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## Review Article

# Recent global health concerns: An imminent challenge

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### ABSTRACT

Global health focuses on the healthcare requirements of individuals all around the world. Resolving these various health concerns necessitates a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach. Understanding the interconnectedness of these concerns enables healthcare professionals all across the world to work on comprehensive solutions that promote health equity and improve population well-being.

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## 1. Introduction

Global health is vital since it affects everyone on the planet. Because of our inextricable interconnectedness as humans, the overall health of humans, animals, and the environment all have an impact on an individual's well-being. There are benefits to increased international trade, communication, and travel in recent years, but there are also negatives. People travelling around allow infectious diseases to spread, perhaps leading to pandemics or epidemics. Observe how the devastating COVID-19 epidemic, a clear international health issue, spread until it reached every part of the planet. Human movement is no longer the exclusive focus of international health concerns.<sup>1</sup>

This episode helped us to comprehend that, in an era of exceptional connectivity and interdependence, troubles about worldwide health had received importance. Hence this review summarises the most recent studies on the complex links between human health, the environment, and infectious illnesses.

## 2. What are Recent Health Concerns?

The COVID-19 Pandemic, mental health, the relationship between climate change and health, antibiotic resistance, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), vaccine hesitancy, and global health inequality are a few persistent health problems as mentioned in (Diagram 1).

## 3. COVID-19 Pandemic

SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2 mostly affects the respiratory system, while it can potentially impact other major organ systems. Since the beginning of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, a number of novel variants have surfaced that warrant caution. These are associated with increased transmissibility and severity and include the Omicron (B.1.1.529), Beta (B.1.351), and Gamma (P.1); Delta (B.1.617.2), and Omicron (B.1.1.7).<sup>2</sup>

Thus, COVID-19 continued to be a serious threat to world health. Public health programs, vaccination efforts, and virus variants were among the main areas of attention.

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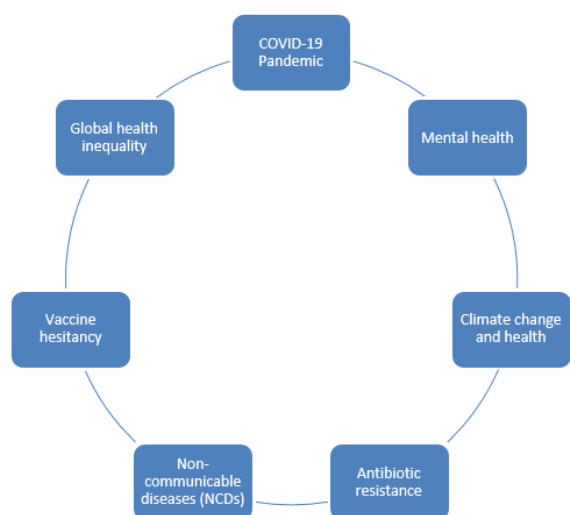


Diagram 1:

#### 4. Mental Health

Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to successfully navigate life's challenges, realise their full potential, study and work professionally, and give back to their communities. It is necessary for our well-being and serves both intrinsic and instrumental functions.

According to a scientific brief released by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the global prevalence of anxiety and depression soared by a staggering 25% in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The synopsis of the pandemic's impact on mental health services' accessibility and alterations during the epidemic also includes a list of the most impacted individuals.

90% of the countries polled had previously included mental health and psychosocial support in their COVID-19 response plans because to worries about possible increases in mental health issues; nevertheless, there are still significant gaps and unanswered questions.

The WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, stated that "the information we currently have about the impact of COVID-19 on the world's mental health is just the tip of the iceberg."<sup>3</sup>

#### 5. Climate Change and Health

Climate change's environmental repercussions, such as rising sea levels, rising temperatures, more extreme weather events, greater droughts, flooding, and wildfires, have an influence on human health and lives.<sup>4</sup>

Since global warming is one of the most significant indicators of global change, the terms are frequently used interchangeably with climate change. The term "global warming" describes an increase in the average global temperature that has been associated with major effects on ecosystems, wildlife, and people worldwide. The phrase

"climate change" is used to refer to these extra effects because there are other variables and repercussions besides just increasing surface temperatures. Among scientists, who account for 97% of those who publish on climate change, there is broad agreement that human activity has been the primary driver of observed warming trends over the 20th century.<sup>5</sup>

As of early 2020, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased from approximately 280 parts per million (ppm) in pre-Industrial times to 413 ppm.

There has never been carbon dioxide at this concentration in history. According to scientific reports, stabilising global warming would require us to get back to a "safe" concentration of 350 parts per million by the year 2100.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, there is a growing concern about the effects of climate change on human health, including the spread of infectious illnesses, air pollution, and extreme weather events.

#### 6. Antibiotic Resistance

Antimicrobial medications are used to prevent and treat infections in humans, animals, and plants. They include antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals, and antiparasitics.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites develop resistance to antimicrobial medicines.

The widespread spread of antibiotic resistance threatens the effectiveness of traditional medications against common bacterial illnesses. The 2022 Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS) study identifies alarming rates of resistance among common bacterial illnesses. A significant worry is the median reported rates of 35% for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* and 42% for third-generation cephalosporin-resistant *E. Coli* across 76 nations. In 2020, 1 in 5 cases of *E. Coli* urinary tract infections showed decreased susceptibility to common antibiotics such as ampicillin, co-trimoxazole, and fluoroquinolones. Treating common infections properly is becoming more difficult as a result.<sup>7</sup>

#### 7. Noncommunicable Diseases

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) account for 74% of all fatalities globally and include diabetes, cancer, heart disease, stroke, and chronic lung disease. Low- and middle-income nations account for more than three-quarters of all NCD deaths as well as 86% of the 17 million premature deaths—those that occur before a person reaches the age of 70.

The use of tobacco products, physical inactivity, excessive alcohol consumption, poor diets, and air pollution are the five main risk factors for NCDs.

The NCD epidemic threatens to bankrupt health systems and has terrible health effects on people, families, and communities. The prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are critical developments for the twenty-first century due to the socioeconomic expenses connected with these disorders.<sup>8</sup>

## 8. Vaccine Hesitancy

Reluctance to get immunized has been associated with vaccine-preventable outbreaks and has hindered efforts to control and eradicate illnesses, such as the polio eradication campaign and the COVID-19 vaccination program. For example, in comprehensive evaluations of measles cases after the virus was eradicated in the United States in 2000, more than 70% of cases that were eligible for vaccination but declined the injection had non-medical reasons for their refusal (e.g., exclusions due to religious or philosophical convictions).

Furthermore, vaccination refusal was linked to an increased chance of contracting pertussis in some communities, even though recent resurgences of the illness have been linked to declining immunity and other causes.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, vaccine reluctance and false information continued to be obstacles to obtaining broad vaccination coverage, which had an effect on the fight against infectious illnesses.

## 9. Global Health Inequality

There is a wealth of research indicating that a person's health is significantly influenced by social factors, such as education, employment status, income level, gender, and ethnicity. Every nation, regardless of income level, has significant differences in the health of various social groups. An individual's risk of bad health increases with decreasing socioeconomic status.

Systematic disparities in the health status of various demographic groups are known as health inequalities. Both people and societies bear heavy social and financial consequences as a result of these disparities.<sup>10</sup>

As a result, obtaining necessary medical services, immunisations, and treatments continued to be a major challenge.

## 10. Conclusion

Global health addresses the healthcare needs of people all around the world. Each geographical population faces unique global health difficulties, such as malaria, hunger, and measles, but these issues affect people all over the world. Resolving these different health challenges requires a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach. Understanding the interconnection of these challenges allows healthcare professionals around the world to collaborate on holistic solutions that promote health equity and improve population

well-being.

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## 12. Conflict of Interest

None.

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