



AUF

The American
University of Florence**The American University of Florence and Fairfield University**

are pleased to announce an International Conference taking place in Florence, Italy on

Thursday, January 14 and Friday, January 15, 2027

SYMBIOSIS IN HEALTH**Global Perspectives on Nutrition, Wellness, and Social Inclusion**

In an era marked by accelerating global health challenges and deepening social disparities, the traditional boundaries of healthcare delivery are being fundamentally reshaped. The American University of Florence and Fairfield University invite researchers, clinicians, and international scholars to a multidisciplinary forum dedicated to examining the vital convergence of social wellbeing, healthcare, and nutrition.

To better capture the complexity of such convergence, we may draw upon the concept of **symbiosis** and return to the etymological roots of the term, derived from the Greek *sym* (“together”) and *bios* (“life”). Traditionally used to describe the deeply intertwined, mutually dependent relationships within biological ecosystems, the concept of symbiosis offers a useful lens through which to understand health. Health cannot exist in isolation; rather, it emerges from a complex ecosystem in which clinical medicine, nutritional equity, and social infrastructure influence one another to survive and flourish. When one element is weakened, the effects propagate through the entire system.

At its core, the conference explores how local and global values, community-driven volunteerism, and historic medical institutions interact with contemporary clinical practices and jurisprudence to shape global health equity. We aim to redefine global health outcomes by treating wellness as an interconnected, living ecosystem. This inquiry encompasses a critical look at distributive justice in food systems, the profound biological and psychological impacts of social connectivity on recovery, and the revitalization of full-fledged holistic care. Uncovering these *symbioses* allows us to transcend clinical intervention, paving the way for sustainable and equitable systems of global wellbeing.

Suggested Thematic Axes & Topics

We invite interdisciplinary contributions from fields including but not limited to medicine, nursing, public health, nutritional sciences, bioethics, sociology, history. Possible topics for presentation include:



- **The Mediterranean Paradigm and Lifetime Nutrition:** Juxtaposing historic regional dietary traditions with modern physical demands, fitness trends, and lifestyle wellness across the life-stage continuum.
- **Bioethics, Law, and Patient Advocacy:** Critical interrogation of how communal, cultural, or religious traditions interact with contemporary legal frameworks and medical ethics to influence healthcare delivery.
- **Distributive Justice and Food Systems:** Examining the political economy of food security, the clinical application of specialized dietary regimens, and navigating systemic disparities in nutritional equity.
- **Integrated Healthcare Models & Clinical Leadership:** The translation of public health theory into active clinical practice, emphasizing the evolving role of healthcare leadership and multidisciplinary frameworks within primary and intensive care environments.
- **Social Connectivity, Addiction, and Patient Outcomes:** Assessing the impact of social isolation, community-centered support systems, and holistic care frameworks in treating drug abuse, addiction, and marginalized populations.
- **The Heritage of Community Care & Volunteerism:** Looking at historical models to understand the enduring impact of lay confraternities and modern global volunteerism on public health.
- **Holistic Care and Social Environments:** Redefining clinical environments through the lens of social inclusion, hospitality, and culturally resonant practices to optimize institutional efficiency and human dignity.

Abstract Submission Guidelines

Interested participants are invited to submit a formal proposal containing:

1. A **one-page abstract** (not exceeding 300 words) outlining the scope, methodology, and relevance of the proposed paper.
2. A **brief curriculum vitae** (CV) highlighting academic and research background.

All materials must be submitted in English to conferences@auf-florence.org no later than **Monday, September 14th, 2026**.

- **Notification of Acceptance:** Friday, October 30, 2026
- **Conference Dates:** January 14-15, 2027

Note: Individual presentations must be conducted in English and should not exceed 20 minutes.

Conference Venue

The American University of Florence

Via Ricasoli 21, 21, Florence, Italy

AUF | The American University of Florence Fondazione di Partecipazione - ETS

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