



# **BLENDED**

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# **INTENSIVE**

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# **PROGRAMME**

## **ELEMENTS AND HEALTH IMPACT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET**



# ELEMENTS — AND HEALTH IMPACT — OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

The Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) will bring together faculty and students from European and third-country universities interested in learning and exploring research collaborations on the health impact of the Mediterranean diet. The topics covered will include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Methodological approaches in Epidemiological Studies on Nutrition and Diet,
- Research Methodology (basic epidemiology and statistics),
- Statistics in epidemiology and nutrition,
- Statistical modelling in Nutrition (theory and practice),
- Causality in Scientific Research,
- Culture, Diet and Society,
- Foundations of the Mediterranean Diet: Historical Context (Traditional origins),
- Mediterranean Diet in the Middle Eastern context,
- The Elements and Pyramid of the Mediterranean Diet (types and categories),
- Key Nutritional Elements of Mediterranean Diet,
- Olives, Olive Oil, Carobs (syrup), Fruits and Vegetables, Nuts, Dairy Products and more,
- Mediterranean diet's bioactive compounds on developing novel foods,
- The traditional functional foods of the Mediterranean diet and their health benefits,
- Mediterranean diet and childhood obesity,
- Exploring the Health Benefits of the Mediterranean Diet in association with Cardiovascular and Metabolic diseases, and Cognitive Outcomes,
- Mediterranean Diet and Cancer prevention,
- Mediterranean Diet and Occupational health,
- Mediterranean Diet, lifestyle and mental health.
- Mediterranean Diet, Longevity and Healthy Aging.

# AIM

The Blended Intensive Programme is expected to provide ample opportunities for faculty and students to advance their knowledge and experience in the field of Mediterranean diet in general with particular focus on the elements of Mediterranean diet. In addition, participants will be exposed to scientific literature documenting several health impacts of the Mediterranean diet. Both faculty and students are expected to cultivate needed skills on how to design and implement epidemiological studies focusing on the Mediterranean diet and explore opportunities to prepare research articles and associated grant proposals for funding.

# LEARNING OUTCOMES

## The main learning outcomes of this Programme include the following:

- Understand and recognize the elements of the Mediterranean diet,
- Describe the most important health impacts of the Mediterranean diet documented in international scientific literature including its contribution to the prevention of obesity and chronic diseases and the improvement of quality of life,
- Explore the possibilities and opportunities of promoting the Mediterranean diet in non-Mediterranean countries,
- Identify the pathways of using the Mediterranean diet in an environmentally sustainable way,
- Cultivate skills of presenting the Mediterranean diet to patients and motivate them for dietary change,
- Gain knowledge and skills on the design and implementation of epidemiological studies in nutrition.
- Understand the scientific data about the health benefits of the traditional functional foods of the Mediterranean diet and their synergistic effect,
- Investigate the Mediterranean diet's elements to develop novel foods, drugs etc.

# CONSORTIUM



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CYPRUS  
www.ouc.ac.cy

**Open University of Cyprus**

COORDINATOR

Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου

OUC (Cyprus)



UNIVERSITY OF THE  
AEGEAN

**University of the Aegean**

Πανεπιστήμιο Αιγαίου

UA (Greece)



INTERNATIONAL  
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**Διεθνές Πανεπιστήμιο Ελλάδος**

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ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ  
UNIVERSITY OF CRETE

**Πανεπιστήμιο Κρήτης**

University of Crete

UC (Greece)



UAEU

**United Arab Emirates University**

UAEU (United Arab Emirates)

## STUDENTS' PROFILE / TARGET AUDIENCE

Undergraduate students from different disciplines (medicine, nursing, food science and nutrition, public health and others interested),

Postgraduate students of any medical, nursing, food science and nutrition programme,

Doctoral students from partner universities.

## EXPECTED NUMBER OF STUDENTS

15-25

## TEACHING LANGUAGE

English

## ECTS

Three (3)

## LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT METHODS

Students will participate in lectures delivered by international academics and researchers, as well as engage in workshops and collaborative group activities during the five days of physical mobility. Prior to this, they will complete online courses and have access to virtual educational materials as part of the programme's virtual component.

At the conclusion of the Blended Intensive Programme (BIP), students will complete a written assessment to evaluate the knowledge acquired throughout the course. Upon successfully passing the assessment, they will be awarded a Certificate of BIP Completion along with the corresponding 3 ECTS credits.

## ASSESSMENT METHODS

Course Participation _____	10%
Individual Assignment _____	30%
Group Project _____	20%
Final Exam _____	40%



# TEACHING STAFF

**Maria Hassapidou.**

Professor  
International Hellenic University, Greece

**Daniela Bonofiglio,**

Professor,  
University of Calabria, Italy

**Carine Platat,**

Associate Professor,  
United Arab Emirates University, UAE

**Ioanna Tsiligianni,**

Associate Professor,  
University of Crete, Greece

**Elpidoforos S. Soteriades,**

Associate Professor,  
Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus

**Antonios Koutelidakis,**

Associate Professor,  
University of the Aegean, Greece

**Anna Hornakova,**

Associate Professor,  
Charles University, Czech Republic

**Alexandra Pankova,**

Associate Professor,  
Charles University, Czech Republic

**Iffat Elbarazi,**

Assistant Professor,  
United Arab Emirates University, UAE

**Nadirah Ghenimi,**

Assistant Professor,  
United Arab Emirates University, UAE

## DURATION

The BIP will be offered in English and last for four (4) weeks.

The virtual component (duration of 3 weeks) will be offered online on the educational platform of the Open University of Cyprus in April 2025, followed by the BIP physical mobility part that will take place in Cyprus between 5th – 9th of May 2025 (5 working days).

## LOCATION

Open University of Cyprus  
33 Yiannou Kranidioti Avenue, 2220 Latsia, Nicosia

### GOOGLE MAPS

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/Ug9gnF3iQWFsHCaL7>

## ERASMUS+ FUNDING

Participants need to be nominated by their universities and secure **Erasmus+ BIP funding from their University** for short-term Student Mobility for Studies (SMS). OUC does not provide additional Erasmus+ funding.

The Erasmus+ Programme provides funding for physical mobility only.

### The financial contribution consists of:

Mobility grant of **70-79 EUR (€)** per day up to the 14th day of activity  
(calculated based on the actual days spent at the Open University of Cyprus, i.e. 5 working days)

Students are granted two additional days for travelling.  
No further supplements or refunds for travel costs are provided.

### APPLICATION FORM

<https://forms.office.com/e/WcFqH6zKts>





## ACCOMMODATION

While students are welcome to explore alternative accommodation options (other hotels, hotel apartments, Airbnb etc.) we strongly recommend staying in Nicosia's city centre (around Eleftheria Square), as the Open University of Cyprus plans to arrange bus transportation from Solomou Square (Central Bus Station) to the OUC. Hence, booking accommodation in this area will ensure convenient access.

Please avoid booking accommodation in the occupied areas of Nicosia. In you are unsure about the location, please check with the OUC Mobility Office before finalizing your booking.

<b>1. The Sendal Boutique Hotel</b>  thesendal.com	<b>Rates:</b> Single Room: €113/night Standard Double Room: €124/night Superior Double Room: €134/night
<b>2. Castelli Hotel</b>  castellihotel.com	<b>Rates:</b> Single Superior Room: €74/night Double/Twin Superior Room: €84/night Triple Superior Room: €94/night
<b>3. Centrum Hotel</b>  centrumhotelcyprus.com	<b>Rates:</b> Single Room: €94/night Double Room: €99/night Triple Room: €123/night Fourfold Room: €143/night
<b>4. Gate 22 Hotel</b>  gate22hotel.com	<b>Rates:</b> €125 per single room per night
<b>5. Classic Hotel</b>  classic.com.cy	<b>Rates:</b> Superior Single: €135/night Superior Double: €145/night

## CONTACT US

Open University of Cyprus, Mobility Office, Ms Erato Ioanna Sarri

✉ erasmus@ouc.ac.cy / sarri@ouc.ac.cy ☎ +357 22 411 659

## SUPPORTERS





# BIP VIRTUAL COMPONENT

Meetings will take place virtually on the educational platform of the Open University of Cyprus (link will be shared with participants)

## First Week

Monday April 7th, 2025

Web-based Meeting between 18:00 – 21:00 EEST

### Introduction to Health and Public Health.

Elpidoforos S. Soteriades MD, SM, ScD  
Open University of Cyprus

Thursday April 10th, 2025

Web-based Meeting between 18:00 – 21:00 EEST

### Epidemiology, Statistical Modelling and Meta-analyses in Nutrition.

Anna Hornakova, PhD  
Charles University

## Second Week

Monday April 14th, 2025

Web-based Meeting between 18:00 – 21:00 EEST

### Program overview and students' projects.

Elpidoforos S. Soteriades MD, SM, ScD  
Open University of Cyprus

Thursday April 17th, 2025

Web-based Meeting between 18:00 – 21:00 EEST

### Introduction to the Mediterranean Diet.

Maria Hassapidou, PhD  
International Hellenic University

## Third Week

Tuesday April 29th 2025

Web-based Meeting between 15:00 – 18:00 EEST

### Nutritional Interventions – Clinical Trials: Practical Issues for Bioactivity Assessment of Functional Foods.

Antonios Koutelidakis, PhD  
University of the Aegean

Wednesday April 30th, 2025

Web-based Meeting between 18:00 – 21:00 EEST

### Mediterranean diet and cardiovascular diseases. Mediterranean diet and smoking and their impact on microbiome.

Alexandra Pankova, MD, PhD  
Charles University

# PROGRAMME

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## 5-9 MAY 2025

08




## BIP PHYSICAL MOBILITY COMPONENT IN CYPRUS

### Day 1: May 5th, 2025

09:00 – 10:00	Principles of Health Promotion	Dr. Iffat Elbarazi
10:00 – 11:00	The burden of chronic diseases in the Mediterranean Basin	
11:00 – 11:15	Break	
11:15 – 12:15	The origins and historical context of the Mediterranean diet	Dr. Iffat Elbarazi
12:15 – 13:15	The Mediterranean diet and chronic disease prevention	
13:15 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:00 15:00 – 16:00	Traditional functional foods of the Mediterranean diet: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention	Dr. Antonios Koutelidakis
16:00 – 16:15	Break	
16:15 – 17:15	Mediterranean Diet and the COSI Program on Childhood Obesity	Eliza Markidou

### Day 2: May 6th, 2025 FIELD TRIP

Visit to different Villages and Museums:  
Carob Museum, Olive Oil Park, Grape Yard





09:00 – 10:00	Mediterranean diet and culture	Dr. Iffat Elbarazi
10:00 – 11:00	Mediterranean diet and sustainable development	
11:00 – 11:15	Break	
11:15 – 12:15	Mediterranean diet in the United Arab Emirates and the Middle East	Dr. Iffat Elbarazi
12:15 – 13:15	Robust study designs on Mediterranean diet Health Outcomes	
13:15 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:00 15:00 – 16:00	Development of novel functional foods by using Mediterranean raw materials	Dr. Antonios Koutelidakis
16:00 – 16:15	Break	
16:15 – 17:15	Grapes, Grape Juice and Health	Dr. Maria Hassapidou

## BIP PHYSICAL MOBILITY COMPONENT IN CYPRUS

### Day 3: May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025



09:00 – 10:00	Mediterranean diet and quality of life	Dr. Ioanna Tsiligianni
10:00 – 11:00	Mediterranean diet and management of chronic diseases	
11:00 – 11:15	Break	
11:15 – 12:15	Olive Oil: All you need to know	Dr. Maria Hassapidou
12:15 – 13:15	Carobs, Carob Syrup and Health	
13:15 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:00	Mediterranean diet and obesity	Dr. Daniela Bonofiglio
15:00 – 16:00	Mediterranean diet and cancer	
16:00 – 16:15	Break	
16:15 – 17:15	Barriers of Mediterranean diet implementation in non-Mediterranean countries	Dr. Anna Hornakova

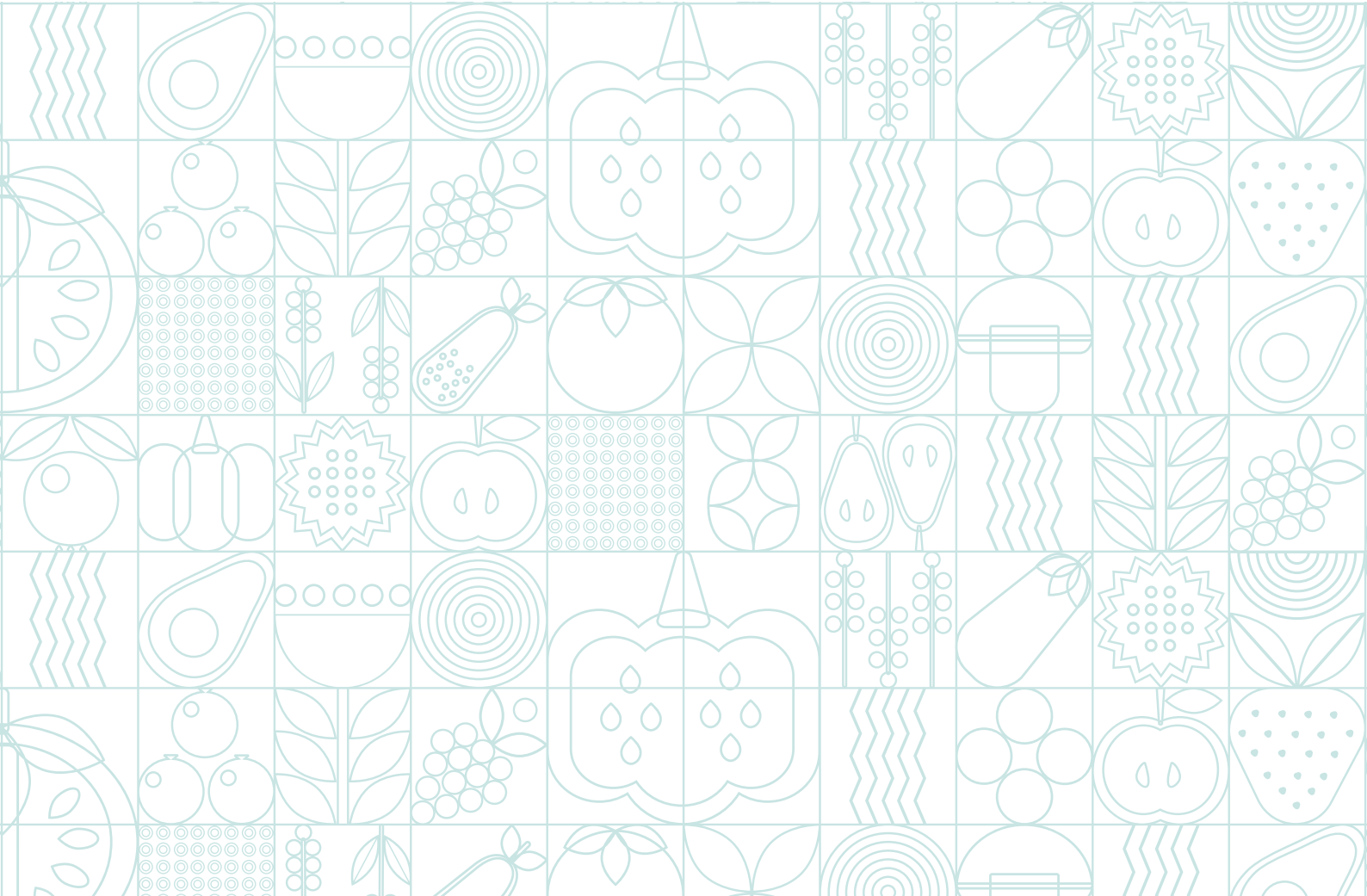
### Day 4: May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025

09:00 – 10:00	Individual and lifestyle factors influence and adherence to Mediterranean diet. How to proceed?	Dr. Ioanna Tsiligianni
10:00 – 11:00	Greek Orthodox fasting, Mediterranean diet and health benefits	
11:00 – 11:15	Break	
11:15 – 12:15	Mediterranean diet and adolescent health	Dr. Daniela Bonofiglio
12:15 – 13:15	Mediterranean diet: Bibliometric Assessment	Dr. Elpidoforos S. Soteriades
13:15 – 14:00	Lunch – Traditional Mediterranean Menu	
14:00 – 15:00	Statistical models for research in Nutrition	Dr. Anna Hornakova
15:00 – 16:00	Mediterranean diet and the environment	Dr. Maria Hassapidou
16:00 – 16:15	Break	
16:15 – 17:15	Mediterranean food sustainability (web-based)	Dr. Carine Platat
19:30	Official Dinner	

BIP PHYSICAL MOBILITY COMPONENT  
IN CYPRUS

Day 5: May 9th, 2025

09:00 – 10:00 10:00 – 11:00	A culinary workshop: from farm to plate – hands-on experience	Dr. Nadirah Ghenimi
11:00 – 11:15	Break	
11:15 – 12:15	Students' Presentations	Dr. Maria Hassapidou
12:15 – 13:15	Students' Presentations	Dr. Daniela Bonofiglio
13:15 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:00	Students' Presentations	Dr. Anna Hornakova
15:00 – 16:00	Students' Presentations	
16:00 – 16:15	Break	
16:15 – 17:15	Final Exam	All Instructors
17:30	Programme Conclusion	



# SHORT BIO

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## OF INVITED LECTURERS / INSTRUCTORS

## SHORT BIO OF INVITED LECTURERS / INSTRUCTORS

**Maria Hassapidou**✉ [mnhass@gmail.com](mailto:mnhass@gmail.com)

Dr Maria Hassapidou is a professor in the department of Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics at the International Hellenic University. She is also the Head of the post-graduate course on Nutrition and Dietetics and Head of the Human Nutrition research group. She has coordinated and/or participated in many research projects funded by the EU (Health, Diets I and II, Healthgrain, EURRECA, JANPA, PROTEIN, BigO), the Greek Ministries of Health, Education, Research and Technology as well as food and pharmaceutical companies, in the areas of dietary assessment and nutritional evaluation, dietary treatment of obese patients with cardiometabolic diseases and childhood obesity. She is the national coordinator in Greece for the COSI program (WHO European Childhood Surveillance Initiative), chair of NWG (Nutrition Working Group) of EASO, member of the EASO Childhood Obesity Task Force and chair of the European Specialized Dietetic Network (ESDN) of EFAD on Obesity. She is also a member of the Hellenic Nutrition Policy Committee of the Greek Ministry of Health. She has authored several books and has published more than 150 scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals in the areas of nutrition and obesity. She is also a member of the editorial boards and reviewer in many related European and International journals.

**Daniela Bonofiglio**✉ [daniela.bonofiglio@unical.it](mailto:daniela.bonofiglio@unical.it)

Dr Daniela Bonofiglio, an endocrinologist, is currently a Full Professor of Biotechnology and Methods in the Laboratory Medicine at the Department of Pharmacy, Health and Nutritional Sciences, University of Calabria, Italy. Her scientific interests are devoted to dissecting the molecular mechanisms involved in the initiation and progression of endocrine-related cancers with the main goal of identifying novel markers and potential therapeutic targets for these diseases. Her achievements contributed to advancing scientific knowledge on Peroxisome Proliferator-Activated Receptor gamma (PPAR $\gamma$ ) biology, focusing on the inhibiting role of natural and synthetic ligands of PPAR $\gamma$  in cancer growth and progression. In the context of natural products field, her research activity has been focused on the beneficial role of different food compounds on human health and, particularly, on the nutraceuticals from the Mediterranean Diet involved in cancer growth and progression. In addition, in the last two decades she is investigating the iodine status of young and adult population living in sufficient and deficient iodine areas and the impact of the adherence to the Mediterranean diet and physical activity on biochemical and inflammatory parameters among adolescents and adults in from Southern Italy.



## SHORT BIO OF INVITED LECTURERS / INSTRUCTORS

**Carine Platat**✉ [platatcarine@uaeu.ac.ae](mailto:platatcarine@uaeu.ac.ae)

Dr. Carine Platat has graduated from the prestigious National Institute of Agronomy in Paris, France and became specialized in human nutrition and physiology. She completed her PhD in 2005 in the field of nutrition, investigating the metabolic syndrome and its relationship with diet, physical activity and inflammation. She has been working as an assistant, then associate and currently as a full professor at United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) since 2008. She has been involved in different research projects related to physical activity, lipid metabolism and nutrition-related diseases, especially diabetes and obesity. She is conducting research related to polyphenols, oxidative stress and nutrition-related diseases including diabetes and cancer. She is also focusing her research on oxidative stress, inflammation, anti-cancer properties and the investigation of potential functional ingredients. Dr Carine Platat is teaching a variety of courses in the Nutrition and Health department at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences, UAEU, including Nutrition, Medical Nutrition Therapy and Sports Nutrition. Dr Carine Platat is coordinating the Nutritional Science Program.

**Ioanna Tsiligianni**✉ [i.tsiligianni@uoc.gr](mailto:i.tsiligianni@uoc.gr)

Dr Ioanna Tsiligianni is an associate professor in General Practice and Public Health, at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Crete and Director of the Health Planning Unit. She is a general practitioner who holds a Master of Public Health and Healthcare Management degree, as well as two PhDs, one on interstitial lung diseases from the University of Crete, Greece and a second on health status and COPD from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. She has chaired two IPCRG world conferences, the last in 2024 and served as the president of IPCRG 2018-2020. She is an active member of EURIPA, International Institute of Compassionate Care, WONCA Working Party on Rural Health, WONCA Working Party on Mental Disorders, GRIAC, ELEGEIA, EGPRN, Hellenic Oncology Research Group. She has been the Editor in Chief in NPJ PCRM (Nature partner journals Primary Care Respiratory Medicine) since 2019. Dr Tsiligianni has more than 160 3 publications in international journals and has received 15 awards for her work at the national and international level.

## SHORT BIO OF INVITED LECTURERS / INSTRUCTORS

**Elpidoforos S. Soteriades** elpidoforos.soteriades@ouc.ac.cy

Dr. Soteriades grew up in Larnaca, Cyprus and graduated from the University of Athens, School of Medicine. He holds a Master degree in Epidemiology and a doctoral degree in Environmental Health with concentration in Occupational Health from the Harvard School of Public Health. He has a medical specialization in Preventive Medicine and a sub-specialty in Occupational and Environmental Medicine. His doctoral thesis was focused on the health of firefighters. Dr Soteriades conducts extensive research in the fields of public health with a special focus on firefighters' health, cardiovascular diseases, obesity, occupational stress, tobacco control and infectious diseases. Dr. Soteriades has published more than 110 articles in peer-reviewed international scientific journals and his work is highly cited internationally. He is currently an Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at the Healthcare Management Program of the Open University of Cyprus.

**Antonios Koutelidakis** akoutel@yahoo.gr

Dr Koutelidakis earned his bachelor's degree from the Department of Food Science and Technology of the Agricultural University of Athens. He also completed a master's and a PhD degree in Human Nutrition from the same department. He has participated in several Greek and international research programs and has published more than 40 scientific articles in international journals, while he has presented his research work in more than 50 Greek & international conferences. His scientific interests are focused on functional foods and their health effects. He is currently an associate professor in Human Nutrition, at the department of Food, Science and Nutrition at the University of the Aegean in Greece.

## SHORT BIO OF INVITED LECTURERS / INSTRUCTORS

**Anna Hornakova** [anna.hornakova@lf1.cuni.cz](mailto:anna.hornakova@lf1.cuni.cz)

Dr Anna Hornakova is the Head of the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology at the First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, and the General University Hospital in Prague, as well as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Biomedical Engineering, Czech Technical University in Prague. Her research and teaching focuses on epidemiology, public health, and medical statistics, with expertise in 4 statistical modeling, data analysis, and evidence-based medicine. She is particularly interested in the application of digital tools in medical education and interdisciplinary approaches to health data science. She has been involved in international collaborations and research projects in the fields of public health, environmental epidemiology, and medical statistics. Her work includes studies on the impact of environmental factors on health, risk assessment of air pollution and climate change, and the application of statistical methods in clinical and epidemiological research. She has also contributed to projects focusing on the development of modern educational tools and e-learning strategies for medical students.

**Alexandra Pankova** [Alexandra.Pankova@lf1.cuni.cz](mailto:Alexandra.Pankova@lf1.cuni.cz)

Dr Pankova is an endocrinologist and an associate professor at the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, 1st Faculty of Medicine, Charles University and the General University Hospital in Prague, Czech Republic. She is also a certified tobacco treatment specialist and a committee member of the Society for Treatment of Tobacco Dependence. She completed a doctoral degree in Preventive Medicine and also holds a specialization in general internal medicine. Her research is focused on tobacco control, nicotine dependence and associated public health problems. She has been involved in many international collaborations and participated in research projects on smoking cessation and other cardiometabolic disorders in relation to tobacco. She has published more than 50 scientific articles in international journals and her research work is highly cited internationally.

## SHORT BIO OF INVITED LECTURERS / INSTRUCTORS

**Iffat Elbarazi**

✉ ielbarazi@uaeu.ac.ae

Dr Elbarazi is an accomplished Public Health professional and academic with extensive experience in health promotion, research, and education. Specializing in women's health, mental health, and chronic disease prevention, with a significant impact on community health and wellbeing through innovative research, teaching, and service delivery. Recognized in Stanford University and Elsevier top 2% cited Scientist for 2021-2023, with a strong publication record and a proven track record in curriculum development, student mentorship, and health policy consultancy.

**Nadirah Ghenimi**

✉ nghenimi@uaeu.ac.ae

Dr. Nadirah Ghenimi is an Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Chair of the Department at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences, United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and a Consultant Physician in Bariatric Family Medicine at Tawam Hospital, Al Ain. She earned her PhD in Nutrition from the University of Bordeaux, France, in 2009, focusing on the role of vitamin A and retinoids in Alzheimer's disease. After completing her medical studies and Family Medicine residency in 2018, she obtained a DESC in Clinical Nutrition in 2020, exploring perinatal risk factors for childhood obesity. She recently achieved a Master's in Artificial Intelligence for Public Health from Marseille, France. Dr. Nadirah has over a decade of experience in Family Medicine, with expertise in obesity and diabetes management. Her research interests include women and child health, obesity, AI in healthcare, and narrative-based medicine. She is the Principal 5 Investigator of the MAFLD cohort study in children and adolescents in the UAE and works on the Mutaba`ah study to develop AI-driven predictive models for maternal and newborn outcomes. Dr. Nadirah is a member of the National Obesity Guidelines Committee under the Ministry of Health and Prevention.