



Brief Report

First Webinar REDSALI: The COVID-19 pandemic from an international health perspective

- The pandemic by COVID-19 raises the question for humanity as to whether we are prepared and in what way to face a crisis such as the one that is currently occurring. Despite the existence of action plans, protocols and guidelines, the pandemic seems to indicate that we are not prepared and that its consequences will mostly affect the poor.
- Various response scenarios have been presented by all the countries of the world. Some countries have chosen to launch strategies to achieve herd immunity; others have opted for WHO suggested measures (i.e. social distancing and hygiene measures). Regardless of the measures taken, countries face what it seem to be contradictory challenges: on the one hand, protecting citizens and, on the other, the prompt opening of the economy.
- The pandemic is framed within a complex political-social context at a global level, in which economic difficulties; chronic diseases, climate change and multiple social protests due to inconformity with development models have played a leading role in recent years. This setting has highlighted deep fractures in our societies, which end-up by affecting health determinants in a special way.
- Health has thus acquired a priority status in national and international schemes, putting it in the very heart of long-term objectives set at various levels. An example of this is the inclusion of specific health related objectives in multiple United Nations agendas and strategies and the increasing priority that issues like universal health coverage, primary health care, early crisis care, the health of the elderly and healthy aging, among others are gaining on the international development agenda.
- Emerging and reemerging diseases threat the world on a daily basis. Every country is vulnerable to the effects of epidemics, regardless of their available resources and/or their health systems performances. Effectively responding and containing outbreaks implies high costs that can ignite serious impacts on national and international economies.
- The COVID-19 pandemic affects all countries in the same way. We have witnessed a rapid increase in the number of cases. As of today, most confirmed

cases are reported in the United States, Russia, Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Brazil and Turkey.

- We have several reporting and data visualization systems. From the analysis of trends in the number of confirmed cases in recent months, it is possible to assure that a growing pandemic is brewing in Latin America.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has ignited the following responses: the restriction of free movement, the closing of borders, the struggle for powers, centralism and decentralization, the provision of humanitarian aid and economic protection, the active search for cases and epidemiological containment, the application of the most advanced curative model to avoid death, the use of information technologies for its containment as well as the activation of research sectors to search for a vaccine, among others.
- A recurring theme is the effectiveness of masks; in countries like China they are used not only to avoid inhaling pathogens but also to protect themselves from air pollution.
- The LIHP conceptual model of international health offers a theoretical framework to analyze the different forces that play a role in the pandemic and end up affecting the health and health levels of populations. Several questions can be asked using this model as a guide, for example: Are healing models the way out of the pandemic?
- The consequences of the interactions between forces and its impact on the international determinants of health and development models will reach great magnitudes. For example, the closure of the economy and trade will affect the established development models and will probably highlight the importance of strengthening the primary health care level in all countries.
- The consequences of the economic collapse in the world will bring with it health consequences, on account of unemployment, hunger, poverty and mental health.
- Recovery will require adaptation to a new way of life, of global production and consumption. It will require the follow-up of opening protocols with hygiene measures never seen before.
- The pandemic has revealed alarming inequities in access to health services, especially for minorities.
- Brazil and Colombia are two countries in the region that exemplify this reality with an overwhelming growth of cases in the Amazon with a large indigenous population and in regions of Afro-descendants. Both countries must establish strategies to comply with the health coverage of the most neglected social groups.
- With a view to the future, it seems that we are at a turning point in which it is necessary to consider a paradigm shift in the models that we have followed so far with a view to: greater biosecurity, more basic public services, capital taxes global, more care and affection for the family, more care for the environment and older adults.