

# Emerging Infectious diseases are still a threat to Global Health



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Emerging Infectious diseases do not seem to be giving Global Health a break. As COVID 19 is being contained and Monkey pox did not cause much havoc, Ebola is now threatening as it reappears in Uganda. Uganda has had sporadic outbreaks of Ebola, however this outbreak has been different in that no index case has been identified. The Africa Health Journal October issue has dedicated an article on Ebola written by experts from Uganda who have been at the forefront of fighting this disease since the early days of its emergence.

The opinion piece is on "Decolonising Global Health" which is a concept that is filling the global Health airwaves at the moment. Francis Omaswa bases the opinion on discussions that were held at the African Forum for Education and Research in Health (AFREhealth) symposium which was held in August 2022 at Harare, Zimbabwe. He defines it as movement that fights against entrenched systems of dominance and power imbalance in the work to improve the health of populations. He goes on to say that the south has to accept and take some responsibility towards decolonisation. He offers some examples where this has been successfully done.

There are two articles on "Innovations in Health professions Education (HPE) for the new normal". Both highlight the changes that had to be made during and after the COVID 19 pandemic. The Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER®) global programs team, describes the FAIMER Institutes that offer global FDPs in HPE and the pivots made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; as well as the implications for Health Professions Education (HPE) and Faculty Development Programs (FDPs) with a special focus on Africa. They highlight how they had to innovate and adapt to the "new normal" to convene faculty and offer new skills to them. This is a bit similar to what Joan Shepard, the Principal, National School of Midwifery in Sierra Leone talks about. She describes how teaching Midwifery was

impacted in the COVID-19 Pandemic and Post Pandemic periods. She narrates her experience on what challenges both faculty and students faced and also how they had to be innovative and adapt to the new situation. Both highlight the role of online training in the new normal, one at a local level in Sierra Leone and another at a global level. It has been noted that though COVID 19 was a big challenge to the education sector worldwide, it never the less has had some positive impact in that the educators have had to relook at the way they deliver their curriculum content and also become innovative in their approaches. There has been a significant increase in the use of Information Computer Technology (ICT) even in Low/Mid Income Countries (LMICs) like Sierra Leone. This has challenged these countries to invest more in ICT.

Okoro et al posed an interesting question as to whether Africa should continue to implement COVID-19 vaccination to 70% target? They say that early evidence indicated COVID 19 was unlikely to adversely impact prevailing life expectancies in Africa thus calling for a response sensitive to this insight. They noted that three years of the pandemic are not evolving the same way everywhere and therefore, Africa ought to recalibrate its response to COVID-19 beyond focusing on high immunization coverage of vulnerable groups. That vaccination towards the 70 % target is not helpful considering the deepening widespread poverty and social desperation. They collate the data on the pandemic, on funding and also on how the funding to other diseases in Africa is being affected. They conclude that repeated universal inoculation against every imaginable variant of a constantly changing virus is simply unsustainable in Africa without further borrowing. There is more on COVID 19 by Ivor Campbell, CEO of Snedden Campbell, a UK-based recruitment agency for the global medical technology industry, he gives an account on the benefits of COVID 19 especially where technological advance is concerned. Talking about the advance in the manufacture of vaccines,

artificial intelligence, telehealth, block chain technology, 3D printing and more.

Jim Campbell et al present a commentary on Africa's workforce challenges, and related Health Workforce (HWF) policy, planning, governance, and collaborative partnership issues. They highlight the collaboratives supporting Africa drive the Health Workforce agenda but also note that despite the gains in this area pre COVID 19, the gap in the LMICs remains big. This has been further aggravated by the COVID 19 pandemic. They recommend more inclusive multisectoral engagement and partnership with stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society so as to make things better in the region.

Juliet Nabyonga-Orem works for the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a Medical Officer in charge of health policies, strategies and governance gives an overview on the different drivers of inequalities in maternal and child health services in low- income countries. She links this to the achievement of Universal Health Coverage. She advocates for strengthening health research and information systems to guide development of refined approaches in tackling inequalities so as to generate granular data that can benefit the low-income countries to come up with evidence based solutions.

There are also two articles on health and safety at the workplace and how they can be mitigated.

There is our usual medicine digest and quiz, plenty of news and advertisements.

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