

## The Resonance of World Health Days through a Painting Exhibition by Undergraduate Students

Astara K<sup>1\*</sup>, Ragias D<sup>1</sup>, Tsiouvakas N<sup>1</sup>, Vatzia K<sup>1</sup>, Lampropoulos I<sup>2</sup> and Gourgoulianis KI<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Medical Student, Faculty of Medicine, University of Thessaly, Larissa, Greece

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Medicine, University of Thessaly, Greece

<sup>3</sup>Department of Pulmonology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Thessaly, Larissa, Greece

\*Corresponding author: Astara Kyriaki, Faculty of Medicine, University of Thessaly, Larissa, Greece, Tel: +30 6944055129; E-mail: kyriakiastara@gmail.com

Receive date: December 18, 2018; Accepted date: January 23, 2019; Published date: January 25, 2019

Copyright: ©2019 Astara K, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

### Abstract

In the context of the celebration of the World Health Days, a painting event was created under the auspices of the University Hospital of Larissa. For the event, artworks were gathered from undergraduate students of all around Greece, dedicated to a World Health Day of their choice. The works were collected and demonstrated at the Cultural Center of the University Hospital of Larissa.

Undergraduate students designed a questionnaire with 12 items to capture the impact of both the event and global days in general. During the event, they were distributed to the attendees, while an electronic form was created and notified on web platforms with photographs of the artworks for wider dissemination of the event.

Four months later, a total of 209 questionnaires were collected in both formats, and the results were analyzed. The 57.42% were women whereas 42.58% male respondents. The age range was 12-71 years in which the majority was represented by young students and in particular medical ones. The global blood donor day appears to have influenced the most, since approximately 30 out of 209 voted it in most questions. Among medical students, the most preferred day was about children's rights, with one out of 21 voting it. Finally, 8 out of 10 responded positively to the existence and purpose of the institution of the world days and 9 out of 10 to the event.

Consequently, many people seem to have been influenced by the event. Therefore, it was considered of satisfying success.

**Keywords:** World days; Painting exhibition; Public health; Social medicine

### Introduction

Every year, some days can be distinguished from others, as each one of them is connected to a special issue, very often related to public health. That connection was mainly set by major global organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations General Assembly (UN), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) as well as by many governments. These days are the so called "International (or World) Health Days". Many refer to them as "International Awareness Days" or "International Observance". All the above alternatives reflect the causes that they serve; to reduce mortality of various diseases [1] and to raise awareness for crucial health matters that appear with great functionality in the population [2,3].

International Days consist of a diverse celebration institution in honor of human efforts and accomplishments and a lasting reminder of the issues that are still pending. Particularly, global days devoted to health are of significant importance and interest among the general population, resulting in organizing an on growing number of events concerning awareness raising and citizens' information.

Inspired by the context of this idea, students attending the optional undergraduate course "Medical Communication" of the Larissa Medical School of Thessaly University, a nationwide painting contest was held about World Health Days. Students of Greece were asked to create a painting designed by them on a World Health Day of their choice. The contestants were obliged to subjectively engage in the creation of their work, regardless of the structure or the theme.

A total of 20 different artworks had been gathered, mostly drawings on paper or canvas, as well as a collage, a drawing on cardboard and a sculpture. The themes that were chosen and demonstrated concerned the World Blood Donor Day, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, children's rights, mental health, the International Day against Blindness, the experiments on animals, National Nurse Day, World Diet Day, International Heart Day, World Health Day, International Organ Donation and Transplantation Day, autism, National Midwife Day, against clitoridectomy, Fertility Day, Safety Day and Health at Work Day. The medicine students who attended the course collected the paintings mentions above. They compiled brief informative texts accompanying the works at the event. This exhibition was hosted by the Cultural Center of the University General Hospital of Larissa for four months.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the interest of the attendees regarding the event as well as on the international days in general.

## Materials and Methods

The study was conducted at the Medical School of Larissa, University of Thessaly and the University General Hospital of Larissa. Undergraduate second and third year students conducted the research, while whoever desired to watch the event was invited in the research.

To evaluate the exhibition and the way participants view World Health Days, questionnaires were designed in both print and electronic format. It consisted of 12 items concerning demographic factors with an emphasis on the University for whoever was a student, the exhibits, the world health days and the event.

The printed version was distributed to those attending the event, while the digital one was disseminated on social networking platforms for the same period, accompanied by an informative text on the purpose of the event, the structure and the necessity of the questionnaire response, and photographs of the corresponding exhibits. The participants were asked to vote which of the paintings was most preferable and which was the most moving, as well as which of the established days is the most moving. Additionally, they answered close-ended questions about whether they agree or not with the existence of the institution, especially on health issues, and for what reason. Furthermore, they were asked whether they consider necessary the existence of world-wide days and whether they contribute to the preservation of human rights. The last question was related to the evaluation of the event itself and whether it was satisfactory or not.

## Results

In total, 209 questionnaires were collected with 120 being electronic and 89 printed. The digital ones were measured by the electronic form in which participants connected to respond, automatically and the printed ones by hand. Each participant was allowed to complement only one questionnaire. All the data was transferred on a Microsoft Excel file for further analysis. The total sum, 209 questionnaires, is the sample size (response rate: 58.2%).

Among them, 57.42% were women and 42.58% men. An age distribution was made based on the gender with the results being demonstrated in Table 1.

Age	Male	Female	Total
5 to 24	45	65	110
25 to 44	25	26	51
45 to 64	16	29	45
65 and above	3	0	3
Total	89	120	209

**Table 1:** Age distribution based on genders.

Regarding the educational level of the respondents, in primary education was the 3% of people, in secondary the 15%, in higher the 69%, in postgraduate studies the 10% and in doctoral studies the 3%. Out of all undergraduate students, 64% corresponded to students in Medical Schools.

As far as the exhibits are concerned, the most preferable was the sculpture of the World Blood Donor Day with a total of 28/209 votes, with male to female ratio being 1:2. Subsequently, came the works dedicated to the world diet day with a total of 16/209 votes and the work devoted to the world day against blindness with a total of 14/209 votes.

Out of the exhibits that were found as the most emotional, most votes (22/209), from both genders, collected the one devoted to the World Day of Organ Donation and Transplantation. The exhibits that followed were about the international day against clitoridectomies-principally raised by women to this position and the world autism day with a total of 20/209 votes each.

Concerning global days, distribution was based on gender and college. In Table 2, the results are shown for men and women. Students of Faculty of Medicine had a tendency on children's rights with 1 out of 21 voting it.

World Day	Male	Female	Total
Blood donation	12	17	29
Children's rights	7	13	20
Against experiments on animals	6	9	15
Mental health	4	10	14
AIDS	7	5	12
Autism	6	4	10
Against cancer	7	3	10
Health	3	7	10
Organ donation and transplantation	1	8	9
Blindness	4	4	8
Heart	5	2	7
Against child cancer	5	2	7
None	5	2	7
Against clitoridectomy	0	5	5
Woman	1	3	4
Against breast cancer	1	2	3
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	1	1	2
Alzheimer disease	0	1	1

**Table 2:** Global days that moved the participants in general.

The existence of World Days was evaluated as important by the 88.52%. The distribution was based on the educational level, as demonstrated in Table 3.

Do you agree with the institution of World Health Days?	Primary Education	Secondary Education	College/ University	Postgraduate Studies	Doctoral Studies	Total
Yes	4	24	132	20	5	185
No	1	9	12	1	1	24
Total	80.00%	72.73%	91.67%	95.24%	83.33%	88.52%
Do you consider necessary the existence of World Days in our days?						
Yes	4	19	129	21	5	178
No	1	14	15	0	1	31
Total	80.00%	57.58%	89.58%	100.00%	83.33%	85.17%
Do you believe that World Days contribute to the protection of human rights?						
Yes	4	15	120	19	5	163
No	1	18	24	2	1	46
Total	80.00%	45.45%	83.33%	90.48%	83.33%	77.99%

**Table 3:** Distribution upon educational level, concerning the three close-ended questions about the institution of world days.

It is essential to note that 28% of secondary school graduates answered negatively. Those who did not agree justified their answers by claiming that *"every day is a global day"*, *"the institution is inefficient"* and *"commercialization"*. In the following questions, high school graduates again recorded the highest negative response rate 42.42% and 54.55% respectively.

The event itself was rated as extremely satisfying by the 92.34%. It is noted that the remaining 16 negative votes stem exclusively from women.

## Discussion

The study was conducted to assess the institution of World Health Days through the original event organized by the Medical School of Larissa, of University of Thessaly. Our results showed that World Health Days have grown into the mindset of people, as indicated by the satisfactory response rate. The participation of the thirteen contestants from all over the country, who created and sent more than one a total of twenty artworks to establish the exhibition, was of undeniable importance. Also remarkable is the variety in the structure of the exhibits, since there were paintings on canvases, paper, cardboard, collage as well as a sculpture. This variety may have posed an inevitable bias of preference to the participating spectators.

A strong element of the study was the digitization of the exhibition, by creating the electronic form of the questionnaires distributed in the Cultural Center where it was hosted, and its dissemination on the social networking platforms. In this way, the event was expanded, and access was facilitated for participants. Besides, the majority of the questionnaires gathered came from the online form.

Several observations have emerged through the statistical analysis of the results. Regarding the demographic profile of the participants, women composed the majority but in a not-significant percentage, while a broad age distribution of 12 to 71 years was recorded. This is mainly attributed to the online widening of the exhibition. The respondents were chiefly graduates of Higher Education Institutions

and particularly of Medical Schools of Greece. The presence of students at the University Hospital probably justifies the strong presence and the over-representation of healthcare workers in the research. However, some respondents reported to be studying abroad. The presence of the event on the web allowed this variety of the participants.

According to the votes of the participants, the representative of World Blood Donor Day was strongly preferable in most of the questions. The result might have been determined by the unique structure of one of the artworks representing the day, as it was a sculpture. The international day of organ donation and transplantation was voted as the most touching day, without being low in other preference questions. It became obvious that women and the World Day against clitoridectomy are strongly related, despite the fact that female genital mutilation concerns mostly African and Eastern Asian populations [4]. All these days are highly publicized by the media, implying greater awareness and information by the public [5]. Medical students' votes showed that the most emotional day was the world day for children's rights for them. This option shows the interest of youth represented mainly by medical students in children's development [6].

However, the works were only 20, leading to the omission of many days that could greatly be present in the exhibition. This was also evident from the variety of views recorded in the question about the global day that was considered as the most touching in general, regardless of the report. Although there was a tendency to vote days displayed at the event, remarkable ideas were proposed, such as World AIDS Day, against Cancer Day and Down Syndrome Day, which could be a source of inspiration for a next and richer event. On the other hand, some specific global days did not manage to collect notable percentages in any of the questions. A distinctive instance composes the world chronic obstructive pulmonary disease day, which although it was represented by two paintings, reached the least positions. This observation probably demonstrates the citizens' incomplete sensitivity towards a crucial and popular health problem, which often leads to hospitalization [7].

Nevertheless, there were various limitations that should be taken into account. The event was organized and held in a small rural region of the country and not in some of the big and urban ones. Hence, the population approached, and the number of printed questionnaires were restricted. Furthermore, the spread of the exhibition, despite the significant advantage of the electronic form, was mainly implemented by the members of the group, who are mainly medical students with limited radiation on the web- compared to the governments' agencies. This led to the spread of the event among their coeval colleagues. It is, also, vital to highlight the place where the exhibition was hosted. The Cultural Center is located on the third floor of the University General Hospital of Larissa, with the result that only the visitors and the employees of the specific hospital could see the exhibition. All the above limitations resulted in creating an opportunistic sample. Only the visitors could represent the general population, but their percentage is relatively low. Therefore, an ideal random sampling could not be achieved. A municipal area, in the center of the city and not in a hospital outside of it, which more citizens could visit, would contribute to the further dissemination of the event among the general population.

Regarding the assessment of the institution, the participants responded vastly positively to the existence of the world's days, to its necessity and to the successful preservation of human rights. After distributing the participants according to their educational level, it was observed that the secondary school graduates showed the most negative attitude in all three questions. In fact, in the last question-focusing on the ability of international days to preserve human rights-the negative answers outweighed the positive in this group. It is possible the lower educational level to signify a deficient awareness of the value and purpose of the institution of the world days. Despite their tendency having been evident, only conjectures can be suggested.

Overall, the impressions left by the exhibition itself were extremely satisfactory. The influence of the global days was resonant through this particular painting event. The success of this original event is likely to follow up on the next, with more variety and popularity.

## Conclusion

Citizens seem to be highly influenced by the institution of World Health Days. Despite the exhibition's limitations, attendance was

satisfactory probably due to the distribution of the questionnaire in both forms. World Blood Donor Day was distinguished not only as a day, but also through the artwork represented. Although the institution was positively rated by the respondents, a significant proportion of those who mostly belong to the secondary education level group, showed a negative attitude that even reached the majority in one of the questions. However, for the particular event, pleasure was shared by the overwhelming majority of participants.

## Acknowledgement

We would like to express our deep gratitude to our research supervisors, for their guidance and support on this research work, as well as, Ms. Maria Ischnopoulou, Ms. Eleni Drakou, Ms. Lydia Kitsikidou, Mr. Karakasidis Efstathios and Mr. Christos Michalakis for their contribution to this project. Finally, we would like to thank the Management sector's staff and especially the Chief Executive of the University Hospital of Larissa, Mr. Panagiotis Nanos and the manager of the library of the University Hospital of Larissa, Mrs. Sofia Karagiannidi, for their help in the organization of the exhibition.

## References

1. Murphy A, Faria-Neto JR, Al-Rasadi K, Blom D, Catapano A, et al. (2017) World heart federation cholesterol roadmap. *Glob Heart* 12: 179-197.
2. World Health Organization (2010) Towards 100% voluntary blood donation: A global framework for action. WHO Press: 2-4.
3. Fitzpatrick JJ (2017) World mental health day. *Arch Psychiatr Nurs* 31: 531.
4. World Health Organization (2010) Global strategy to stop health-care providers from performing female genital mutilation UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNIFEM, WHO, FIGO, ICN, IOM, WCPT, WMA, MWIA. WHO Press 10.9: 3
5. Guillermo G, Paul H, Jeremy C (2012) World kidney day 2012: The global role of kidney transplantation. *Am J Kidney Dis* 59: 319-324.
6. Bundy DAP, Silva N, Horton S, Jamison DT, Patton GC (2017) Child and adolescent health and development, (3rd edn.), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/the World Bank, Washington, USA.
7. Halpin DM, Miravittles M, Metzdorf N, Celli B (2017) Impact and prevention of severe exacerbations of COPD: A review of the evidence. *Int J Chron Obstruct Pulmon Dis* 12: 2891-2908.