Global Environmental Public Health Governance in COVID-19

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Climate and other Determinants of Health (CE/CDE)
In 2004, photographer Tuca Vieira captured the image of the Paraisópolis favela next to its wealthy neighbour, Morumbi, that came to symbolise the...

Guardian São Paulo week

Inequality ... in a photograph
The view point from PAHO

- Support MS
- Partners
- Links to SDGs

PAHO Strategy

• Technical Notes
• Guidelines
• Webinars
**Objective**
Strengthen the capacity of health actors in all sectors to address and adapt to EDH, prioritizing populations living in situations of vulnerability.

**Goal**
Reduce the burden of disease and inequity in health attributable to environmental risks in the Region.

**Strategic Objectives**

- Primary prevention
- Cross-sectoral action
- Strengthened health sector
- Building political and social support
- Enhanced evidence and communication
- Monitoring

**PAHO Plan of Action 2020-2030**
Reduce the burden of disease and inequity in health attributable to environmental risks in the Region.
Strategic Actions

• Improve the performance of environmental public health programs

• Strengthen environmental public health surveillance

• Foster an environmentally responsible and resilient health sector

• Promote environmentally healthy and resilient cities and communities
Strategic Actions

• Improve the performance of environmental public health programs

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• Revitalize environmental public health programs.
  • Enhance health sector collaboration with other sectors.
  • Strengthen the technical capacity of workforce.

Thematic Areas

Climate Change and Health

Chemical Safety

Food Safety

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Air Quality and Health
Thematic Areas

- Climate Change and Health
- Chemical Safety
- Food Safety
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Air Quality and Health

Strategic Actions

- Improve the performance of environmental public health programs
- Strengthen environmental public health surveillance
- Foster an environmentally responsible and resilient health sector
- Promote environmentally healthy and resilient cities and communities

- Strengthen environmental public health surveillance systems.
- Strengthen network of WHO Collaborating Centers.
**Thematic Areas**

- Improve the performance of environmental public health programs
- Strengthen environmental public health surveillance
- Foster an environmentally responsible and resilient health sector
- Promote environmentally healthy and resilient cities and communities

**Strategic Actions**

- Reduce environmental footprint of the health sector.
- Providing adequate environmental infrastructure and services in health care facilities.
**Thematic Areas**

- **Climate Change and Health**
- **Chemical Safety**
- **Food Safety**
- **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**
- **Air Quality and Health**

**Strategic Actions**

- Improve the performance of environmental public health programs.
- Strengthen environmental public health surveillance.
- Foster an environmentally responsible and resilient health sector.
- Promote environmentally healthy and resilient cities and communities.

- Integrate environmental public health in cities and communities’ health and development programs.
The view point from PAHO

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IHR (2005)

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS (IHR) – from policy to people’s health security

What are the IHR?
The IHR are legally binding and help countries work together to protect lives threatened by the spread of diseases and other health risks, including pollution and chemical hazards.

5 reasons why the IHR matter

1. HEALTH THREATS HAVE NO BORDERS
The IHR strengthen countries’ abilities to control diseases that cross borders at ports, airports and ground crossings.

2. TRAVEL AND TRADE ARE MADE SAFER
The IHR promote trade and tourism in countries and prevent economic damage.

3. GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY IS ENHANCED
The IHR establish an early warning system not only for diseases but for anything that threatens human health and livelihoods.

4. DAILY THREATS ARE KEPT UNDER CONTROL
The IHR guide countries to detect, assess and respond to threats and inform other countries quickly.

5. ALL SECTORS BENEFIT
The IHR prepare all sectors for potential emergencies through coordination and information sharing.

Until all sectors are on board with the IHR, no country is ready

www.euro.who.int/ihr

Event shall be notified to the World Health Organization under IHR 2005

#UniversalHealth
Observed and potential impacts of COVID-19 on the environment and climate change


#UniversalHealth
Number of Daily Exposures to Cleaners and Disinfectants Reported to US Poison Centers — United States, January–March 2018, 2019, and 2020

*Increase in exposures to cleaners on January 29, 2020, came from an unintentional exposure to a cleaning agent within a school.*

An increase in 1 µg/m³ in PM$_{2.5}$ is associated with an 8% increase in the mortality rate from COVID-19 (95%CI: 2%, 15%) (Wu et al, 2020)
Webinars

- Chemical Safety
- HCWM
- Waste
- WASH
- EPH in Camps and shelter
- SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater

- Facebook Live sessions
Partners

- WHO
- AIDIS
- UN Environment
- UNICEF
- Universities (Perdue, …)
- Research bodies (FIOCRUZ)
- Global Water 2020
Barriers to good governance

- Environmental public health policy processes informal and ambiguous
- Environmental public health only slightly integrated in other health sector policies
- Chronic shortage of human, technical, and financial resources
- Policies in sectors with relevance to health set without recognition of their impacts on environmental public health
What have we learnt from the Pandemic in EPH?

- Environmental Public Health is not well integrated into the actions of the Health Systems, although it is essential to ensure the protection of the health of the population and the prevention of diseases.
- Personal hygiene (hand washing, respiratory etiquette) is not within cultural norms.
- There are no technical, human and financial resources for proper hand hygiene or infection prevention in health facilities.
- The management of hospital waste is limited in most countries, increasing the risk of infections.
- Community knowledge about the safe use of chemicals is inadequate to protect the population from accidental poisonings.
- Ventilation in closed environments tends to be poor.
- Many countries do not have experience in wastewater epidemiology which is important not only for the pandemic but for antimicrobial resistance and communicable disease surveillance.
What should we do in EPH to prepare for future situations?

- Advocate for the importance of environmental public health in health systems and responses to outbreaks through active presence in sector tables and strengthening of intersectoral tables (WASH)
- Strengthen Public Environmental Health entities in the countries to better integrate them into the response
- Implement environmental public health analysis of health facilities and disseminate their results widely
- Advocate in an integrated way with water and sanitation entities so that no one is left behind, and that everyone has access to safe water and sanitation services and appropriate solid waste collection systems
- Ensure the availability of information on environmental public health and environmental infrastructure indicators through an integrated environmental public health information system
A shared responsibility

- Call to action to the environmental public health community to lead
- Use of the power of partnerships and knowledge
- Engagement of all relevant stakeholders