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WHO Public Health Report

Bosnia and Herzegovina

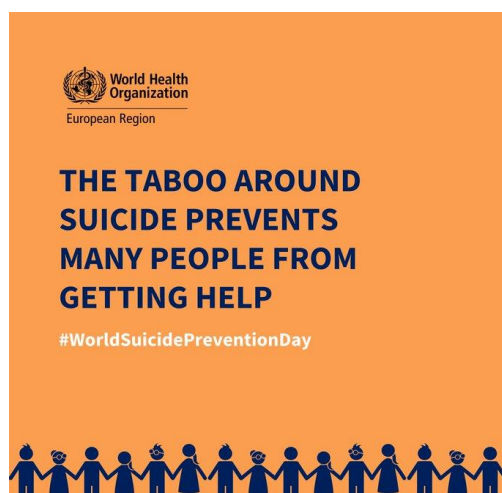
22 September 2023

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WHO LAUNCHES NEW RESOURCES ON PREVENTION AND DECRIMINALIZATION OF SUICIDE



The World Health Organization (WHO) launched two resources designed to strengthen suicide prevention efforts: [Preventing suicide: a resource for media professionals \(2023 update\)](#) and a [policy brief on the health aspects of decriminalization of suicide and suicide attempts](#).

Suicide is a major public health problem. Each year more than 700 000 people take their own life. It is the fourth leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds. Not only is each loss of life tragic in itself, but it also has profound and devastating effects on families and entire communities.

Suicide can be linked to multiple, complex, and intersecting social, economic, cultural, and psychological factors and challenges, including the denial of basic human rights and access to resources as well as stressful life events such as loss of livelihood, work or academic pressures, relationship breakdowns and discrimination, among others.

Reducing the global suicide rate by one third by 2030 is a target of both the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the WHO Global Mental Health Action Plan. Urgent action is needed to meet the 2030 goal, and countries have committed to taking concrete measures in this direction.

“Each death by suicide is a tragedy, and more must be done to strengthen suicide prevention. The resources launched by WHO today provide important guidance on two areas which are critical to suicide prevention efforts: decriminalisation of suicide and suicide attempts and responsible reporting of suicide by the media,” said Dévora Kestel, Director of Mental Health and Substance Use, World Health Organization.

Suicide and suicide attempts are criminalized in the laws of at least 23 countries worldwide and suicide attempts continue to be actively punished in some of them. The criminalisation of suicide perpetuates an environment that fosters blame towards people who attempt suicide and deters people from seeking timely help due to the fear of legal repercussions and stigma. Key recommendations focus on developing national suicide prevention strategies; budgeting for ‘post-decriminalization’ training for first line responders; establishing rights-oriented community-based mental health services; formulating new mental health related laws and policies that promote quality care and the rights of persons with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities.

Fact sheet [Suicide](#).

More on this: <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-09-2023-who-launches-new-resources-on-prevention-and-decriminalization-of-suicide>

WHO WELCOMES HISTORIC COMMITMENT BY WORLD LEADERS FOR GREATER COLLABORATION, GOVERNANCE AND INVESTMENT TO PREVENT, PREPARE FOR AND RESPOND TO FUTURE PANDEMICS



The World Health Organization welcomed the historic commitment shown by global leaders at the United Nations General Assembly, to strengthen international cooperation, coordination, governance and investment needed to prevent a repeat of the devastating health and socioeconomic impact caused by COVID-19, make the world better prepared for future pandemics, and get back on track to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

“The first-ever head of state summit on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response is a historic milestone in the urgent drive to make all people of the world safer, and better protected from the devastating impacts of pandemics,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. “I welcome this commitment by world leaders to provide the political support and direction needed so that WHO, governments and all involved can protect people’s health and take concrete steps towards investing in local capacities, ensuring equity and supporting the global emergency health architecture that the world needs.”

The political declaration, approved by Mr Dennis Francis, President of the Seventy-eighth United Nations General Assembly, and the result of negotiations under the able leadership of Ambassadors Gilad Erdan of Israel and Omar Hilale of Morocco, underscored the pivotal role played by WHO as the *“directing and coordinating authority on international health,”* and the need to *“commit further to sustainable financing that provides adequate and predictable funding to the World Health Organization, which enables it to have the resources needed to fulfil its core functions.”*

“The devastating impacts of COVID-19 demonstrated why the world needs a more collaborative, cohesive and equitable approach to preventing, preparing for and responding to pandemics,” said Dr Tedros.

Dr Tedros said governments and multilateral partners have already commenced building the foundations for a safer world, with the establishment of the Pandemic Fund, the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence, the WHO BioHub to voluntarily share novel biological materials, and the mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub.

However, Dr Tedros added that the political declaration approved on Wednesday called for further strengthening of the global health emergency architecture to better protect the world from a repeat of COVID-19.

Full statement is available [here](#).

FIRST WHO REPORT DETAILS DEVASTATING IMPACT OF HYPERTENSION AND WAYS TO STOP IT



The World Health Organization (WHO) released its first-ever report on the devastating global impact of high blood pressure, along with recommendations on the ways to win the race against this silent killer. The report shows approximately 4 out of every 5 people with hypertension are not adequately treated. If countries can scale up coverage, 76 million deaths could be averted between 2023 and 2050.

Hypertension affects 1 in 3 adults worldwide. This common, deadly condition can lead to stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney damage and many other health problems.

The number of people living with hypertension (blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg or higher or taking medication for hypertension) doubled between 1990 and 2019, from 650 million to 1.3 billion. Nearly half of the people with hypertension globally are currently unaware of their condition. More than three-quarters of adults with hypertension live in low- and middle-income countries.

Older age and genetics can increase the risk of having high blood pressure, but modifiable risk factors such as eating high-salt diet, not being physically active and drinking too much alcohol can also increase the risk of hypertension.

Lifestyle changes such as eating a healthier diet, quitting tobacco and being more active can help lower blood pressure. Some people may need medicines that can control hypertension effectively and prevent related complications.

The prevention, early detection and effective management of hypertension are among the most cost-effective interventions in health care and should be prioritized by countries as part of their national health benefit package offered at a primary care level. The economic benefits of improved hypertension treatment programmes outweigh the costs by about 18 to 1.

Learn more about the global impact of high blood pressure and the HEARTS package to control it [here](#).

Fact sheet [Hypertension](#).

Find the full report [here](#).

More on the report <https://www.who.int/news/item/19-09-2023-first-who-report-details-devastating-impact-of-hypertension-and-ways-to-stop-it>.

WHO, WIPO, WTO RENEW COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL HEALTH CHALLENGES



At their third meeting since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Directors-General of WHO, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreed to shift the focus of trilateral cooperation from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic to increasing and broadening support for more effective and sustainable use of TRIPS flexibilities to increase access to health technologies and to be better prepared

for future pandemics.

While acknowledging the critical role of intellectual property (IP) to incentivize innovation, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WIPO Director-General Daren Tang and WTO Director-General Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala recognized the challenges faced by Members to fully implement at domestic level the wide range of available options to secure timely and equitable access to health technologies. This included the TRIPS COVID-19 Vaccines Decision adopted at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022, as well as flexibilities generally available under the TRIPS Agreement. They agreed that trilateral cooperation should address these challenges by intensifying activities to provide tailored support and information to Members, including through joint technical seminars for delegates handling health, trade and IP issues.

To mirror this broader focus of trilateral cooperation, and to respond to members' evolving needs, the Directors-General agreed to expand the use of the WHO-WIPO-WTO COVID-19 Technical Assistance Platform beyond COVID-19. They agreed that the platform would be adapted to enable Members to seek assistance for any issues at the crossroad of public health, trade and IP. It would also be developed as an active communication and resources tool to disseminate information about relevant technical assistance activities and materials.

Noting the multiple crises caused by climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss and their impact on human health, the Directors-General agreed to make climate change and human health the topic of the next in the series of high-level trilateral policy symposia. The 10th Trilateral Symposium will be hosted by WHO on 14 November 2023, as a public event in hybrid format open to government representatives and other interested stakeholders. The Directors-General noted that the outcome could usefully feed into the health and climate day that will be organized at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28).

More on [TRIPS COVID-19 Vaccines Decision](#).

More on [WHO-WIPO-WTO COVID-19 Technical Assistance Platform](#).

Full statement: <https://www.who.int/news/item/13-09-2023-who--wipo--wto-renew-commitment-to-support-integrated-solutions-to-global-health-challenges>.

INFOSAN QUARTERLY SUMMARY, 2023 #2 (APRIL-JUNE 2023)

Food safety incidents



The INFOSAN Secretariat was involved in 53 food safety incidents concerning 58 WHO Member States and territories from all WHO regions during this second quarter of the year. There were 32 incidents involving a biological hazard [*Salmonella* spp. (12), *Listeria monocytogenes* (6), *Clostridium* (3), *E. coli* (3), hepatitis A virus (3), norovirus (2), *Bacillus cereus* (1), mould (1), *S. agalactiae* (1)]; ten involving an undeclared allergen/ingredient [milk (3), peanut (3), egg (1), mustard (1), pistachio (1), soy (1)]; five involving a chemical hazard [cadmium (1), cyanide (1), methanol (1), patulin (1), solanine (1)]; four involving a physical hazard [metal (2), glass (1), wood (1)]; and two of an unknown hazard.

The food categories most commonly involved in the 53 incidents during the second quarter of 2023 were vegetables and vegetable products (11), fruit and fruit products (8), meat and meat products (7), composite foods (6), herb spices and condiments (3), milk and dairy products (3), nuts and oil seeds (3), snacks, desserts, and other foods (3), sugar and confectionary (3), alcoholic beverages (1), eggs and egg products (1), fish and other seafood (1), legumes and pulses (1), products for special nutritional use (1) and one unknown food source.

Due to the active engagement of INFOSAN members and partners, 35% of incidents were reported to the INFOSAN Secretariat by INFOSAN members (Emergency Contact Points and Focal Points), 28% of those incidents were communicated to the Secretariat through the European Commission's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), and 37% through various WHO channels.

The affected Member States were distributed as follows: 33 Member States (out of 53) from the European Region, 7 (out of 47) in the Americas Region, in the Eastern Mediterranean 6 out of 21, in the Western Pacific 6 out of 21, in the African Region 3 out of 35, and in the South-East Asia Region 3 out of 11.

More on [FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network \(INFOSAN\)](#)

Full summary can be found at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/14-09-2023-infosan-quarterly-summary-2023-2>

GLOBAL STAKEHOLDERS AGREE TO A NEW CHARTER ON PATIENT SAFETY RIGHTS



The WHO-hosted global conference on patient safety and patient engagement concluded with agreement across a broad range of stakeholders on a first-ever Patient safety rights charter. It outlines the core rights of all patients in the context of safety of health care and seeks to assist governments and other stakeholders to ensure that the voices of patients are heard and their right to safe health care is protected.

“Patient safety is a collective responsibility. Health systems must work hand-in-hand with patients, families, and communities, so that patients can be informed advocates in their own care, and every person can receive the safe, dignified, and compassionate care they deserve,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

Patient safety is an ethical and moral imperative grounded in the health care principle ‘First, do no harm!’, which lies at the heart of efforts to ensure high-quality health care systems and achieve universal health coverage. Yet, an estimated one in every 10 patients experience harm in health care facilities and each year there are more than three million deaths globally due to unsafe health care

Most of the patient harm is preventable, and the engagement of patients, families and caregivers is one of the most important strategies for reducing harm. This year’s World Patient Safety Day seeks to highlight the critical importance of listening to patients, families and caregivers, learning from their experiences, and involving them in every aspect of care, to avoid harm, lower the risk of errors and reduce the impact of harm when it does occur. This requires a shift in paradigm, from care designed for patients to care designed with patients, their families and caregivers.

The conference was held on 12 and 13 September at WHO headquarters in Geneva and online, with the participation of more than 2300 people from all six WHO regions, including patient advocates and representatives of patients’ organizations, who took an active role in the development of the Patient safety rights charter, a significant step forward in the global commitment to safer health systems. Its advanced version will be released and open for public consultation as part of the activities to commemorate World Patient Safety Day 2023.

At the conference, WHO unveiled two new resources to support key stakeholders in implementing involvement of patients, families and caregivers in the provision of health care. Drawing on the power of patient stories, which is one of the most effective mechanisms for driving improvements in patient safety, a storytelling toolkit will guide patients and families through the process of sharing their experiences, especially those related to harmful events within health care. The Global Knowledge Sharing Platform, created as part of a strategic partnership with SingHealth Institute for Patient Safety and Quality Singapore, supports the exchange of global resources, best practices, tools and resources related to patient safety, acknowledging the pivotal role of knowledge sharing in advancing safety.

Fact sheet [Patient safety](#)

More on [global conference on patient safety and patient engagement](#)

Full news release at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/patient-safety>

NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS NEGLECTED HEALTH NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



A [new report](#) published by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF highlights the global prevalence of developmental disabilities among children and young people, shedding light on the urgent action needed to address disparities in their access to healthcare, health outcomes, and exposure to social determinants such as poverty.

The report estimates that 317 million children and young people were affected by health conditions contributing to a developmental disability in 2019. Many of them experience stigmatization, prejudice, and social exclusion. They also encounter barriers in accessing health care and experience poorer quality of care when compared with their peers.

“The vision of leaving no one behind can only be achieved if the aspirations and needs of children and young people with developmental disabilities are brought from the margins to the mainstream of our work in promoting the health and well-being of children all over the world” said Dr Luwei Pearson, Associate Director of Health, UNICEF.

“From poorer health outcomes to social exclusion, children and young people with developmental disabilities experience vast disparities. By strengthening interventions to support children and young people with developmental disabilities within wider efforts to boost universal health coverage and promote inclusive nurturing environments, we can ensure they have access to the resources and services they need to live healthy lives” said Dévora Kestel, Director for Mental Health and Substance Use, WHO.

Children and young people with developmental disabilities have underlying health conditions which affect the developing nervous system and cause impairments in motor, cognitive, language, behaviour and/or sensory functioning and associated disabilities. In interaction with various barriers and contextual factors, these impairments may hinder a child’s full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Underlying health conditions which contribute to developmental disabilities include autism, disorders of intellectual development, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and many other neurodevelopmental disorders listed in the International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision (ICD-11) and also a much broader group of congenital conditions (such as Down syndrome) or conditions acquired at birth (such as cerebral palsy) or during childhood.

[Executive Summary: Global report on children with developmental disabilities.](#)

More on this <https://www.who.int/news/item/15-09-2023-new-reports-highlights-neglected-health-needs-of-children-with-developmental-disabilities>.

DEAD BODIES FROM NATURAL DISASTERS AND CONFLICTS DO NOT GENERALLY POSE HEALTH RISKS, RED CROSS AND WHO SAY

Ensuring dignity of dead bodies and emotional closure for surviving family is essential

Amid devastating loss of life due to disasters and conflicts, there is often unfounded fear and misunderstanding concerning the dead. It is therefore important that communities have the tools and information they need to manage dead bodies safely and with dignity. This is in part to help survivors along the path to recovery, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) said today.

When many people die in natural disasters or armed conflicts, the presence of these bodies is distressing for affected communities. Some may move quickly to bury bodies, such as in mass graves, in part in an attempt to manage this distress, and sometimes because of the fear that these bodies pose a health threat. This approach can be detrimental to the population, the organizations said.

Though local authorities and communities can be under immense pressure to bury the dead quickly, the consequences of mismanagement of the dead include long lasting mental distress for family members as well as social and legal problems. Well managed burials include easily traceable and properly documented individual graves in demarcated burial sites. This should ensure that the exact location of each dead body, as well as the associated information and personal belongings, is known as outlined in guidance developed by the organizations, in particular the ICRC/IFRC/WHO Manual for the Management of the Dead After Disasters. Cremations should not take place before the body is positively identified.

In order to support better management of the dead, the organizations provide supplies and expertise to local authorities to help them manage the sometimes overwhelming task of burying the dead. Today in Libya, teams from the International Committee of the Red Cross and WHO are working directly with authorities, communities and the Libyan Red Crescent Society, supporting them with guidance, materials, and training. The ICRC and WHO are both delivering body bags in Libya to help with the dignified treatment of the dead.

The ICRC, IFRC and WHO urge all parties to conflict, and responders in disasters, to follow established principles for the management of dead bodies, for the good of all of society, and have offered further support as needed.

More on <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/management-of-dead-bodies-after-disasters>.

LEADERS SPOTLIGHT THE CRITICAL INTERSECTION BETWEEN HEALTH AND CLIMATE AHEAD OF COP-28 FIRST-EVER HEALTH DAY



Heads of State and leading experts in health and climate gathered on 18 September 2023 to discuss critical concerns around the intersection of climate and health priorities ahead of the UN Climate Conference's (COP-28) first-ever 'Day of Health'. The event was held at the beginning of New York Climate Week during the UN General Assembly in New York, USA.

The central theme of the event underscored that the climate crisis is, unequivocally, a health crisis. Climate change poses an imminent and severe threat to human health, affecting nearly half of the world's population today, not in some distant future.

WHO called on Ministers of Health to raise their voices for health as the driving force behind climate action, leading by example with climate-friendly healthcare systems, and advocating for climate finance that safeguards our well-being today and tomorrow. *"The most compelling reasons for climate action are not in the future – they're right here, and right now,"* said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. *"The climate crisis drives the extreme weather that is taking lives around the world, it fuels the spread of infectious and noncommunicable diseases, and it undermines food security. I am grateful to the COP28 UAE Presidency for choosing health as a priority area, and for designating 3 December as a day dedicated to health."*

Alarming statistics revealed that one in four deaths can be attributed to preventable environmental causes, with WHO estimating an additional 250 000 people are dying every year due to climate change. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, air pollution, wildfires, and compromised water, land, and food security result in lives lost and negatively impact infectious diseases, heat-related illnesses, noncommunicable diseases, and adverse pregnancy outcomes. The health consequences of climate change carry significant economic ramifications. The World Bank estimates that up to 132 million people will fall into poverty by 2030 due to direct health impacts of climate change, and approximately 1.2 billion people will be displaced by 2050. Investments in health yield substantial returns, with studies showing that every dollar invested in health can generate up to US\$ 4.

This event furthermore served as a catalyst for mainstreaming the challenges and opportunities at hand and sharing the impactful initiatives of WHO, the COP28 Presidency, and other key players in addressing climate impacts on health.

[How investing in health has a significant economic payoff for developing economies | Brookings.](#)

Full news item is available here: <https://www.who.int/news/item/18-09-2023-leaders-spotlight-the-critical-intersection-between-health-and-climate-ahead-of-cop-s-first-ever-health-day>.

BILLIONS LEFT BEHIND ON THE PATH TO UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE



The World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank have jointly published the 2023 Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Global Monitoring Report, revealing an alarming stagnation in the progress towards providing people everywhere with quality, affordable, and accessible health care.

Released ahead of the High-Level Meeting on UHC at the 78th United Nations General Assembly, this report exposes a stark reality based on the latest available evidence – more than half of the world's population is still not covered by essential health services. Furthermore, 2 billion people face severe financial hardship when paying out-of-pocket for the services and products they needed.

"The COVID-19 pandemic was a reminder that healthy societies and economies depend on healthy people," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. *"The fact that so many people cannot benefit from affordable, quality, essential health services not only put their own health at risk, it also puts the stability of communities, societies and economies at risk, we urgently need stronger political will, more aggressive investments in health, and a decisive shift to transform health systems based on primary health care."*

The 2023 report found that, over the past two decades, less than a third of countries have improved health service coverage and reduced catastrophic out-of-pocket health spending. Moreover, most countries for which data are available on both UHC dimensions (96 out of 138) are off-track in either service coverage, financial protection, or both.

"We know that achieving Universal Health Coverage is a critical step in helping people escape and stay out of poverty, yet there continues to be increased financial hardship, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable people," said Mamta Murthi, Vice-President for Human Development, World Bank. *"This report paints a dire picture, but also offers evidence on ways to prioritize health in government budgets and strengthen health systems for greater equity in both the delivery of essential quality health services and financial protection."*

The 2023 UHC Global Monitoring Report serves as a wake-up call to the global community, highlighting the urgent need to prioritize and invest in UHC to ensure that everyone gains access to quality, affordable, and accessible healthcare without suffering financial hardship.

Read the full report: [Universal Health Coverage Global Monitoring Report 2023](#).

Watch the launch of: [the Universal Health Coverage Global Monitoring Report 2023](#).

Watch the video: [2023 Universal Health Coverage Global Monitoring Report](#).

Full news item: <https://www.who.int/news/item/18-09-2023-billions-left-behind-on-the-path-to-universal-health-coverage>.

UNHCR, WHO WARN OF DETERIORATING HEALTH CONDITIONS AS 1200 CHILDREN DIE OF SUSPECTED MEASLES, MALNUTRITION IN SUDAN



The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are again sounding the alarm on the worsening health situation caused by the Sudan crisis.

According to UNHCR teams in Sudan's White Nile state, more than 1200 refugee children under 5 have died in 9 camps in the period between 15 May and 14 September, due to a deadly combination of a suspected measles outbreak and high malnutrition. Over 3100 suspected cases were also reported in the same period and more than 500 suspected cases of cholera have been reported in other parts of the country, along with outbreaks of dengue and malaria, in a context of increased epidemic risk and challenges for epidemic control.

"The world has the means and the money to prevent every one of these deaths from measles or malnutrition," the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, said today. *"And yet dozens of children are dying every day – a result of this devastating conflict and a lack of global attention. We can prevent more deaths, but need money for the response, access to those in need, and above all, an end to the fighting."*

Health facilities are at breaking point, due to shortages of staff, life-saving medicine and critical equipment, exacerbating current outbreaks and causing unnecessary deaths. Repeated attacks on health since the beginning of the conflict, including on personnel, patients and transportation of medical supplies, are also restricting the delivery of health services.

"Local health workers, with the help of WHO and partners, are doing all they can, in very difficult conditions. But they desperately need the support of the international community to prevent further deaths and the spread of outbreaks," said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. *"We call on donors to be generous and on the warring parties to protect health workers and access to health for all those who need it."*

In Renk, South Sudan, humanitarian partners report increasing cases of children arriving with measles and high rates of malnutrition from Sudan, mainly from White Nile State. The malnutrition situation in the country is deepening at a rapid scale. Across South Sudan, over 5770 suspected cases of measles have been reported with 142 deaths. Children younger than 5 years are worst impacted, accounting for nearly 70% of all cases and 76% of all deaths. Half of the affected children were unvaccinated against measles, highlighting gaps in immunization, especially amongst returnees and refugees. On average 103 children per month were admitted in health facilities for moderate or severe malnutrition between May and July, up from 14 total admissions before the conflict.

More on this: <https://www.who.int/news/item/19-09-2023-unhcr--who-warn-of-deteriorating-health-conditions-as-1-200-children-die-of-suspected-measles--malnutrition-in-sudan>

POLIO OUTBREAK IN UKRAINE CLOSED – A SUCCESS STORY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH DESPITE EXTREME CHALLENGES OF WAR

WHO/Europe has declared an outbreak of poliovirus in Ukraine, detected in October 2021, officially closed. The European Regional Commission for the Certification of Poliomyelitis Eradication endorsed the closure of the outbreak during its annual meeting on 8 September 2023. The country has achieved this milestone – stopping transmission of the virus that threatened the lives and futures of its children and preventing spread to other countries – in the face of the ongoing war.

The comprehensive outbreak response, initiated by the Ministry of Health of Ukraine in December 2021, faced multiple challenges since the end of February 2022, including massive population displacement, destruction of health-care infrastructure and disruption of logistical routes for medical product deliveries.

“Stopping the spread of poliovirus in the midst of a devastating war is a major achievement and a clear demonstration of the highest level of political commitment of the Government of Ukraine to the welfare of its population,” said Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe.

The decision to close the outbreak was based on:

- the recommendations of a poliovirus outbreak response assessment conducted by Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners, including WHO, in May 2023;
- additional documentation provided by Ukraine in support of the ongoing surveillance, immunization and communication efforts since May; and
- a comprehensive review of poliovirus surveillance and vaccination performance in the countries hosting the majority of the Ukrainian refugee population.

The outbreak was first detected in a young child in Ukraine in October 2021, following the importation of a poliovirus that had emerged in Pakistan and was previously detected in Tajikistan in 2021. A second child became paralysed in December 2021, and an additional 19 close contacts tested positive without developing symptoms.

“The Ministry of Health of Ukraine declared importation of this poliovirus a local public health emergency, and acted swiftly since its detection in close coordination with the global public health community,” said Dr Viktor Liashko, Minister of Health of Ukraine.

Mr Robb Butler, Director of the Division of Communicable Diseases, Environment and Health at WHO/Europe, stated, *“Ukraine has been steadfast in recent years in its efforts to achieve and sustain high routine vaccination coverage, and within the realm of the European Immunization Agenda 2030, WHO/Europe will continue to support health authorities to prevent further outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases including polio, measles, diphtheria and many more.”*

Mr Butler concluded, *“Tremendous credit goes to the health professionals and parents who continue to make every effort to vaccinate children on schedule to protect them from the threat of polio and other diseases, even while navigating the daily realities and dangers of war.”*

Full media report is available [here](#).

HEALTH TOPICS

Climate change

The global climate is changing. This affects human health, well-being and life on earth. In the near future it will lead to an amplification of current health problems, as well as new risks and pressures for the environment and the social and economic determinants of health.

Digital health

Digital health is the field of knowledge and practice associated with the development and use of digital technologies to improve health. Digital health expands the concept of eHealth to include digital consumers, with a wider range of smart devices and connected equipment. The following areas are commonly understood as being part of, or related to, digital health: artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain, health data, health information systems, the infodemic, the Internet of Things, interoperability and telemedicine.

Mental health

Mental health should be seen as a valued source of human capital or well-being in society. It contributes to individual and population health, happiness and welfare, enables social interaction, cohesion and security, and feeds national output and labour force productivity. We need good mental health to succeed in all areas of life.

Yet, individuals with mental ill-health are often shunned and denied access to care, with services for promoting and protecting mental health and preventing ill-health often starved of resources. It is vital to not only address the needs of people with defined mental disorders but also to protect and promote the mental health of all people, and recognize the intrinsic value of positive mental health.

Vaccines and immunization

Immunization is one of the most cost-effective ways to save lives and promote good health and well-being throughout the life course. Every year, vaccines save millions of lives, and millions more people are protected from disease and disability. By preventing many serious early-childhood infectious diseases, like polio and measles, immunization helps children grow into healthy adults. Other vaccines given early in life help prevent liver and cervical cancer many years later, and vaccination of older adults protects them from influenza, COVID-19 and other serious diseases.

The WHO European Region has made great progress in recent decades on many of these fronts, but there are still gaps in vaccination coverage that put especially the most vulnerable at risk. Access to vaccines, including against human papillomavirus and SARS-CoV2, is also not equitable within and among countries.

Suicide - Key facts:

- More than 700 000 people die due to suicide every year.
- For every suicide there are many more people who attempt suicide. A prior suicide attempt is an important risk factor for suicide in the general population.
- Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds.
- Seventy-seven per cent of global suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries.
- Ingestion of pesticide, hanging and firearms are among the most common methods of suicide globally.

WHO EMERGENCIES

Health emergencies list

The health emergencies list details the disease outbreaks, disasters and humanitarian crises where WHO plays an essential role in supporting countries to respond to and recover from emergencies with public health consequences.

[Ukraine emergency](#)

[Mpox outbreak](#)

[Earthquake in Türkiye and Syrian Arab Republic](#)

[Pakistan crisis](#)

[Drought and food insecurity in the Greater Horn of Africa](#)

WHO CAMPAIGNS

World Rabies Day. 28 September 2023, “Creating Hope Through Action”

This year’s World Rabies Day theme is: “**All for 1, One Health for all**”.

Rabies control programmes offer a great example to operationalize One Health - building the structures and trust that are crucial to establish systems for other zoonotic diseases, including those that are pandemic-prone.

Ensuring equitable access to health services and rabies post-exposure prophylaxis for underserved communities not only saves lives but also strengthens national health systems.

With the Zero by 30: Global Strategic Plan for the elimination of dog-mediated human rabies deaths by 2030 we have a shared global goal.

The world has the vaccines, medicines, tools, and technologies to break the cycle of one of the oldest diseases. Together in unity we can eliminate rabies. Leaving no one behind.

World Mental Health Day. 10 October 2023; “ Our minds, our right”

World Mental Health Day 2023 is an opportunity for people and communities to unite behind the theme ‘Mental health is a universal human right’ to improve knowledge, raise awareness and drive actions that promote and protect everyone’s mental health as a universal human right.

Mental health is a basic human right for all people. Everyone, whoever and wherever they are, has a right to the highest attainable standard of mental health. This includes the right to be protected from mental health risks, the right to available, accessible, acceptable, and good quality care, and the right to liberty, independence and inclusion in the community.

WHO PUBLICATIONS

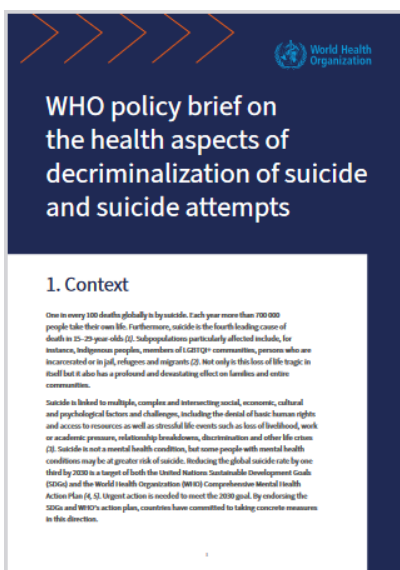
Preventing suicide: a resource for media professionals - Update 2023



Media reports on suicide can influence prevention efforts. Stories about suicides can increase such incidents, while tales of overcoming crises can reduce them. Media professionals should highlight stories of resilience post-suicidal crisis and adhere to the guidelines in this resource. This updated version emphasizes proactive reporting and the positive effects of focusing on hope and recovery, with added considerations for online and digital platforms. This resource targets media professionals, journalism schools, and others communicating about suicide prevention.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240076846>

WHO Policy Brief on the health aspects of decriminalization of suicide and suicide attempts



Reducing global suicide rates by a third by 2030 is a target of the UN and WHO. Yet, in at least 23 countries, suicide and suicide attempts are still illegal, hindering this goal. The WHO Policy Brief advocates for global decriminalization of suicide, using data and examples from countries like Guyana, Pakistan, and Singapore to guide decision-makers.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240078796>

Global report on children with developmental disabilities



Children with developmental disabilities frequently encounter neglect in health planning, experience stigmatization, and face challenges accessing healthcare and education. The WHO-UNICEF Global Report, anchored in international human rights conventions, emphasizes the importance of addressing the needs of these children in policy and programming. Advocating for better accountability, the report proposes 10 priority actions to promote inclusive environments and build more responsive multisectoral care systems for them.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240080539>

Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2023 Global monitoring report



The world is off track to make significant progress towards universal health coverage (UHC) (SDG target 3

.8) by 2030 as improvements to health services coverage have stagnated since 2015, and the proportion of the population that faced catastrophic levels of out-of-pocket (OOP) health spending has increased.

Related: [Frequently asked questions](#)

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240080379>

Global report on hypertension - The race against a silent killer



To amplify the stark reality of the disease burden from this "silent killer", WHO produced a Global report on hypertension. This comprehensive report features unsettling statistics underscoring the far-reaching consequences of uncontrolled hypertension – ranging from heart attacks, strokes and premature death to substantial economic loss. Moreover, the accompanying profiles offer a country-by-country snapshot of hypertension burden and control. The report not only serves as an eye-opener but also shows the way forward for countries to protect their people, highlighting the tremendous strides made in managing the disease, and drawing insights from the implementation of the WHO HEARTS package. Additionally, it equips

countries with essential tools to enhance hypertension prevention, control and surveillance, thereby offering a roadmap towards a healthier future.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240081062>

WHO EVENTS

Launch of the Youth4Health Network; 25 September 2023, 10:00–11:30 CEST

In the Region, 1 out of 3 people is under 30. Since 2021, WHO/Europe has been actively engaging youth in health decisions. The first Youth4Health Forum in 2022 in Tirana, Albania, led to the creation of the Youth4Health Network, promoting youth involvement in WHO/Europe's initiatives.

On 25 September 2023, the official launch event will feature youth discussions on their engagement. Youth4Health members are encouraged to host local events to commemorate the network's inauguration.

Seventy-third session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe; 24-26 October 2023, Astana, Kazakhstan

Health ministers and high-level delegates from the 53 Member States of the WHO European Region, as well as representatives of partner organizations and civil society, will meet in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 24–26 October 2023 for the Seventy-third session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC73).

In 2023, WHO marks its 75th anniversary, 45 years since the signing of the historic Alma-Ata Declaration on primary health care (PHC), and the mid-point of the European Programme of Work (EPW) 2020–2025 – “United Action for Better Health in Europe”. RC73 will therefore be an opportunity for delegates to reflect on the current state of health and well-being across the Region, take stock of progress in delivering the EPW, celebrate public health milestones over the past 75 years, and discuss what is needed to address current and future challenges.

[Learn more](#)

28th annual meeting of the Regions for Health Network – “Health for all: addressing challenges, sharing experiences”; 15-17 November 2023, Seville, Spain

WHO/Europe's Regions for Health Network (RHN) will host its 28th annual meeting in Seville, Spain, 15–17 November 2023.

Established in 1992, RHN is a platform through which more than 30 regions, many associated partners and Member States of the WHO European Region work together to share evidence, intelligence and good practice experiences. Its aims are to promote better health and well-being at all ages, across all sectors and in all settings; to secure universal access to quality care without financial hardship; to protect against health emergencies; and to empower health through science, data and innovation. The 28th annual meeting will be hosted by one of RHN's oldest members, Andalusia, Spain, on "Health for all: addressing challenges, sharing experiences".

More on [Regions for Health Network \(RHN\)](#)

COP28 Health Pavilion; 30 Nov-12 Dec 2023, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

WHO, in collaboration with the Wellcome Trust, and partners will host the Health Pavilion at the COP28 UN Climate Conference, taking place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 12 December 2023.

The COP28 Health Pavilion will convene the global health community and key stakeholders across various sectors to ensure health and equity are placed at the centre of climate negotiations. It will offer a rich two-week programme of events showcasing evidence, initiatives and solutions to maximize the health benefits of tackling climate change across regions, sectors and communities.

More information will be made available soon.

The [call for side events at the COP28 Health Pavilion](#) is open until 15 September 2023.

WHO VIDEO

2023 Universal Health Coverage Global Monitoring Report

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioLM2zwo-4s>

Check out our official video channel on YouTube for the latest video news on our work from around the globe:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/who/playlists>.

SOURCES

- <https://www.who.int/>
- <https://www.un.org/en/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/c/whoregionalofficeforeurope>
- <https://www.brookings.edu/>
- <https://www.who-wipo-wto-trilateral.org/>

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