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| **Should religion be considered a social determinant of health? The case for Islam and health promotion** |
| **Conference sub-theme addressed**Ensure health equity throughout the life course, within and among countries, making each member of the global society an empowered lifelong learner**Relevant experience or practice**The speaker is a British Muslim medical doctor in global health, based between London, United Kingdom and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She is a freelance writer and consultant. She is interested in the interface between public health, religion, and culture. She has consulted for the WHO, UNDP and written for the Independent, Lancet and Bulletin of the WHO. She qualified in medicine from Queen Mary University of London with an intercalated degree in community health sciences and undertook her Master's in Public Health from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She completed her PhD in 2016 at United Nations University - Institute for Global Health, in collaboration with the National University of Malaysia, where her doctoral research explored the role of Islam in shaping HIV prevention in Malaysia. She has written a book published by Springer called ‘Islam and Health Policies related to HIV Prevention in Malaysia’. **Implications for health promotion**Drawing on a rich and diverse experience from England, Malaysia, the Muslim world and beyond the speaker shows how religion can influence a myriad of public health issues spanning HIV prevention to mental health, positively and negatively. Islamic religious leaders can utilise their position in communities for health promotion. **Implications for sustainable development**Religion can act as a social determinant of health and can potentially be leveraged to address public health challenges globally. Furthermore, viewing sustainable development through the lens of spirituality, religious thought and practice can have implications for sustainable development by incorporating Islamic religious leaders in action to improve health, education and the environment by utilising assets that religious groups have available such as, mosques, trust and networks. |