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Scope and Ambit of Global Health Security

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ABSTRACT

The presence of robust & resilient public health system that enable to stop identify & address new infections disease threats wherever they arise in the world is Known as Global Health Security. GHS tackles not just pandemics & infectious illnesses but also other health risk like antibiotic resistance. As awareness of the possible risks to the environment & human health, such as air pollution and climate change, has grown, so too has reliance on chemicals. The significance of readiness, surveillance & efficient response tactics has been further emphasized by lessons learned from previous health emergencies. Such as Ebola, and COVID 19 outbreaks. WHO plays an important role in attaining Global health security, worldwide. The Goal of WHO is to assist all nations in carrying out their obligations to ensure the safely and welling of their particularly the most vulnerable & impoverished. Protecting people against health risk whether they come from human whether actively or natural sources, is the goal of GHS. The present paper deals with the aforesaid issues in detail and suggests the methodologies to achieve the GHS for masses.

I. INTRODUCTION

The actions necessary to reduce the risk and effect of acute public health events that jeopardize people's health across national borders and geographic areas are referred to as global public health security. In other words, the presence of robust and resilient public health systems that are able to stop, identify, and address new infectious disease threats wherever they arise in the world is known as global health security.² Protecting people from current and new health threats is a key component of global health security. It includes a thorough strategy that blends methods for detection, prevention, and reaction. The focus on health and well-being, which acknowledges the close connection between personal health and global health security, is a crucial part of this endeavour.

These actions can be both proactive and reactive. Infectious illness outbreaks and epidemics have been more frequent and more severe since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Since more and more humans live closer to animals worldwide as a result of deforestation, changing land use, climate change, and other causes, animals are the source of 75% of newly developing

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² Global Health Security | Global Health | Health Areas | U.S. Agency for International Development <https://www.usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/global-health-security> | **Accessed on:** 2nd January, 2025

infectious disease concerns. Millions of people have lost their lives and means of subsistence both domestically and internationally as a result of the inability of the global community to avoid, identify, and respond to the risks posed by COVID-19 and other new infectious diseases. Global health security further tackles not just pandemics and infectious illnesses but also other health risks like antibiotic resistance. Global healthcare systems face a serious challenge from maintain the efficacy of current medicines and stop the rise of illnesses that are incurable by putting antibiotic resistance techniques into practice.

Environmental deterioration, population expansion, fast urbanization, and antibiotic abuse are upsetting the microbial world's balance. At previously unheard-of rates, new illnesses like COVID-19 are affecting people's health and having an impact on society and the economy. Aircraft carry billions of people annually, which increases the potential for infectious pathogens and their vectors to spread quickly across international borders.

As awareness of the possible risks to the environment and human health, such as air pollution and climate change, has grown, so too has reliance on chemicals. The danger of contaminated ingredients and foodborne illnesses rises with the globalization of food manufacturing. Traditional defenses at national borders are insufficient to prevent the invasion of a disease or its vector, and the threat to global health is growing as the world's population grows more mobile and economically interdependent.

Furthermore, the effects of climate change on health are also recognized by global health security. Human health may be significantly impacted by changing ecosystems, harsh weather, and rising temperatures. Through comprehension and resolution of these climate-related health hazards, we can safeguard susceptible groups and advance sustainable growth. Furthermore, putting an emphasis on disability inclusion guarantees that wellness and health programs are available to everyone, especially people with disabilities, who frequently encounter major obstacles when trying to obtain support services and medical care.³

The significance of readiness, surveillance, and efficient response tactics has been further emphasized by lessons learned from previous health emergencies, such as the Ebola outbreak. The Ebola virus's catastrophic effects in West Africa made clear the necessity of strong healthcare infrastructure, early detection tools, and concerted international collaboration. It also emphasized how crucial trust-building and community involvement are to handling medical crises successfully. In addition to taking lives, pandemics, medical catastrophes, and inadequate

³ Global Health Security: Safeguarding Humanity's Wellbeing

Available at: <https://www.graygroupintl.com/blog/global-health-security> | Accessed on: 2nd January, 2025

health systems provide some of the biggest threats to the modern world's economy and security.⁴

II. ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL BODIES IN ATTAINING GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY

The advancement of international health security initiatives is greatly aided by international organizations. Coordination, direction, and resource distribution are facilitated by the World Health Organization (hereinafter referred to as WHO) and other important stakeholders. The WHO plays an important role in attaining global health security, worldwide. The goal of WHO is to assist all nations in carrying out their obligations to ensure the safety and well-being of their inhabitants, particularly the most vulnerable and impoverished. Demonstrating how collective worldwide public health action may create a safer future for humanity is the aim of global public health security. International organizations, civil defence, military physicians, law enforcement, and the armed forces are all involved in WHO's health security interface. The Secretariat raises awareness of health security globally, promotes the role of public health in the security sector, and improves WHO readiness and reaction to intentional incidents.

It is a difficult undertaking that calls for the cooperation and knowledge of several stakeholders to ensure the health and well-being of people everywhere. International agencies like the WHO serve as a focal point for organizing activities and offering member nations technical assistance. Their responsibilities go beyond coordinating; they also encourage international cooperation and capacity building. The WHO's capacity to offer technical advice is one of its main contributions. The organization creates evidence-based recommendations that assist nations in fortifying their health systems and successfully addressing health risks based on years of experience and study. Disease surveillance, disaster planning, and response tactics are only a few of the many topics covered by these suggestions.

One important legal document that regulates the coordinated international response to public health emergencies is the International Health Regulations (hereinafter referred to as IHR). The IHR establishes a set of protocols that WHO must adhere to in its efforts to maintain global public health security, while also defining the rights and duties of nations to report public health occurrences. This builds on WHO's unique experience in global disease monitoring, alert, and response.

The WHO created the IHR's current framework in 1969, although its history dates back to the middle of the 19th century. Originally designed to prevent the international spread of illnesses including yellow fever, cholera, and plague, the IHR was revised to meet new health issues.

⁴ Health security | **Available at:** https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-security#tab=tab_1 | **Accessed on:** 2nd January, 2025

Following the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003, the WHO member nations adopted a new version of the IHR in 2005, marking a change toward a more comprehensive and updated approach. This marked a turning point in the history of the IHR. It highlighted a comprehensive strategy for ensuring the security of global health, taking into account elements including environmental occurrences, chemical and radioactive accidents, and the possibility of intentional pathogen release. The transition to a risk-based paradigm from a disease-specific approach was a major milestone. All 196 nations worldwide, including WHO Member States, are bound by the IHR. The National Focal Point of IHR in India is the Director of the National Center of Disease Control (2005).

WHO adopted the revised IHR on June 1, 2024, ushering in a new age of global health security. A key component of international health law, these rules are designed to help nations better prepare for and handle public health catastrophes. A legally enforceable international framework, the IHR was created to stop the transmission of diseases across borders. They require nations to keep an eye on any possible health risks that can affect people across borders and notify the WHO about them. These rules, which are intended to improve global coordination and public health emergency response, include a number of improvements and features that try to rectify the drawbacks of earlier frameworks. Advanced reporting procedures are introduced by the new IHR, which mandates that nations report public health crises within 24 hours of their discovery. This seeks to allow prompt international action and guarantee timely information exchange. The establishment of a States Parties Committee to facilitate the efficient application of the revised provisions further encourages adherence to the updated IHR. In order to improve coordination of the legislation's application both domestically and internationally, National IHR Authorities have been established.⁵

(A) Global Health Security Index

The first thorough evaluation and comparison of health security and associated capacities across the 196 nations that comprise the States Parties to the International Health Regulations is the Global Health Security (GHS) Index (IHR [2005]). The goal of the GHS Index is to promote quantifiable improvements in national health security and enhance global capacity to tackle one of the most pervasive threats in the world: infectious disease outbreaks that have the potential to cause global pandemics and epidemics.⁶

⁵ Enhancing Global Health Security: An Assessment of The New International Health Regulations | Health Affairs | **Available at:** <https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/enhancing-global-health-security-assessment-new-international-health-regulations> | **Accessed on:** 2nd January, 2025

⁶ About - GHS Index | **Available at:** <https://ghsindex.org/about/> | **Accessed on:** 31st Dec. 2024

Health security and associated competencies in 196 nations are evaluated and benchmarked by the Global Health Security (GHS) Index. The global ability to prevent, identify, and respond to pandemics and epidemics is accelerated by the Index. By offering unbiased, publicly available data, the Index promotes change by:

- i. Establishing political responsibility for government spending on pandemic preparation capabilities.
- ii. Helps governments and donors make evidence-based decisions that improve investment impact and resource priority.
- iii. Establishes the benchmark for pandemic preparation and biosecurity worldwide.

Decisionmakers need to be able to assess what nations have done, where they are lacking, and trends over time in order to successfully argue for further investment in biosecurity and pandemic preparation capability and improved policy in this area. Using publicly accessible data, the 2021 Global Health Security Index evaluated nations in six areas, including 37 indicators and 171 questions. The GHS Index evaluates health security in relation to other elements that are important in the battle against epidemics, including national compliance with international standards, political and security issues, and the overall strength of the health system. The 2021 describes how compiling data that is readily available to the public aids in producing an open image of health security weaknesses at the national level.

The GHS Index is the only instrument that can conduct routine evaluations to monitor progress over time and provides the most extensive collection of information on national-level capability across 196 nations to prevent, detect, and respond to pandemics. To optimize the effect of investments in biosecurity and pandemic preparation in nations worldwide, to encourage substantial new investment in this field, and to promote data-driven decision-making, the Index offers a unique resource.

Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and previous epidemics and pandemics, as well as input from an International Panel of Experts, are included into the GHS Index framework. Economist Impact's team of over 80 seasoned field researchers gathers publicly accessible data on six facets of each nation's readiness: risk environment, prevention, detection and reporting, quick response, health systems, and conformity with international standards. In order to get the most complete risk profile, the study team compares the performance of nations on external evaluations to their performance during the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors that affect national reactions to the pandemic.

The 2021 Index's findings demonstrated that while many nations demonstrated their ability to

quickly expand their capabilities during the crisis, such as establishing labs and contact tracing cohorts to monitor the spread of COVID-19, some responses were hampered by long-standing flaws, like a shortage of vital medical supplies and healthcare surge capacity. The implications of this lack of readiness on a nation's health and prosperity are now more clearly understood. The COVID-19 reaction has demonstrated that a number of aspects, such as healthcare and public health capabilities, scientific knowledge and the dissemination of countermeasures, and social and economic resilience, are critical to a nation's ability to respond to a pandemic.

III. CHALLENGES IN ATTAINING GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY & SOLUTIONS

Protecting people against health risks, whether they come from human activity or natural sources, is the goal of global health security. These issues affect everyone in our globalized society and cut beyond national boundaries. Here, we look at six key issues that affect the security of global health, their ramifications, and solutions.

1. Contagious Illnesses

One of the biggest risks to the security of global health is the rise and spread of novel infectious diseases. illnesses like smallpox, the Black Plague, and more recently, COVID-19, have demonstrated throughout history how quickly infectious illnesses may destroy populations. The likelihood of future pandemics is predicted to rise in tandem with increased global travel, endangering people everywhere.

Infectious illnesses are spreading more quickly as a result of urbanization, globalization, and climate change. For instance, shifting climatic trends are increasing the range of habitats for mosquitoes that spread disease, which is causing an increase in illnesses like dengue, Zika, and malaria. Investing in research, surveillance, and rapid-response systems is essential to preventing pandemics in the face of these risks.⁷

2. Resistance to Antimicrobials

The quickly developing phenomenon known as antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites develop resistance to the actions of drugs, including antibiotics. This resistance, which makes some diseases more difficult to treat and raises hospital stays, medical expenses, and death rates, is turning into a serious danger to the security of world health.

This resistance is being caused by the overuse and abuse of antibiotics in agriculture, animals,

⁷ Challenges Threatening Global Health Security - Embrace Relief Foundation

Available at: <https://www.embracerelief.org/6-challenges-threatening-global-health-security/> | **Accessed on:** 31st Dec. 2024

and humans, making it more difficult—and occasionally impossible—to treat illnesses like pneumonia and TB that were formerly curable. AMR may become the next hidden pandemic if international measures are not made to decrease the usage of antibiotics and encourage the creation of new medications.

3. Diseases That Are Not Communicable ⁸

The biggest cause of mortality globally now is noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), which include diabetes, cancer, chronic respiratory conditions, and cardiovascular disorders. Despite not being contagious like infectious diseases, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) cause over 70% of deaths worldwide each year. The most common cardiovascular illnesses, which impact both high- and low-income nations, are stroke and ischemic heart disease.

The prevalence of NCDs has grown due to factors like poor diets, inactivity, and alcohol and cigarette use. Low-income nations frequently bear two burdens: the increased prevalence of NCDs and infectious illnesses. Promoting preventative healthcare, expanding access to treatments, and increasing worldwide knowledge of healthy lifestyle choices are all crucial to addressing issue.

4. Climate Change

In addition to being an environmental emergency, climate change poses a serious risk to human health. Health is already being significantly impacted by rising sea levels, harsh weather, and global warming. For instance, although floods and storms can result in fatalities, injuries, and outbreaks of aquatic illnesses, high heat waves produce increased mortality and droughts that negatively impact global food supply systems.

Furthermore, because warmer temperatures provide mosquitoes with perfect breeding circumstances, climate change is causing changes in the geographic distribution of illnesses like malaria. Furthermore, when extreme weather occurrences interfere with humanitarian efforts and agriculture, food security is jeopardized. Existing health disparities will be made worse by climate change, especially in low-income and vulnerable populations.

5. Food and Safe Water Availability

Millions of people worldwide lack access to enough food and clean drinking water, despite this being a fundamental human right. Malnutrition, hunger, and contaminated drinking water all

⁸ Global Health Security: Progress, Challenges and the Role of Key Organizations

Available at: https://www.modernghana.com/news/1369751/global-health-security-progress-challenges-and.html#google_vignette | **Accessed on:** 31st Dec., 2024

impair immune systems, increasing a person's vulnerability to illness and aggravating global health issues. In Nigeria, where over 66 million people lack access to clean water and more than 151,700 children die each year from water-related illnesses—the greatest number of any nation—the effects of clean water availability on health are evident. 88% of Nigeria's ailments, most of which are avoidable, are caused by tainted water and inadequate hygiene habits.

Climate change, population increase, and political instability exacerbate food insecurity and water shortages. The spread of illnesses including cholera, typhoid, and dysentery is facilitated by inadequate sanitation and contaminated water. In addition to enhancing global health security, ensuring access to wholesome food and clean water is crucial for promoting sustainable development and economic expansion in underdeveloped areas.

6. Disasters Caused by Man and Nature

Earthquakes, floods, armed conflicts, and terrorist attacks are examples of man-made and natural disasters that can endanger global health security in both the short and long term. Mass displacement brought on by these calamities can leave refugees in critical need of food, shelter, clean water, and medical attention. In the Ouaddai region of Chad, where Sudanese refugees and Chadian returnees are dealing with a Hepatitis E outbreak, the likelihood of infectious disease outbreaks is increased by the inadequate sanitation, starvation, and overcrowding that plague refugee communities.

Additionally, disaster-affected communities suffer from severe mental health consequences. Long-term displacement and conflict can cause anxiety, sadness, and trauma. Coordinated worldwide efforts are needed to respond to these crises, from emergency response teams to the long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation of systems of healthcare.

IV. CONCLUSION

Upon perusal of the contents mentioned above along with the references to cases and issues in hand, it can be very well concluded that Global Health Security (GHS) falls in the “must” category not only at the municipal level but also at the world as a whole. This is because during a pandemic or at a time of catastrophe, where the world needs to act for solutions to a common problem, it is the regime of GHS plays the primary role. Due to this, we need to work on diseases and their cure, and further work on evolving the techniques and technologies. At the same time, we need to ensure that the best possible treatments and technological developments reach out to the weakest section of society as well. Furthermore, equal focus also needs to be given to the challenges, and working together by countries at a global level is also an important way out the same. International treaties and bodies like WHO need to be vested with more power by all the

member countries and the international treaties and laws pertaining to the subject need to be more binding and should not be taken as a mere obligatory purpose. Moreover, by working on the discussed points as well as by taking systematic learnings from the past, we can move on the way towards attaining Global Health Security.

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