

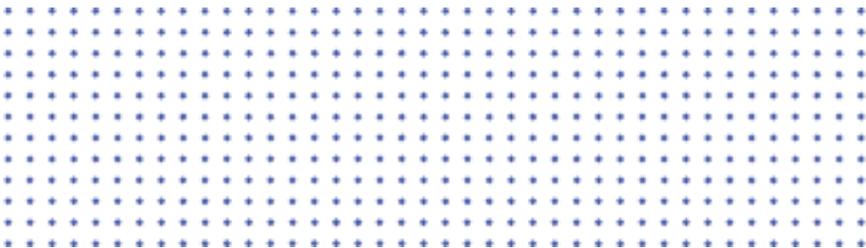


PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

World Health Organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina

28 March 2025

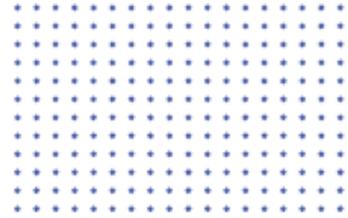




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WHO CALLS FOR URGENT ACTION TO ADDRESS WORLDWIDE DISRUPTIONS IN TUBERCULOSIS SERVICES PUTTING MILLIONS OF LIVES AT RISK



On the occasion on World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, marked each year on 24 March, the World Health Organization (WHO) called for an urgent investment of resources to protect and maintain tuberculosis (TB) care and support services for people in need across regions and countries. TB remains the world's deadliest infectious disease, responsible for over 1 million deaths annually bringing devastating impacts on families and communities.

Global efforts to combat TB have saved an estimated 79 million lives since 2000. However, the drastic and abrupt cuts in global health funding happening now are threatening to reverse these gains. Rising drug resistance especially across Europe and the ongoing conflicts across the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe, are further exacerbating the situation for the most vulnerable.

Under the theme “Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver”, World Tuberculosis Day 2025 campaign highlights a rallying cry for urgency, and accountability and hope. *“The huge gains the world has made against TB over the past 20 years are now at risk as cuts to funding start to disrupt access to services for prevention, screening, and treatment for people with TB,”* said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. *“But we cannot give up on the concrete commitments that world leaders made at the UN General Assembly just 18 months ago to accelerate work to end TB. WHO is*



committed to working with all donors, partners and affected countries to mitigate the impact of funding cuts and find innovative solutions.”

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (24 March), Heads of the Country Offices of WHO and the International Organization for Migration visited the Blažuj Temporary Reception Center, to observe the transition of health services from NGOs to cantonal providers. WHO Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Erwin Cooreman, highlighted the importance of correct diagnosis and full treatment to ensure cure and prevent drug resistance, as well role of preventive treatment. He further emphasized WHO's commitment to supporting vulnerable populations in accessing essential healthcare services.

The “2025 Tuberculosis surveillance and monitoring in Europe” report, released on 24 March 2025 by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and WHO/Europe shows that children under 15 years of age accounted for 4.3% of those with new and relapsed tuberculosis (TB) in the WHO European Region, representing a worrying 10% surge in paediatric TB for 2023, compared to the previous year. Similarly, children under 15 years accounted for 4.3% of all TB cases in the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA), signifying an increase for the third year in a row.

These findings of increased TB among children show that transmission of TB in the European Region is still ongoing, and immediate public health measures are needed to control and reduce the growing TB burden. The findings also highlight the escalating burden of the disease in younger populations, as overall TB notifications continue to rise, with over 650 additional TB cases among children reported between 2022 and 2023. A major concern is that for 1 in 5 children with TB in the EU/EEA, it is unknown whether their treatment has been completed. This uncertainty regarding completion of treatment may result in deteriorating health outcomes such as the emergence of drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) and its further transmission.

Read more on this [LINK](#).



WHO/EUROPE TO LAUNCH QUALITY STANDARDS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CARE



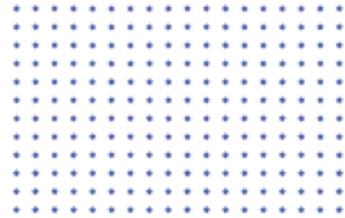
On 27 March 2025, WHO/Europe unveiled the inaugural WHO Quality Standards for Child and Youth Mental Health Care. This initiative, spearheaded by the WHO Office on Quality of Care and Patient Safety in Athens alongside the Mental Health Flagship team, addressed the escalating need for enhanced mental health services for children and adolescents.

The newly introduced standards provide a comprehensive framework tailored for outpatient and community settings, aiming to define and elevate the quality of specialized mental health care across the WHO European Region. Their development was informed by extensive consultations with children, young people, caregivers, and healthcare providers, ensuring a holistic and inclusive approach.

These standards are designed to be adaptable to the unique contexts of individual countries. Healthcare professionals and leaders are encouraged to utilize them for self-assessment and to identify priority areas for quality improvement. Additionally, the general public could reference these standards to better understand the benchmarks of high-quality mental health care.

The launching event, held online, featured experts discussing strategies to enhance mental health care quality throughout the Region. This marked a significant step forward in WHO/Europe's commitment to improving mental health services for younger populations.

DELEGATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA STUDIES SLOVENIA'S PRIMARY HEALTH CARE MODEL IN WHO-ORGANIZED VISIT



A delegation from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) participated in a study visit to Slovenia as part of the European Union-funded project “Support to the Health Sector Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Realizing the Potential of Primary Health Care-Driven Health Systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” The initiative is implemented by the World Health Organization (WHO) in BiH.

The visit aimed to provide key stakeholders – including representatives from the Ministry of Health of the Federation of BiH, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republika Srpska, and the Department of Health and Other Services of Brčko District of BiH – with direct insights into Slovenia’s primary health care (PHC) system. The delegation was welcomed by Slovenia’s State Secretary Iztok Kos and Dr Kerstin Vesna Petrič, Head of the Office for Cooperation with WHO.

A highlight of the visit was the delegation’s exploration of Slovenia’s recently established WHO Collaborating Centre on Primary Health Care in Ljubljana. This centre focuses on integrating health services with a strong emphasis on primary care and public health. Its approach – implemented through Centres for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention – is closely aligned with BiH’s ongoing efforts to establish similar centers, a key objective of the future Strategic Roadmap for PHC improvement in both the Federation of BiH and the Republika Srpska.

During the visit, the delegation engaged with senior informants in several key institutions, including community health centres in Ljubljana and Domžale, the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia, the



National Institute of Public Health, the Community Health Centre for Mental Health, the Family Medicine Department at the Faculty of Medicine (University of Ljubljana), and the National Association of Nurses and Midwives. These interactions provided valuable insights into the practical implementation of Slovenia's PHC model at various levels of care.

Discussions covered essential aspects of PHC organization, including the roles of general practitioners and nurses, the referral system to and from secondary and tertiary care, collaboration between various disciplines and with specialists, the linkages with school health programmes, and the integration of home nursing services. Participants also learned about Slovenia's preventive health programmes, the availability of 24/7 primary care services, healthcare digitization (including the Central Registry of Patient Data, and the adoption of eHealth solutions).

This study visit marked a significant step in the development of Strategic Roadmaps for PHC improvement in the Federation of BiH and the Republika Srpska. It reinforces BiH's commitment to strengthening primary health care systems for better health outcomes.



HLM4: ON THE ROAD TO 2025 AND BEYOND



In September 2025, world leaders will meet at the Fourth High-level Meeting (HLM4) at the UN General Assembly to create a new vision and adopt an ambitious political declaration to promote the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) for the next twenty-five years.

Last June, in preparation for the HLM4, the International Dialogue on Sustainable Financing for NCDs and Mental Health brought together a diverse array of stakeholders to discuss ways to secure adequate, predictable and sustained resources, including health financing reforms to address NCDs and mental health conditions.

As a follow up to this 'International Dialogue', the World Bank and the World Health Organization, together with partners, are launching a country-focused webinar series exploring issues related to health financing, NCDs and mental health. Topics that will be discussed include, among others, health taxes, financial protection, access to medicines, and provider payment mechanisms for chronic care. The webinars, which will start from April 2025, aim to:

- Value the experiences of countries making progress in NCD and mental health financing,
- Support countries committed to action by sharing lessons,
- Build a community of champions across sectors,
- Connect the key messages from the 'International Dialogue' with the HLM4.

Register to the series here: <https://shorturl.at/6B78l>

WHO LAUNCHES FIRST-EVER COLLABORATING CENTRE ON RISK COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFODEMIC MANAGEMENT



The first-ever WHO Collaborating Centre (CC) on Risk Communication, Community Engagement and Infodemic Management (RCCE-IM) has launched at Kristiania University of Applied Sciences in Oslo, Norway. During a four-year partnership with WHO, the new CC will conduct high-quality research to help country health authorities and health practitioners on the ground to design timely and effective RCCE-IM interventions during health emergencies.

RCCE-IM is vital for building trust between communities and health authorities, and increasing the acceptance and uptake of protective measures. Public health interventions need data to inform decisions, and the new CC will leverage insights from recent emergencies to support more effective, evidence-based actions that can be rapidly implemented during emergencies to save lives.

A critical milestone in health security

Based at Kristiania University's School of Communication, Leadership and Marketing in Oslo, the new centre will focus specifically on supporting RCCE-IM in health emergency preparedness, response and resilience. It joins a global network of over 800 WHO CCs, of which 265 are in the European Region.

Led by Professor Audra Diers-Lawson, an internationally recognized expert in risk and crisis communication, the centre will bridge research and real-world application. Professor Diers-Lawson advised the European Parliament on risk communication during the COVID-19 pandemic and was appointed to WHO's first-ever technical advisory group on RCCE-IM in 2023. Under her leadership, the

centre aims to use practical solutions to advance knowledge and countries' capabilities in this crucial field.

“Professor Diers-Lawson and her team will support WHO in conducting the right studies and asking the right questions to better understand communities at risk from or affected by emergencies,” said Ihor Perehinets, WHO/Europe’s Regional Emergency Director. *“They will help WHO to do this rapidly and rigorously, ensuring a maximum impact on saving lives in an age of permacrisis, with health emergencies, from emerging infectious diseases to climate-related crises, arriving faster than ever.”*

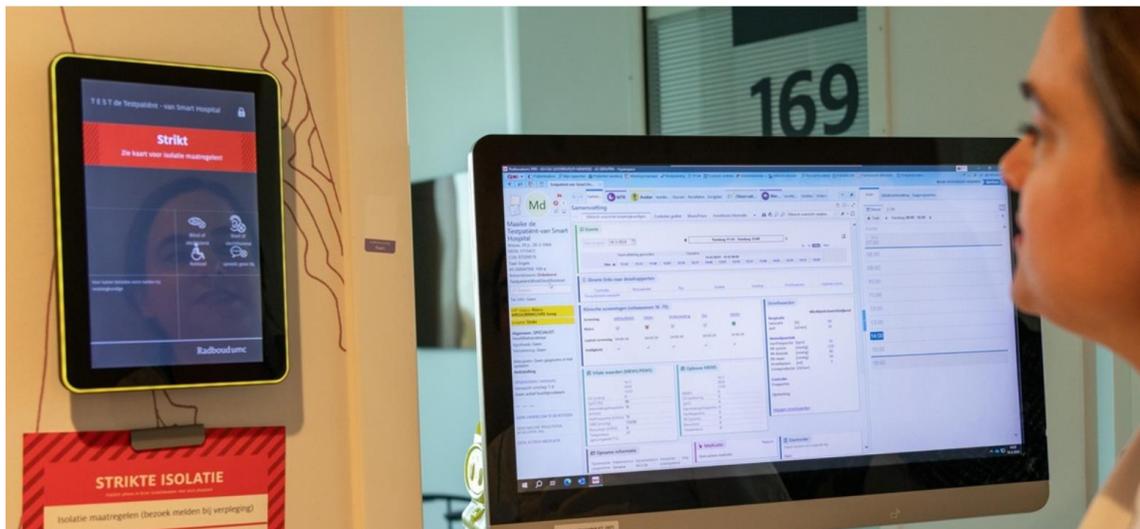
RCCE-IM in health emergencies

Recent health emergencies in Europe have underscored the importance of RCCE-IM. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, RCCE-IM practitioners in the Western Balkans and South Caucasus used community insights to shape response efforts, ensuring that interventions were locally relevant and effective. By establishing a feedback and engagement mechanism with community influencers, civil society organizations and vulnerable groups, local authorities were better prepared to translate health information and advice into action. This strengthened public trust in health ministries, improved vaccination efforts and drove innovative cross-platform campaigns.

Read more on this [LINK](#).



WHO/EUROPE LAUNCHES GUIDE TO STRENGTHEN CYBERSECURITY IN DIGITAL HEALTH



At a time of rapid advances in digital technology, WHO/Europe has published a guide on cybersecurity and privacy risk assessments in digital health tailored to the WHO European Region, which encompasses 53 Member States across Europe and central Asia.

The document, titled “Cybersecurity and privacy maturity assessment and strengthening for digital health information systems”, provides a framework to help countries and organizations develop risk assessment strategies that align with their specific needs, goals and regulatory requirements.

The need for cyber resilience

The rapid development and adoption of telemedicine, electronic health records and other digital solutions in recent years is improving service delivery and availability, but it has also exposed the health-care sector to cybersecurity risks.

The health-care sector is one of the most targeted by cyberattacks. The European Commission counted over 300 cybersecurity incidents in 2023 – more than in any other critical sector in the European Union (EU). These breaches can result in significant financial losses, compromise patient privacy, disrupt health-care services, delay treatments and even endanger the lives of patients.

Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, emphasized the geopolitical implications of cybersecurity threats. *“Cybersecurity in health care is not just a technical issue but also a matter of national security. We have seen how cyberattacks on hospitals and public health systems can*

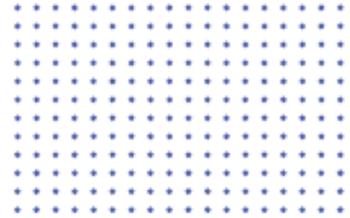
compromise access to and delivery of vital health services and be used to target the most vulnerable people in times of crisis.” He added, “Our new cybersecurity guidance provides a tool for countries to step up their defences and ensure that health systems remain ready for and resilient against evolving threats.”

Dr Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat, Director of Country Health Policies and Systems at WHO/Europe, underscored, *“Every patient deserves to know that their most sensitive health data is safe. Cybersecurity is about trust: trust in health systems, trust in digital innovation and trust that no one’s care will be disrupted by a cyberattack. This guide is an important step in supporting governments and health partners in ensuring that safety and security are at the core of digital health.”*

Read more on this [LINK](#).



EUROPEAN REGION REPORTS HIGHEST NUMBER OF MEASLES CASES IN MORE THAN 25 YEARS – UNICEF, WHO/EUROPE



According to an analysis by WHO and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 127 350 measles cases were reported in the European Region for 2024, double the number of cases reported for 2023 and the highest number since 1997.

Children under 5 accounted for more than 40% of reported cases in the Region – comprising 53 countries in Europe and central Asia. More than half of the reported cases required hospitalization. A total of 38 deaths have been reported, based on preliminary data received as of 6 March 2025.

Measles cases in the Region have generally been declining since 1997, when some 216 000 were reported, reaching a low of 4440 cases in 2016. However, a resurgence was seen in 2018 and 2019 – with 89 000 and 106 000 cases reported for the two years, respectively. Following a backsliding in immunization coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic, cases rose significantly again in 2023 and 2024. Vaccination rates in many countries are yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, increasing the risk of outbreaks.

“Measles is back, and it’s a wake-up call. Without high vaccination rates, there is no health security. As we shape our new regional health strategy for Europe and central Asia, we cannot afford to lose ground. Every country must step up efforts to reach under-vaccinated communities,” warned Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe. *“The measles virus never rests – and neither can we.”*



The European Region accounted for a third of all measles cases globally in 2024. In 2023 alone, 500 000 children across the Region missed the first dose of the measles vaccine (MCV1) that should be given through routine immunization services.

“Measles cases across Europe and central Asia have soared over the past two years – pointing to gaps in immunization coverage,” said Regina De Dominicis, UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia. *“To protect children from this deadly and debilitating disease, we need urgent government action including sustained investment in health-care workers.”*

Measles is one of the most contagious viral disease affecting people. As well as hospitalization and death caused by complications including pneumonia, encephalitis, diarrhea and dehydration, measles can cause long-term, debilitating health complications such as blindness. It can also damage the immune system by “erasing” its memory of how to fight infections, leaving measles survivors vulnerable to other diseases. Vaccination is the best line of defence against the virus.

Less than 80% of eligible children in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Romania were vaccinated with MCV1 in 2023 – far below the 95% coverage rate required to achieve herd immunity. In both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro the coverage rate for MCV1 has remained below 70% and 50% respectively for the past five or more years.

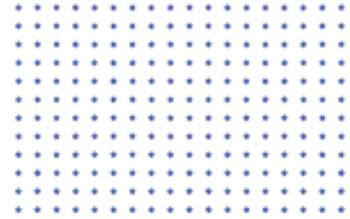
Romania reported the highest number of cases in the Region for 2024, with 30 692 cases, followed by Kazakhstan with 28 147 cases.

Measles remains a significant global threat. In 2024, 359 521 cases of measles were reported worldwide. Transmission of the virus across borders and continents occurs regularly, and outbreaks of this highly infectious disease will occur wherever the virus finds pockets of un- or under-vaccinated people, particularly children.

Read more [HERE](#).



NEARLY 50 MILLION PEOPLE SIGN UP CALL FOR CLEAN AIR ACTION FOR BETTER HEALTH



In an unprecedented show of unity, more than 47 million health professionals, patients, advocates, representatives from civil society organizations, and individuals worldwide have signed a resounding call for urgent action to reduce air pollution and to protect people’s health from its devastating impacts.

Air pollution is one of the biggest environmental threats to human health and a major contributor to climate change. Around 7 million people die from air pollution each year, mainly from respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

This global call to action, spearheaded by the World Health Organization (WHO) and international health organizations will be presented at the Second Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health, which took place in Cartagena, Colombia, from 25–27 March 2025.

“Forty-seven million people from the health community have issued a clarion call for urgent, bold, science-driven action on air pollution, and their voices must be heard,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. *“Around the world, WHO is supporting countries to implement evidence-based tools to address air pollution and prevent the diseases it causes. At the second WHO Conference on Air Pollution and Health in Cartagena, we hope to see concrete commitments from countries to implement those tools and save lives.”*

Hosted by WHO and the Government of Colombia, the conference brought together political leaders, representatives from civil society organizations, UN agencies and academia to drive a global clean air



agenda which promises benefits for public health, climate change response and sustainable development, both globally and locally.

Recognizing the heavy toll of air pollution, the health community is calling on governments to take immediate and ambitious steps to reduce emissions, enforce stricter air quality standards, and transition to cleaner energy sources, unlocking multiple benefits for the health of people and the planet. The topic will also be a focus ahead of the 2025 UN High-Level Meeting on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), where world leaders will be called upon to take stronger action.

Key facts:

- ✓ Air pollution in both cities and rural areas generates fine particulate matter which is inhaled and results in NCDs such as stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, chronic respiratory diseases as well as acute conditions such as pneumonia.
- ✓ Around 2.1 billion people are exposed to dangerous levels of household air pollution while using polluting open fires or stoves for cooking.
- ✓ Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), are among the leading causes of death, many are linked to air pollution exposure. The global NCD epidemic claims 41 million lives annually. Addressing air pollution is a key strategy in reducing the burden of NCDs and improving global health.
- ✓ Sources of air pollution are varied and context-specific. The major pollution sources include polluting energy sources used in homes, energy production, industrial emissions, transport, agriculture, waste as well as natural sources such as desert and dust storms or wildfires.

Read more [HERE](#).



WHO EMERGENCIES



WHO flash appeal: Syria emergency



Conflict in Israel and the occupied
Palestinian territory



Ukraine emergency



COVID 19

[Syria Emergency Response](#) / [Conflict in Israel and the occupied
Palestinian territory](#) / [Ukraine Emergency](#) / [COVID-19](#) /

EVENTS AND COURSES

- **Launch of the Global Evidence Review on Health and Migration: Spotlight on Dementia**
Date: 31 March 2025
Location: Online
More info: <https://shorturl.at/ypU1o>

WHO PODCAST

- **Health in Europe: Medevac**

Crisis and conflict dominate the headlines. The ongoing war in Ukraine and the conflict between Israel and Hamas have brought death, destruction and displacement. But among the major disasters and conflicts it is important to look for the stories of the people who are helping.

We'll also explore the Region's Emergency Medical Teams to learn about people who, with sometimes only hours notice, drop everything to travel to emergency zones. Who are they and what motivates them?

Listen [HERE](#).

PUBLICATIONS

Behavioural and cultural insights at the WHO Regional Office for Europe: annual progress report 2024

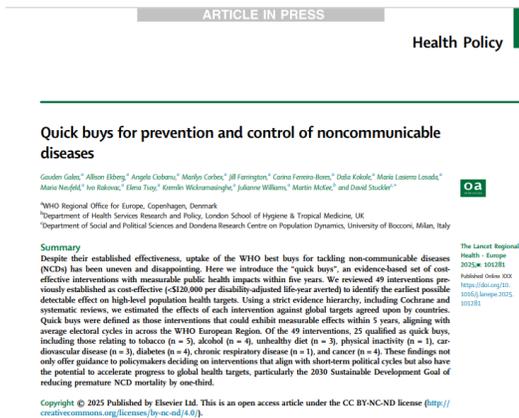


This report highlights actions related to behavioural and cultural insights (BCI) undertaken by the WHO Regional Office for Europe in 2024. In September 2022 Member States of the WHO European Region unanimously adopted a Regional resolution and five-year action framework for BCI for health, with five strategic commitments. In 2024 the Regional Office collaborated closely with Member States and partners to advance the

implementation of these commitments. This involved planning and initiating BCI research and interventions together with several Member States with the aim of ensuring more people-centered, culturally informed and evidence-informed approaches to health behaviors.

Available here: <https://shorturl.at/vSPzV>

Quick buys for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases



Despite their established effectiveness, uptake of the WHO best buys for tackling non-communicable diseases (NCDs) has been uneven and disappointing. Here we introduce the “quick buys”, an evidence-based set of cost-effective interventions with measurable public health impacts within five years. We reviewed 49 interventions previously established as cost-effective (<\$120,000 per disability-adjusted life-year averted) to identify the earliest possible detectable effect on high-level population health targets. Using a strict evidence hierarchy, including Cochrane and systematic reviews, we estimated the effects of each intervention against global targets agreed upon by countries. Quick buys were defined as those interventions that could exhibit measurable effects within 5 years, aligning with average electoral cycles in across the WHO European Region. Of the 49 interventions, 25 qualified as quick buys, including those relating to tobacco (n = 5), alcohol (n = 4), unhealthy diet (n = 3), physical inactivity (n = 1), cardiovascular disease (n = 3), diabetes (n = 4), chronic respiratory disease (n = 1), and cancer (n = 4). These findings not only offer guidance to policymakers deciding on interventions that align with short-term political cycles but also have the potential to accelerate progress to global health targets, particularly the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of reducing premature NCD mortality by one-third.

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Introduction
In 2010, WHO developed a package of evidence-based, cost-effective interventions that could reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Acting at the individual and population level, these interventions targeted the leading NCD risk factors (tobacco and alcohol use, unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity) and four disease groups (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer). The resulting list was known as the “NCD best buys”, and helped focus both NCD advocacy worldwide and policymaking at the country level.
However, a decade and a half later, implementation

include the false perception that the benefits of NCD interventions take too long to realise and are thus misaligned with short-term political cycles.¹⁰ Politicians are likely to favour measures that yield results that they can take credit for, although empirical research shows that this varies with their career stage.¹¹ In addition, the best buys need to be more relevant to higher-income countries, given that they were initially envisioned and promoted to apply to low-income and middle-income countries.
To address these misconceptions, we undertook a review of the best buys and other recommended interventions for preventing and controlling NCDs to

those interventions that could exhibit measurable effects within five years, aligning with average electoral cycles across the WHO European Region.

Available here: <https://shorturl.at/MciHh>



Health data governance in the age of artificial intelligence: policy imperatives for the WHO European Region

Effective health data governance is essential for treating trusted, digitally enabled health systems that deliver high-quality, equitable care to populations. It underpins actions that support interoperability and sharing of data, enhance data quality and facilitate evidence-informed decision-making to lead to better health outcomes. Health data governance also plays a crucial role in supporting artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in health, which is reliant upon access to large, high-quality datasets for training algorithms. In this context, health data governance ensures that data used for AI are ethically sourced, representative and free from bias, which helps in developing safe and reliable AI models that also enshrine gender, equity and human rights.

Executive summary

Effective health data governance is essential for creating trusted, digitally enabled health systems that deliver high-quality, equitable care to populations. It underpins actions that support interoperability and sharing of data, enhance data quality and facilitate evidence-informed decision-making to lead to better health outcomes.

Challenges concerning the collection, use and sharing of health data. These findings are summarized in the report on digital health in the European Region and underscore the importance of building strong governance frameworks to harness the potential of health data while safeguarding individual privacy and human rights.

Main findings

Health data governance also plays a crucial role in supporting artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in health, which is reliant upon access to large, high-quality datasets for training algorithms. In this context, health data governance ensures that data used for AI are ethically sourced, representative and free from bias, which helps in developing safe and reliable AI models that also enshrine gender, equity and human rights.

The 2022 WHO survey on digital health in the WHO European Region (referred to here as the 2022 WHO survey) highlighted several key trends and

and free from bias, which helps in developing safe and reliable AI models that also enshrine gender, equity and human rights.

Available here: <https://shorturl.at/dhSCI>

Cybersecurity and privacy maturity assessment and strengthening for digital health information systems



Digital health aims to enhance patient outcomes and reduce the burden on health-care providers, including doctors, nurses and family caregivers, by leveraging digital technologies. These technologies encompass health-care providers' information systems, cloud computing, mobile apps, web applications, connected medical devices, digital therapeutics, application processing interface services and artificial intelligence/machine learning applications. Operating within a regulatory and cybersecurity-challenged environment, health information systems face threats such as ransomware attacks on hospitals. This guide focuses on cybersecurity and privacy risk assessments in digital health, as tailored to the WHO European Region. It provides a framework for technical audiences to

develop risk assessment specifications suited to the unique needs and goals of their organizations and countries in order to comply with country-specific cybersecurity and privacy regulations.

Available here: <https://shorturl.at/VuOMI>



MULTIMEDIA

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[YouTube](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) / [X/Twitter](#)

SOURCES

- <https://www.who.int/europe/home?v=welcome>
- <https://www.who.int/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/c/whoregionalofficeforeurope>

CONTRIBUTORS

- Erwin Cooreman
- Zlatan Musić

The Public Health Report is a publication that provides the latest updates and insights on the World Health Organization's activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European region. It covers diverse health topics, emerging trends, and pressing issues, offering valuable information for professionals as well as the public. The report highlights WHO's initiatives, achievements, and collaborative efforts to address health challenges, improve public health, and promote well-being across the region.