

A Nurse's Impact on Global Health Concerns

Meagan Yoder, Student Nurse

INTRODUCTION

Global health concerns are widespread risks that pose a threat to safety, health, and life expectancy. These concerns include infectious diseases, health inequalities, economic disparities, universal health coverage, and varied distribution of the health workforce (WHO, 2021).

Nurses must adopt a global perspective of health threats in order to actively participate and contribute to "Policy, education, economic relations, and environmental activism," (Salvage & White, 2020, p. 2). Such factors are vital parts in confronting global health concerns.

"Global health security is the existence of strong and resilient public health systems that can prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats, wherever they occur in the world," (CDC, 2020 A, para. 2). The process of prevention, detection, and response is profoundly impacted by nurses, as they are a significant force in healthcare services.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Countries with increased nurse-to-patient ratios face a heightened burden of disease due to the lack of essential care (WHO, 2021)
 - Africa- 973 people : 1 nurse
 - SE Asia- 409 people : 1 nurse
 - America- 121 people : 1 nurse
 - Europe- 129 people : 1 nurse
- Efforts of the Global Health Security Agency have resulted in promising achievements (CDC, 2020 A)-
 - 11 countries with laboratory systems for disease detection
 - 17 countries with disease detection training programs, and emergency response and management protocols

POSITION STATEMENT

Nurses can impact the development, severity, and span of global health concerns by collaboration between nations and promoting global health security.

SUPPORT FOR POSITION

Global health concerns transcend national boundaries and require nurses to not only provide care on the frontlines, but advocate and involve themselves in constructing social and healthcare policy. In all parts of the globe, there is a lack of access to healthcare, a declining number of nurses in the workforce, and a decreased knowledge of disease prevention on a worldwide scale (Buseh, 2017).

As reported by the World Health Organization in 2021, "Thanks to sustained global efforts, significant progress continues to take place, particularly in reducing the number of deaths caused by communicable, maternal, perinatal, and nutritional conditions," (para. 20). Nurses play a vast part in promoting those efforts by advocating for change, prevention education, providing treatment, and encouraging global compliance.

"Nurses, as leading actors in this story, will be at the heart of sustainable health systems that meet individual and population needs, are fit for the present, and innovative and adaptable for the future" (Salvage & White, 2020, p. 5). Nursing is an integral part of an intricate healthcare system, in which every nurse can have a crucial influence on the outcome of health issues.



(Potter, 2021)

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Nurses in all roles must be involved as leaders in practice, ethics, and education to promote global health. Nurses worldwide need increased opportunities for advancing their skills and knowledge regarding several global health issues: prevention, detection, and response (CDC, 2020 B):

- Prevention of global infectious diseases significantly impacted by nurses being knowledgeable and vocal about the importance of immunizations and being skilled in the ability to educate the public about disease processes(chronic health problems, infections, pandemics) and preventative measures
- Detection of diseases through testing, surveillance techniques, and reporting is vital in preventing outbreaks from reaching an epidemic/pandemic level, therefore protecting health across nations
- Response to global health concerns including emergency operations, close collaboration and open communication with citizens and other healthcare authorities, and close monitoring of active outbreaks

There is a "Need for nurses to become more engaged with other professionals and in the political and policy making process... playing a pivotal role in how healthcare and social policies are developed aimed at mitigating emerging infectious disease," (Buseh, 2017, para. 13). Nurses are capable of generating positive reform and worldwide health improvement.

Nurses should advocate for enhanced measures for prevention, detection, and response to global health concerns within their own institutions. Big changes can only be achieved if the change is beginning on an individual level. Nurses can provide valuable insight and constructive objectives when it comes to treating and eliminating global health concerns.

CONCLUSION

Global health concerns need to be approached on both a local and global level. Nurses of all specialties and areas must lead their own generation and inspire future nurses to respond to the challenges in which they are uniquely equipped to face.

"Nurses have a professional obligation to understand the world in its broader context and base decision-making on an expanded understanding of ourselves, our patients, and our circumstances," (Salvage & White, 2020, p. 2).

Those who pursue and practice a career in nursing have significant influence in leading global health into a new age- one that is more collaborative, safer, and equalized.

Nurses can impact global health concerns by educating themselves and others, involving themselves in matters of policy and equality, and advocating for healthcare that is sustainable for all.

REFERENCES

- Buseh, A. G. (2017). Overview & Summary: Emerging Global Health Concerns: How Nurses Respond. *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 22(1), 1. <https://doi-org.misericordia.idm.oclc.org/10.3912/OJIN.Vol22No01ManOS>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020). Key achievements in five years of GSHA. *Center for Global Health*. <https://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/resources/factsheets/5-years-of-gsha.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020). Strengthening Health Security across the globe. *Global Health Security Agenda*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Global-Health-Security-Agenda-Annual-Report.pdf>
- Potter, Teddie. (2021). Redesigning healthcare: global insights for nurses. *American Nurse*. <https://www.myamerican-nurse.com/redesigning-healthcare-global-insights-for-nurses/>
- Salvage, J., & White, J. (2020). Our future is global: nursing leadership and global health. *Revista latino-americana de enfermagem*, 28, e3339. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1518-8345.4542.3339>
- World Health Organization. (2021). World health statistics 2021: a visual summary. <https://www.who.int/data/stories/world-health-statistics-2021-a-visual-summary>