

EDITORIAL

Normalization after Covid-19 Pandemic: Way Forward Towards Healthy Recovery

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The world as we know has changed. While a global pandemic has been an ominous risk for decades, COVID-19 came as a jolt, characterized by the functional interdependencies of the social, economic and public health systems. The initial shock and systemic failures from policy unpreparedness, not only bared open the fault lines of social injustice and inequity, but also led to xenophobic orientation and conspiratorial thinking. Social isolation, mental health illness, redundancies, financial difficulties and permanent closure of many businesses were the fall out of this crisis. The world adapted and moved from physical to digital. Financial systems, education, industry and entertainment were restructured and decentralized. The pandemic also had significant effect on the sociopolitical trends including sense of human solidarity, rebuilding of national pride, work-home balance, reducing human impact on climate and the selfless dedication of health professionals.

The pandemic's chaos presented an opportunity to reevaluate priorities and develop new strategic solutions to the disruptions caused by tactical difficulties consequent to this plague. The interdependencies of our society, use of information technology and exceptional computational sciences, are the so-called new normal, the most appropriate way to do governance in an era of hyper connectedness. The pandemic has shown that economic and social determinants of ill-health are strong predictors of health outcome. There is a need to work for universal health coverage as it is in everyone's interest that people who feel unwell should not check their pocket before they seek help. It is also imperative to integrate community-led services into public systems so as to enable universal access. Free healthcare is not only vital for tackling pandemics but it also prevents millions of people from falling into extreme poverty by the cost of healthcare every year. One also needs to strengthen social safety nets to enhance resilience, given the interrelation between health and livelihoods. Lastly, developing a common culture that emphasizes personal responsibility in the public interest, is essential. It is important to underscore that the biggest steps forward in health have usually happened in response to a major crisis as raising of post-Second World War health systems across Europe or establishment of NHS in United Kingdom.

Thus, coronavirus crisis, first and foremost a health crisis, has complex and long-term consequences. Policy preparedness, financing our health, and business leadership are key to resilience against such large systemic shocks. It can therefore be seen as an important opportunity for largescale, deep-seated structural change, far beyond the obvious, in scale and scope.

Editor-in-Chief

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