

Strengthening Primary Health Care

Introduction



Ask yourself: "What is **primary health care (PHC)**?"

It is a concept, which has been continuously redefined since the 1978 - so no wonder, if there is some confusion about the term and its meaning. There is an official definition to help with these issues:

"PHC is a whole-of-society approach to health that aims at ensuring the highest possible level of health and well-being and their equitable distribution by focusing on people's needs and as early as possible along the continuum from health promotion and disease prevention to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care, and as close as feasible to people's everyday environment." (WHO and UNICEF. A vision for primary health care in the 21st century: Towards UHC and the SDGs.)

Next question: "What is **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**?"

It is a system that can be formed in many ways, but allows all individuals and communities to "receive the health services they need without suffering financial hardship. It includes the full spectrum of essential, quality health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care across the life course." (WHO UHC)

Huh, interesting. So, how does the PHC link to UHC and how the health system can be strengthened? Let's find out!



1 - The components of primary health care



2 - Comparison of different health systems and primary health care

PHC should:

1. Meet people's health needs in every situation in life strategically prioritized - integrated health services
2. Systematically address broader determinants of health via evidence-informed cross-sectoral policies
3. Empower individuals, families, and communities in optimizing health and protect health

Why focus on PHC now?



If UHC is the umbrella, which everyone can take shelter under - the PHC is the shaft that keeps the top in place and everyone protected.

WHO states there are three reasons to renew PHC and to place it at the center of improvement efforts:

1. PHC is by feature an adaptable and very responsive tool against rapidly changing world for the health system
2. When promotion and prevention is emphasized with people-centred approach, PHC has proven to be highly effective and efficient addressing risk factors, main causes, and handling emerging challenges
3. UHC and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals can only be achieved via PHC sustainably

Covid-19 showed that global pandemics can happen. We can prepare us for the next with PHC. It is the only cost-effective way to keep our species alive and flourishing.



How can we do it?



1. Keep your representatives accountable for Health in All Policies -thinking and ask about the ways the government is going to do this
2. Keep the subject in sight - tweet, make posts, advocate openly (*no one can read your mind*)
3. Educate yourself and stay curious - health literacy can be learned

Credits and references



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Pleased to meet you!

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