

## Editorial Review

# Global Health Security, Health System Strengthening and Primary Health Care

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Infectious disease outbreaks and other emerging global health threats are occurring with increasing frequency and severity. Factors including globalization, urbanization, climate change, and the ease of travel and trade mean that dangerous pathogens are more easily transported and spread across the world, with no respect for national boundaries.

Multiple pandemics and numerous outbreaks has already occurred, thousands of lives lost and billions of dollars of national income wiped out. The large epidemic could give an impact to health, economic and social aspect. The health aspect will include disease, death and long term sequelae. The economic impact might cover loss of productivity, cost of response & recovery, loss from travel / trade bans, etc. In this regard, the disruption of social life could also be happen as well as a social stigma with it's wide possible impact.

There is a wish of a world safe and secure from global health threats posed by infectious diseases - where we can

prevent or mitigate the impact of naturally occurring outbreaks and accidental or intentional releases of dangerous pathogens, rapidly detect and transparently report outbreaks when they occur, and employ an interconnected global network that can respond effectively to limit the spread of infectious disease outbreaks in humans and animals, mitigate human suffering and the loss of human life, and reduce economic impact.

For far too long, the approach to pandemics has been one of panic and neglect: throwing resources at the problem when a serious outbreak occurs; then relatively neglecting the preparedness when the news headlines move on. The result has been too many lives lost, too much damage to human livelihoods. New outbreaks will occur, but by investing in prevention, detection, containment and response we can reduce their frequency and impact. Investing in global health security is an imperative. Otherwise we will all too often see poorer, more vulnerable countries

suffering terrible loss of life and being knocked off their trajectory of social and economic development. And we put the world as a whole at risk of some highly contagious deadly influenza or other virus that could kill millions of people.

There is no simple definition of health security. It can mean, variously, human security, the prevention and control of infectious diseases, attention to non-communicable diseases, revitalising research and development to produce global public goods, dealing with substandard and falsified drugs, considering conflict and disaster settings, addressing international migration, and building stronger health systems through universal health coverage.

Global health security itself means having strong public health and emergency response systems in place around the world to stop the spread of infectious diseases across borders and to detect, prevent, and respond to biological threats, from emerging infectious diseases to other pandemics. In an increasingly interconnected world, where diseases know no borders, global health security efforts are vital to protecting health around the world.

The bedrock of outbreak and emergency preparedness and response is a functioning, resilient national health system – with financing, human resources, infrastructure, information

and supply management systems capable of detecting and responding to public health emergencies.

### *Health System Strengthening (HSS)*

Global health security starts at home – making sure it has the tools to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases and biological threats. However, it is critical that efforts also address building systems and capacity in countries with weak health infrastructures that prevent them from adequately responding to disease outbreaks. Strong health systems are critical to ensuring that countries have the capacity to respond to disease outbreaks and prevent them from becoming global epidemics. Strong health systems with the necessary resources and personnel are vital for prevention, detection, and response. This should include funding and adequate support for infrastructure projects, workforce development, and technical assistance to effectively deliver the necessary products to those in need.

In this regard, a strong comprehensive health systems are essential for health security while in turn better health security strengthens health systems. Integrated, multi-stakeholder, multi-sectorial approaches are beneficial in that they work to strengthen global health security and national capacities by involving key players to help prepare for

prevention, detection and response to public health emergencies.

Stronger health security within health systems relies upon several underpinning components such as the quality and safety aspects of service delivery; infection prevention and control; community engagement; health workforce; health information systems; supply chain management; and adapted infrastructure.

Preparedness for pandemics refers to a range of health and non-health interventions, capabilities, and capacities at community, country, regional, and global levels. Health system strengthening is the third aspect of investing in pandemic preparedness deserve special mention. The first aspect, preparedness is part of a broader approach to disaster risk management. Resources put into preparedness are investments in critical risk management for countries, regions, and the global community as a whole. The second aspect, pandemic preparedness is inherently multi-sectoral, requiring cooperation across different arms of government and with the private sector. While the third aspect, preparedness is a core component of health systems strengthening, both depending on and contributing to other parts of the health system. This means the costs of achieving preparedness depend on what other systems components exist and how well

they work. This is also why preparedness measures cannot be undertaken for a single pathogen: “preparedness” reflects the performance of the full system. Efforts to strengthen health security and health systems need to be integrated to promote sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness of a country’s preparedness efforts.

Strong and resilient health systems are essential for a world safe from the threat of infectious disease outbreaks. There is a need for enhancing the components of the health system critical for epidemic prevention and response, including strong leadership and governance, the quality and safety of service delivery, infection prevention and control, community engagement, a skilled health workforce, robust information systems, and effective management of supplies and pharmaceuticals.

Strong leadership and good governance practices are critical factors for epidemic preparedness and response, and are the backbone of sustainable, responsive health systems. These capacities should be strengthen to empower governing bodies to work urgently and decisively to mitigate and defeat health security threats.

Health security must be addressed with great urgency, and

health-system strengthening is one of the surest routes to health security.

### *Primary Health Care (PHC)*

Strengthening preparedness at a national level reinforces the first line of defense against the threat of pandemics. Of course it is not the whole answer: there is also need to strengthen capabilities and coordination at a global level; and must accelerate research and development to give more scientific weapons to fight infectious pathogens. Yet unless we can prevent, detect, contain and respond at a local level we will always be on the back foot.

When countries at the same level of economic development are compared, those where health care is organized around the tenets of primary health care produce a higher level of health for the same investment. This approach to health is people-centred, with prevention considered as important as cure. As part of this preventive approach, primary health care tackles the root causes of ill health, including in non-health sectors, and offers an upstream attack on threats to health.

Enabling global health security through health system strengthening will include a primary care strengthening, adequately training health workers, leveraging technology, supporting regulatory capacity, and good governance.

Investment in health systems and services is investment in human capital. Healthy human capital is the foundation for productivity and prosperity. Equitable distribution of health care and equity in the health status of populations is the foundation for social cohesion, which is our best protection against social unrest.

The country's focus on revitalizing primary health care as the cornerstone of a stronger and resilient public health system will give positive impact to national and global health security.

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