

Long term visibility needs for pre-defined 'World Health Priorities'

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ABSTRACT

World Health Day being celebrated with much fanfare from year 1950 with an ever-changing focus on a spectrum of areas related primarily to the health promotion and prevention issues has not yielded the desired results as is evidenced by repeat of the same focus areas after a decade or so. Despite unfruitful results around the world, especially in developing countries, the mere symbolic observance of World Health Day raises serious unanswered questions. Thus, there is a need to evaluate the existing aspects related to low and short term visibility of the worldwide goals towards

achievement of internationally defined and generally accepted 'World Health Priorities' being reflected through the instruments of change such as 'Millennium Development Goals' and 'Observance of special days such as World Health Day'. It sustained concerted efforts and focused approach with high level commitments shall yield much desired results in terms of human development, welfare and happiness.

Key words: inclusive growth; millennium developmental goals; stakeholders; universal health care

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World Health Organization (WHO) has been repeatedly emphasizing the importance of coverage, consistency, comprehensiveness and consolidation of the efforts and services in the field of preventive, promotional and curative health care. [1-3], However, the sustained concerted efforts of WHO have seen challenges of enormous proportions from political, administrative, social and individual choices, preferences, policies and deep seated behavioral practices.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been successful in trying to bring all the relevant health concerns and other human developmental agenda into a basket of varied socio-economic challenges [4]. Thus developed 'Millennium Developmental Goals are the bench marks for a spectrum of issues ranging from poverty alleviation to maternal & child health coupled with the environmental sustainability. Addressing the globally important tasks of controlling Malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS have also been given due to emphasis [5-7]. UNICEF has also been proactively involved in the protection of child through infrastructure strengthening, manpower provisions, capacity building of the technical and para medical staff, involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations, Volunteer Groups, Special Campaigns, quality guidelines and supportive supervision [8]. 'Health for All' [9] is still a distant dream. The timely, co-ordinate and willful participation, courage and scrutiny of the policies, programmes and resources can only yield rich dividends if there is enthusiastic involvement of the high political forces towards excellence in achievements as per desired and discussed regional norms, variations and agreed principles. The convergence of UNICEF [10,11] and WHO policies [12] shall go a long way in realizing much dreamt visionary goals of human happiness and development.

Universal Health Care (UHC) approach for developing countries with the provisions of free outdoor and indoor medical care, especially to the poor and under-privileged classes within the society, shall help in setting of the national priorities towards addressing the social determinants of health with full fledged hammering intensity of collective inputs provided by externally and internally funded agencies, organizations and networks [13].

The theme of World Health Day is observed as generally changing, unrelated to the previous or following theme of the earlier or next year respectively. There are no review reports /analytical literature available related to the fulfillment of the targets for each yearly specified theme. Surprisingly, the most preferred focus area, generally in all developing countries, of 'Maternal Health' (with only one theme, i.e. 1.58%) has not been given due to preference over the other themes

(62 themes, i.e. 98.41%). Despite focus of the theme related to 'Health' and 'Prevention' for 15 themes (23.80%) and 11 themes (17.46%), a thoughtful analysis of the achievements around the continents is required to gauge the impact of these themes over the achievement of objectives of 'Health' and 'Prevention Health'. Services, the backbone of any health care system, may have been given greater emphasis than the observed five themes (7.93%). Child Health with six themes (9.52%) is the most individual centric area being at par with 'Communicable Diseases' and 'Non Communicable Diseases' separately. High emphasis given to 'primary level of prevention' (66.66%) as compared to 'secondary' (20.63%) and 'tertiary' (12.69%) levels are indicative of the transition of priorities over time. However, haphazard allocation of themes over the consecutive years may not have been fruitful for sustaining the gains made so far. Non-achievement of yearly specified goals has been great stumbling block for step wise envisioned improvements in global health scenario.

Comprehensive review, by the public health authorities around the world, of the reasons of failure, necessary amendments and mechanisms for long term visibility of World Day Themes is the answer for translating the World Health Day themes into action for effective and efficient global change. The need about an hour for all stakeholders is to review not only the system of decision making for theme of world health day, but also devise ways and mean to ensure continuity of the purpose, achievement of global health targets and visibility of the focus area specific activities at least throughout that year, for long-lasting impact to the beneficiaries. The dual benefits, to be achieved through careful observance of conceptualized understanding based priority settings, activities and measurable supervised indicators, necessarily will include the enabling environment for quick march towards targeted achievement of 'Millennium Development Goals' and speeding up of the socio-economic trajectory for all inclusive growth.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have declared no conflicts of interest.

Table 1. Quantitative cum area wise distribution of the 'World Health Day Themes'

Period	Mode of Intervention/ Level of Prevention	Area	No.	Year	Theme		
PRE-PATHOGENESI	Health Promotion (25 Themes: 39.68%); I. Primary Level of Prevention	Health (15 Themes; 23.80%)	1	1953	Health is Wealth		
			2	1958	Ten Years of Health Progress		
			3	1959	Mental Illness and Mental Health in the World Today		
			4	1967	Partners in Health		
			5	1968	Health in the World of Tomorrow		
			6	1969	Health, Labor and Productivity		
			7	1981	Health for All by the Year 2000		
			8	1983	Health for All by the Year 2000; The Countdown Has Begun		
			9	1985	Healthy Youth : Our Best Resource		
			10	1986	Healthy Living : Everyone a Winner		
			11	1988	Health for All : All for Health		
			12	1989	Let Us Talk Health		
			13	2001	Mental Health: Stop Exclusion – Dare to Care		
			14	2006	Working Together for Better Health		
			15	2007	Invest in Health; Build a Safer Future		
			Environment (7 Themes; 11.11%)	1	1952	Healthy Surroundings Make Healthy People	
				2	1955	Clean Water Means Better Health	
				3	1966	Man and His Cities	
				4	1990	Think Globally Act Locally: Our Planet (One Earth One Family)	
				5	1996	Healthy City for Better Living	
				6	2008	Protect Health from Climate Change	
				7	2010	Join the Global Movement to Make Cities Healthier	
			Hunger (3 Themes; 4.76%)	1	1957	Food for Health	
				2	1963	Hunger, Disease of Millions	
				3	1974	Better Food for a Healthier World	
		Specific Protection (17 Themes: 26.98%); I. Primary Level of Prevention	Prevention (11 Themes; 17.46%)	1	1961	Accidents Need Not Happen	
					2	1962	Preserve Sight – Prevent Blindness
					3	1976	Foresight Prevents Blindness
					4	1980	Smoking or Health : Choice is Yours
					5	1991	Should Disaster Occur Be Prepared

PATHOGENESIS			6	1993	Handle Life with Care : Present Violence and Negligence	
			7	1994	Oral Hygiene	
			8	1995	World Free Polio By 2000 AD	
			9	1998	Pregnancy is Precious : Let Us Make it Safe	
			10	2000	Safe Blood Starts With Me: Blood Saves Lives	
			11	2004	Road Safety is No Accident	
		Child Health (6 Themes; 9.52%)	1	1951	Health for Your Child and the World's Children	
			2	1977	Immunize and Protect Your Child	
			3	1979	A Healthy Child, a Sure Future	
			4	1984	Children's Health : Tomorrow's Wealth	
			5	1987	Immunizing Chance for Every Child	
	6		2003	Shape the Future of Life ; Healthy Environments for Children		
	Early Diagnosis & Treatment (13 Themes: 20.63%); II. Secondary Level of Prevention	Communicable Diseases (6 Themes; 9.52%)	1	1956	Destroy Disease Carrying Insects	
			2	1960	Malaria Eradication – A World Challenge	
			3	1964	No Truce for Tuberculosis	
			4	1965	Smallpox – Constant Alert	
			5	1975	Smallpox – Point of no Return	
			6	1997	Emerging Infectious Diseases : Global Alert and Global Response	
		Health Services (5 Themes; 7.93%)	1	1950	Know Your Health Services	
			2	1954	The Nurse, Pioneer of Health	
			3	1982	Add Life to Years	
			4	2009	Save Lives, Make Hospitals Safe in Emergencies	
			5	2011	Antibiotic Resistance: No Action Today, No Cure Tomorrow	
		Maternal & Child Health (1 Theme; 1.58%)	1	2005	Make Every Mother and Child Count	
		Disability Limitation (6 Themes: 9.52%); III. Tertiary Level of Prevention	Non Communicable Diseases (6 Themes; 9.52%)	1	1970	Early Detection of Cancer Saves Lives
				2	1971	A Full Life Despite Diabetes
3	1972			Your Heart is Your Health		
4	1978			Down with High Blood Pressure		
5	1992			Heart Beat : Rhythm of Life		
6	2002			Move for Health: Prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases		
Rehabilitation (2 Themes: 3.17%); III. Tertiary Level of Prevention	Geriatric Care (2 Themes; 3.17%)	1	1999	Active Ageing Makes the Difference		
		2	2012	Ageing and Health		

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