Impact of Emerging Diseases on the Global Right to Health: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Emerging diseases (EDs) are newly identified, introduced, or evolved diseases with rapidly changing incidence. According to international instruments, the right to health includes universal access to healthcare, fair distribution of health facilities, medications, adequate food, and the highest standards of physical and mental health. This right is fundamental in modern society but has received less attention, especially in the context of EDs. This study aimed to investigate the impact of EDs on the right to health.

Search Strategy: Searches were based on the PubMed, Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar databases by using the following terms: "emerging disease" OR "emerging diseases" OR "communicable diseases, emerging") AND ("community health" OR "health rights" OR "global health" OR "public health" OR "right to health"). Publication from January 2020 to May 2024 and full text in English or Persian were the prerequisites for inclusion.

Results: We identified 2,221 articles through a systematic search and included 29 after screening for relevance. The results showed that EDs can lead to significant mental health problems due to quarantine and economic crises. Anger, anxiety, depression, suicide rates, and divorce rates increased during quarantine. Proper nutrition helped fight diseases. During crises like the COVID-19 pandemic in countries such as Uganda, governments and organizations must meet people's nutritional needs to prevent and control diseases and uphold the right to health. Implementing these rights faced challenges, including limited understanding of EDs due to their novelty, inadequate access to vaccines and treatments, crucial aspects of the right to health, and the lack of legislation and education for individuals who fail to adhere to quarantine and personal hygiene measures.

Conclusion and Discussion: Our findings demonstrate that training community health workers can effectively help overcome this challenge. Challenges arise due to the lack of cooperation among governments and health disparities between underdeveloped and developed countries. It is crucial to prioritize preparedness in controlling EDs before they occur, by offering financial support to research centers and implementing stringent laws to manage EDs. To combat these diseases effectively, all governments and international organizations must uphold health rights and embrace approaches such as One Health.

Keywords: Emerging communicable Diseases, Public health, Right to health

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