HSR 2024: Shaping an Amazing Program for the Symposium in Nagasaki

The Program Working Committee (PWC) for the 8th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2024) provides an overview of the abstract review and selection process, and next steps in program planning for Nagasaki in November.

Over the past months we have been thrilled to receive an unprecedented number of more than 3,500 abstracts and session proposals for the upcoming Eighth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR 2024) to be held in Nagasaki, Japan 18-22 November. This includes submission of 392 organized session proposals (for ~50 slots); 179 capacity strengthening session proposals (for 25 slots); and 2,978 individual abstracts (for ~250 oral and ~550 poster slots).

Following an incredibly competitive selection process that took place between January and May, the symposium Program Working Committee has now contacted all submitting authors. We were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and quality of the submissions which not only demonstrated how Health Policy and Systems Research (HPSR) as a field is going from strength to strength, but also the growing breadth and depth of multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration within our community. Submissions showcasing multi-country research programs and knowledge-to-policy initiatives were both notable strengths.

In the first stage of selection, our Scientific Review panel worked very hard to ensure each abstract was reviewed and scored. The panel comprised over 250 individuals, from across the HPSR community with research and policy experience, including many members of HSG's ten Thematic Working Groups. Each abstract was reviewed by up to four independent reviewers using the criteria outlined in the call for abstracts, and ensuring a rigorous process of evaluation.

Review criteria for the **Organized** session proposals considered: technical merit or research quality; relevance and significance of the work to the Symposium theme and field-building dimensions; engagement of different audiences (e.g. policy-makers, managers and civil society groups); and how participatory the session was likely to be. Reviewer criteria for the **Capacity Strengthening** session proposals considered: the level or type of Capacity Strengthening (e.g. individual, organisational or network capacity strengthening) and target audience; the clarity of each session's rationale and learning outcomes; the relevance of the session to HPSR specifically; and diversity and expertise of session leads. Scientific review for **Individual abstracts** considered: technical merit and/or research quality; relevance to the Symposium theme; significance to HPSR as a field and field-building dimension.

After scoring, selection was conducted by a Scientific Committee, convened separately for each type of abstract. Average scores from the peer review process were used to inform selection alongside several other factors including: equitable representation of all symposium themes; at least 50% representation of low- and middle income country-led abstracts, and representation of authors and presenters from as many settings as possible.

Table 1 below provides a sense of the task and outcomes achieved by our Scientific Committee. We have 53 organised sessions, 26 capacity strengthening, 275 oral and 550 poster presentations lined by from over 100 countries including more than half from LMICs. As is evident from the table and unsurprising too, our largest number of submissions was in the critical HPSR area of governance and institutional frameworks for health systems. But we are excited to see the HSG community stretching into critical areas such as planetary health, broadening inclusion, and knowledge for just health systems. We look to HSR 2024 to expand our commitment to all these four topics and meet the challenge of recommitting to equity and justice.

We would like to thank all who submitted abstracts for consideration at HSR2024 and again express our gratitude to all members of the Scientific Committee who volunteered their time to support that peer review process. The HSR2024 Program Working Committee is now working to curate the selected abstracts into a comprehensive program showcasing cutting edge health policy and systems research, collaborations and initiatives alongside opportunities to capacity strengthening opportunities and an exciting program of satellite events.

Abstract selection may be finalised, but many other opportunities for active participation and engagement in the HSR 2024 program exist. These include participation in pre-event webinars; discussion groups and business meetings of the HSG thematic working groups; and the HSG regional networks who will each host a networking and agenda-setting meeting during the symposium. These follow-on from a highly successful series of pre-conferences already hosted and ongoing by the Americas, Africa, Asia and Pacific and Europe regional networks with event records and news available here.

We welcome all HSG members and those in the wider HPSR community to register and participate in what is shaping up to be an amazing symposium.

TABLE 1	Sub-Theme 1 – Health System Strengthening for Planetary Health	Sub-Theme 2 – Advancing Inclusion	Sub-Theme 3 – Governance and Institutional Frameworks	Sub-Theme 4 – Knowledge for Just Health Systems
Total Abstract Submissions	531 (15%)	995 (28%)	1506 (42%)	514 (14%)
Total Abstracts Selected	**152 (16%)**	**275 (29%)**	**372 (40%)**	**146 (16%)**
LMIC-led (among selected)	93 (61%)	175 (64%)	241 (65%)	81 (55%)

HSR2024 Program Working Committee
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