



Webinar organized by Réseau Environnement Santé

Friday April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021 from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm CET / ZOOM

## Biennale of Cities in Transition

Grenoble – April 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> 2021

<https://www.grenoble.fr/2050-biennale-edition-2021.htm>

### **“COVID-19 is not a pandemic. It is a syndemic.”**

***Beyond the hazard posed by SARS-CoV-2 and its variants, what if this health crisis could be explained by the vulnerability of the infected organisms?***

More than 70% of the emerging infections that have appeared over the last 40 years are zoonotic, i.e., infectious animal diseases transmitted to humans, including Sars-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19.

Biodiversity, which has been massively impacted by human activity, can no longer play a protective role, and the thawing of permafrost associated with climate change could release unknown viruses. Although zoonotic diseases appear to be linked to biodiversity, the conditions for their development result from the globalisation of trade and the weakening of populations caused by chronic diseases.

The Covid-19 pandemic revealed the particular vulnerability of those suffering from underlying diseases: cancer, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, neurodegenerative diseases, etc. The epidemic of chronic diseases is mainly linked to the invisible pollution that we ourselves have created: widespread chemical contamination by endocrine disruptors, heavy metals and other carcinogenic, mutagenic and reprotoxic (CMR) products, air, water and soil pollution, ultra-transformed food, noise, electromagnetic fields... The substances of very high concern that surround us are linked to the epidemic of chronic diseases since the post-war period, particularly at the beginning of the 21st century.

This is why the leading international medical journal *The Lancet* referred in September 2020 to Covid-19 as a "syndemic" rather than an epidemic or a pandemic, describing a set of intertwined, mutually-reinforcing health problems.

Had Covid-19 emerged 14 years ago, the risk of suffering and dying from a serious form of Covid-19 may have been half of what it is today, since the number of chronic diseases in France has doubled between 2003 and 2017.

There is an urgent need to question our lifestyles, to shift paradigm and adopt new points of reference, starting with health care policies, no longer solely in terms of curative care, but also in terms of protection against environmental risk factors, over time and with regard to their interaction.