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Dr. Balabanova is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Global Health and Development and in the Health Economics and Systems Analysis Group (HESA) at the LSHTM. In 2001-2006, she worked in the Health Systems Development programme at the LSHTM. Dr. Balabanova is a member of the Health Economics and Systems Analysis group (HESA) and the European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition (ECOHST). Her main area of interest is health systems and policy research, in the transition countries in the European region and the former Soviet Union, and increasingly in other middle and low income countries such as India and Bangladesh.

Dr. Balabanova is an elected Board member of Health Systems Global, a professional society for health policy and systems research, and involved in organising the Third Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (Cape Town, 30 Sept-3 Oct. 2014).

Dr. Balabanova graduated from Sofia University in 1993 with a BA in sociology and BA in childhood psychology. In 1994-5, she undertook a Masters in Social Policy and Planning at the London School of Economics. In 2001 she completed a PhD at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, working with Martin McKee (ECOHST), funded by an EU PHARE programme grant. The research examined the feasibility and acceptability of the health financing reform in Bulgaria, specifically willingness and ability of the population to pay under newly implemented compulsory health insurance, illness behavior, institutional framework, and values influencing reform.

In 1999-2001, Dr. Balabanova was regional policy adviser for Oxfam at the Eastern Europe/ Former Soviet Union/ Middle East Regional Centre in Oxford. The role involved advising on programme planning, Oxfam's regional and global strategies for work on health; and designing research for monitoring the impact of economic transition on population's access to basic health care and education. Other previously held positions were with the World Bank (1997), LSHTM, and with a leading Bulgarian research agency.