foundation Vaccine Acceptance Initiative**



**Dr. Katie Atwell**  
**UWA political scientist and DECRA fellow**  
**University of Western Australia**

Dr Atwell is an early-mid career researcher and Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher Award Fellow.

Dr Atwell has engaged in community, systems and behavioural research in vaccination uptake since 2014, the year of her ground-breaking “I Immunise” campaign, which drew on behavioural insights to address alternative lifestyle-based vaccine hesitancy.

Dr Atwell is one of the world’s leading experts on mandatory childhood vaccination. She leads the interdisciplinary project “Coronavax: Preparing Community and Government”, which engages in community and government research in readiness for a vaccine roll-out for COVID-19.

Dr Atwell is a founding Governance Committee Member of the Collaboration on Social Science and Immunisation (COSSI), a Fellow of the Public Policy Institute (UWA) and an Honorary Fellow of the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases, Telethon Kids Institute.



**Dr. Gabi Barbash**  
**Director, Bench to Bedside Program**  
**Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel**

Dr. Gabriel Barbash served as the CEO of the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center from 1993 to 2015 and from 1996 to 1999 he was the Director General of the Ministry of Health.

In 2001, Dr. Barbash was appointed Professor of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine in the Sackler School of Medicine, Tel Aviv University.

In September 2015, Dr. Barbash was appointed as the Director of the Bench to Bedside (BtB) program at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel.

Dr. Barbash is a graduate of the Hadassah Medical School of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and is board certified in Internal Medicine, Medical Management and Occupational Medicine. He also holds a master degree in Public Health (MPH), specializing in Health Policy and Management, from the School of Public Health at Harvard University.



**Mme. Carolyn Paul**  
**Global Managing Director and EMEA Health Chair at**  
**Edelman**  
**Edelman, UK**

Carolyn Paul is the Chair of the Health Sector for Edelman across the EMEA region where she has particular responsibility for the development of global strategy, providing high level consultancy to senior clients and perfecting the design and execution of integrated global communications marketing campaigns, for clients who operate in multiple markets and regions around the world.

Her work in vaccines includes supporting global launch communications for Gardasil, Prevenar 13 and Dengvaxia.



**NINA T. CASTILLO-CARANDANG**  
**Health Social Scientist and Professor,**  
**Department of Clinical Epidemiology, College of Medicine,**  
**University of the Philippines, Manila**

Nina T. Castillo-Carandang's career as a sociologist in the University of the Philippines began in the agricultural sciences campus (Los Baños) before she joined the health sciences campus (Manila) and went into the fields of health social science, clinical epidemiology, and global health.

She is currently a Health Social Scientist and Professor in the Department of Clinical Epidemiology, College of Medicine, University of the Philippines Manila.

Nina has looked into sociocultural dimensions of health and health care—the perceptions of laypersons, patients, health care providers, policymakers, and how such can affect health-seeking behavior, clinical practice, as well as policy (clinical, public health).

Her current work looks at different facets of quality of life, and the Filipinos' search for Kagalingan (well-being, happiness, and health), and living well and being well.

She and her colleagues have studied the impact of cardiovascular diseases, malaria, tuberculosis, and asthma and allergies on the lives of Filipino communities, families, and individuals.

Nina is a practitioner & an advocate for transdisciplinary teaching, education, research, advocacy & policy work. She believes that achieving a good quality of life and good health outcomes are only possible if teamwork/collaboration & constant dialogue are done within & across professions, sectors, and organizations in solidarity with the public.

As of end August 2020, Nina has been a member of the World Health Organization's Social Science Working Group for COVID-19. In December 2020 she was appointed as a member of the Philippines' National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG) for COVID-19 Vaccine.



**Professor Dr. L. Suzanne Suggs, PhD**  
**Professor of Social Marketing in the Institute of Public**  
**Communication (ICP), Institute of Public Health (IPH)**  
**University of Lugano, Switzerland**

Professor Dr. Suzanne Suggs is a Full Professor of Social Marketing and Head of BeCHANGE Research Group in the Institutes of Public Health and Public Communication at the University of Lugano in Switzerland.

She is also the Vice-President of the Swiss School of Public Health and a Visiting Reader in the Institute for Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London.

She serves on the Swiss National COVID 19 Science Task Force, and is co-presidente of the expert group in Public Health and member of various sub-groups focused on vaccination.

Her research focuses on health behavior change and health communication, with ongoing studies on vaccine communication and vaccination acceptance. She has served on the steering committee for the annual Ancey vaccination meeting for six years.



**Dr Romina Libster**  
**Pediatric Investigator - Vaccine & Respiratory Viruses**  
**Research**  
**Fundación INFANT, Buenos Aires, Argentina**

Dr. Romina Libster received her Doctor of Medicine, with High Honors from the University Of Buenos Aires School Of Medicine in 2004. She completed a pediatric residency and a Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship at the Fundación INFANT in Argentina. She conducted a series of complex and innovative studies on respiratory viruses, with a special focus on influenza. With the identification of the pandemic H1N1 influenza virus in April 2009, Romina led a multi-center study of the impact of the 2009 pandemic on children hospitalized in Buenos Aires, where she characterized the clinical and laboratory manifestations of the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic within three months of its onset and described it in a two first author publications

in the New England Journal of Medicine (R Libster et al NEJM 2009 and R Libster et al NEJM 2010).

Romina was invited by Dr. Kathryn M. Edwards to join the Vanderbilt Vaccine Research Program team at Vanderbilt University in 2009 where, under her mentoring, she led several relevant studies such as a large clinical trial to determine the safety and immunogenicity of sequential rotavirus vaccine schedules and a study to evaluate the long-term outcomes among Group B Streptococcal (GBS) meningitis survivors, in collaboration with the Texas Children's Hospital. Romina also coordinated a network of sites in Argentina evaluating a maternal immunization program for RSV (SA Madhi et al NEJM 2020).

Since COVID-19 pandemic appeared, Dr. Libster together with Fundacion INFANT leadership team is working to identify preventive and therapeutic interventions to fight against the new virus. With Dr. Fernando Polack and Dr. Gonzalo Perez Marc, led a multi-center randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial demonstrating that early administration of high-titer convalescent plasma against SARS-CoV-2 to mildly ill infected older adults reduces the progression of Covid-19 and also conducted a big operation in Argentina evaluating on of the main COVID-19 vaccines currently available (R Libster et al NEJM 2021, FP Polack et al NEJM 2021).

As a demonstration of her deep commitment to science communication and vaccine promotion, Dr. Libster was invited to deliver a TED talk about vaccines and the importance of vaccination to achieve community immunity which was posted on TED.com and has been visited by more than half million people [https://www.ted.com/speakers/romina\\_libster](https://www.ted.com/speakers/romina_libster) . She is also member of the leadership group at the MIT-SOLVE initiative mentoring entrepreneurs to accelerate the development of tech-based solutions for human health challenges such us healthy cities and pandemics <https://solve.mit.edu/>