

CENTRAL TOPICS 2018

Pandemic Preparedness

The ability to prevent, detect, respond to and control outbreaks is a significant investment that many countries are still struggling to make. New financing mechanisms – such as the Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility and WHO’s Contingency Fund – are therefore critical to ensuring global health security and saving lives. In this process, domestic financing for preparedness and reliable public health mechanisms pose a key challenge.

The Sustainable Development Goals: Health in All Policies

The SDGs are an indivisible and interdependent set of goals for sustainable development that are inherently linked with the Health in All Policies approach. This approach provides a tool for finding common ground between economic and social development, environmental sustainability and human health. One of the most important challenges for global health in the coming decade will be to develop synergies between a wide range of SDGs and health.

Access to Essential Medicines

Some countries have made substantial progress towards improving access to essential medicines and treatments for fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Even so, access to essential medicines in many parts of the developing world remains inadequate, and new challenges – like access to NCD medicines – have arisen. Recent progress shows that access to essential medicines can be improved through stronger partnerships between governments, pharmaceutical companies, civil society and individual consumers.

Health Systems Strengthening

Although we now have a sophisticated arsenal of interventions and technologies for curing disease and prolonging life, gaps in health outcomes continue to widen. The power of existing interventions is not matched by the capacity of health systems to deliver them to those in greatest need, in a comprehensive way and on an adequate scale. Smart investments have to be the centerpiece of domestic policies and financing.

Antimicrobial Resistance

Antimicrobial resistance is rising to dangerously high levels all over the world and now threatens our ability to treat common infectious diseases. The global crisis reflects the overuse of common antibiotics, as well as a lack of new compound development on the part of pharmaceutical companies to address the challenge. Fresh efforts have been made recently to coordinate efforts, implement new policies and renew research efforts. But major gaps remain.

The Digital Healthcare Revolution

The global population is growing and ageing, and that is having a profound impact on healthcare all over the planet. Meanwhile, new developments in technology are blurring the boundaries between the physical, biological and digital worlds. The goal is now the personalization of medicine – allowing tailored treatments for individual patients based on their unique genetic makeup. This revolution has the potential to provide huge health benefits and empower patients, but it also poses new ethical challenges and could make inequities in healthcare even starker than they are today.