Pathogens such as the Ebola and Nipah viruses are circulating in animal populations and can threaten both animal and human health. Thus both animal and human health sectors have a stake in, and a responsibility for, their surveillance and control.

There is, therefore, a need for greater integration and coordination between medical researchers and practitioners, and researchers and practitioners involved in both domestic and wild animal health. This integration has been defined as the ‘One Health’ approach and is an approach that has taken hold in many developing countries where infectious diseases remain prevalent, but less so in developed countries.

The proposed session will review the One Health concept, outlining its current reach and impact, which is perceived to be greater in the wildlife/veterinary community than in the human medicine community.

Case studies, focusing especially on the human/wildlife interface, will also show how health surveillance in wildlife and humans living at the wildlife interface can act as an early warning system for deadly infectious diseases such as Ebola. Through improved health and hygiene rules in humans in close contact with wildlife as well as surveillance systems, disease transmission of zoonotic and other infectious diseases can be significantly reduced and hence profit both human and wildlife health.

Holding a dedicated session on One Health at the WHS is an opportunity to raise awareness of the One Health concept, especially among the human health practitioners, researchers, and, perhaps more importantly, decision-makers.