

EDITORIAL

Inexorable Efforts in Enhancing Public Health Strategic Research in Post-pandemic Eras

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Since early 2020, we have been witnessing an ongoing prolonged tragedy due to an unexpected pandemic. Previous public health focus on efforts to address major non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, obesity, nutritional problems and mental stress has undergone a drastic shift because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

No one would have expected that in this modern era with sophisticated medical technology and existing medicine, a pandemic conflict to the point of almost completely paralyzing life activities and movements globally could occur. Added to that, nobody anticipated the pandemic to last for more than a year, particularly after the vaccines were made available.

The original purpose of lockdown during the early period of the pandemic was to curb the progression of the disease, therefore avoiding potential paralysis of the healthcare system. However, it has turned into multiple setbacks to the general population, including impairing the progress of the country, economic, social interactions and deteriorating the overall healthcare system.

As social media now always takes the lead in discussing most global issues, all individuals are 'eligible' to talk even though they have minimal knowledge or even nothing to do with the issue. The focus of a society that no longer depends on physicians and scientists in obtaining authentic information on the treatment and prevention of any health issues also complicates the situation.

Therefore inevitably, Public Health research strategies need to be reset according to the relevant contemporary scope. Ultimate reduction in mortality, morbidity related to the identified root causes need proper insight and wisdom. Public health decisions, in our context, need a fresh realignment, therefore enabling its robustness in combating these post-pandemic challenges.

Strategic paradigms in consolidating every space and dimension that is a necessity in every public health niche. Irresponsible intervention of certain groups of the targeted milestone is something that should be avoided.

One major hurdle for public healthcare practitioners in the field, is a large portion of notification forms that need to be filled up, which consumes significant time. This needs an obvious review, which could allow more time to focus on the outbreak and data management.

In the pre-pandemic era, much focus on infectious and non-infectious diseases had been carried out in a general sense, but now, we must move towards more practical solutions. There is an urgent need to encompass both infectious and non-infectious diseases without 'discrimination'. The current reality of a pandemic gives us a powerful lesson that any pandemic associated with infectious diseases is not a trivial matter, but instead, it imposes an exponential risk of death for all those with chronic diseases as well as always potentially paralyzing existing service systems.

Another point that needs to be addressed in this countless effort is data sharing. The challenge of data sharing during pandemics particularly needs to be reviewed. All stakeholders in pandemic management need to be treated more fairly and wisely. To ensure better innovation and scope of services, data analysis must be carried out accurately and competently, which can then be shared with all parties involved, both in services and academics. The data should not be owned by a specific institution in the name of government confidentiality.

In ensuring the provision of the necessary platform in implementing the strategic research plan, we must provide coordinated ideas that involve competent human resources, comprehensive infrastructure, reasonable allocation, close cooperation of all sectors and full patriotic commitment from the policy makers.

We must change the culture of managing the pandemics just purely based on institution stratification. The competition to outnumber others by putting certain research brands on behalf of separate institutions should be set aside. The determination to face the uncertainties of the epidemic in the future must be faced with full dedication of responsibility and mutual cooperation with each other.

The end of these endemic transition eras is still uncertain, but we obviously do not need to wait much longer to put everything in a proper perspective. While various technologies and updated data management continue to evolve, turning points to navigate absolute targets of public health research in both local and global settings are inexorable.