

Chapter 10

World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

The World Health Organization (WHO) is reviewed in this chapter including how it addressed global emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter takes a temporal look at how the organization grew into the major contributor in trying to connect the world in preventing and mitigating health concerns from sexually transmitted diseases to full-blown pandemics. The WHO's main objective is to promote the highest possible level of health for all people. In doing so, it works to combat diseases, promote health equity, provide leadership on global health matters, and coordinate international health initiatives. The WHO also provides technical assistance and support to countries, conducts research, sets health standards, and publishes guidelines on various health topics. When the COVID-19 pandemic grew, the WHO provided guidance to countries on how to respond to the virus, including recommendations on testing, contact tracing, quarantine measures, and the use of personal protective equipment. The organization has also been working to improve the understanding of the virus.

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

WHO was founded in 1948 as the designated UN agency for connecting “nations, partners, and people” with the goal of promoting good health around the globe. The goal for WHO is intended to create a way to coordinate worldwide health emergencies as well as to assist individuals no matter how

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-8989-2.ch010

World Health Organization

old in living and achieving good health founded in science-based policies and programs.

Following the end of World War II, WHO was conceived at the UN Conference on International Organizations held in San Francisco. From 1946 to 1948, the organization was formed with 18 states and the first World Health Assembly was held in Geneva in the summer of 1948.

Initially, the goals of WHO were focused on “malaria, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, maternal and child health, sanitary engineering, and nutrition (Lancet, 2002) and had a budget of just \$5 million. As WHO grew, new areas of concern were added such as smallpox, disease control and eradication, family planning, maternal morbidity, polio, immunizations, environmental health, and AIDS (Lancet, 2002). In the first decade of its existence, the WHO focused many of its resources on sanitary conditions in improving health and protecting individuals from diseases such as Cholera. Vaccinations for smallpox and polio were created in an effort to reduce the millions of deaths as a result of these diseases (WHO).

As WHO grew along with the number of health concerns worldwide, in the second decade the organization maintained a strong focus on sanitary regulations and maintaining its focus on cholera, plague, small box, and yellow fever. In its third decade, WHO created programs for research and training in areas including tropical and infectious diseases in marginalized populations. Moving into its four decade the discovery and diagnosis of AIDS took the forefront by creating a global program on HIV/AIDS. At the same time, the organization was working on its final plans for the eradication of polio.

As WHO reached its 50th anniversary, new initiatives were put into plus in creating a Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network, to prevent the spread of viruses and infectious diseases on an international level. To this day, WHO remains committed to eradicating and preventing the spread of disease. It is the international responsibilities and processes that will be focused on for the rest of this chapter.

Responsibilities

Despite the existence of studied guidelines from prior pandemics, the COVID-19 tragedy response has proven fragmented, highly political, and lacks the cross-disciplinary understanding of what and how public health crises translate into operational cooperation before, during, and after a pandemic.

18 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/world-health-organization/340744

Related Content

Document Management Mechanism for Holistic Emergency Healthcare

M. Poulymenopoulou, F. Malamateniou and G. Vassilacopoulos (2018). *Health Care Delivery and Clinical Science: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 823-838).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/document-management-mechanism-for-holistic-emergency-healthcare/192706

Multicriteria Models for E-Health Service Evaluation

Gulcin Buyukozkan and Ufuk Bilsel (2010). *Health Information Systems: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 1976-1993).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/multicriteria-models-health-service-evaluation/49976

An Automated Method for Differential Blood Counting Using Microscope Color Image of Isolated WBC

Anant R. Koppa and Venugopalachar Sridhar (2012). *Emerging Communication Technologies for E-Health and Medicine* (pp. 219-232).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/automated-method-differential-blood-counting/65715

Illness Narratives: Creative Drama Within

Pragya Pandey Joshi, Ankur Joshi, Saket Kale, Jeewan Singh Meena and Nivedita Kale (2013). *International Journal of User-Driven Healthcare* (pp. 65-73).

www.irma-international.org/article/illness-narratives/101344

Regulations Initiatives in France for the Interoperability of Communicating Medical Devices

Norbert Noury, Karima Bourquard, Didier Bergognon and Jean-Bernard Schroeder (2013). *International Journal of E-Health and Medical Communications* (pp. 50-64).

www.irma-international.org/article/regulations-initiatives-in-france-for-the-interoperability-of-communicating-medical-devices/78742