

Innovative Care for Chronic Conditions: Building Blocks for Action

Global Report



Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health
World Health Organization

...Committed to health care improvement

This report was produced under the direction of JoAnne Epping-Jordan, Health Care for Chronic Conditions. It is the first key component of a three-pronged WHO strategy to improve the prevention and management of chronic conditions in health care systems. This strategy is overseen by Rafael Bengoa, Director, Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, and Derek Yach, Executive Director, Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health.

The three WHO Health Care for Chronic Conditions projects related to this strategy are:

- ⊕ Innovative Care for Chronic Conditions (managed by JoAnne Epping-Jordan)
- ⊕ Improving Adherence (managed by Eduardo Sabaté)
- ⊕ Primary Health Care for Chronic Conditions (managed by Rania Kawar)

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Introduction

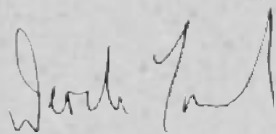
The *Report of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health*, as well as the subsequent WHO report *Scaling Up the Response to Infectious Disease: A Way Out of Poverty*, documented the incontrovertible links between health and economic development, and the rising health care demands related to infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. More generally, the management of all chronic conditions – noncommunicable diseases, long-term mental disorders, and certain communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS – is one of the greatest challenges facing health care systems throughout the world. Currently, chronic conditions are responsible for 60% of the global disease burden. They are increasing such that by the year 2020 developing countries can expect 80% of their disease burden to come from chronic problems. In these countries, adherence to therapies is as low as 20%, resulting in poor health outcomes at a very high cost to society, governments, and families. Yet, around the world, health systems do not have a plan for managing chronic conditions, and simply treat symptoms when they occur.

Recognizing the opportunity to improve health care for chronic conditions, WHO has launched a new project on *Innovative Care for Chronic Conditions*. During the first phase of this project, best practices and affordable health care models for chronic conditions have been identified, analysed, and synthesized. A number of international experts, organizations, and institutions have been involved in the process.

Innovative Care for Chronic Conditions: Building Blocks for Action presents the result of this effort: a comprehensive framework for updating health care to meet the needs of chronic conditions. The proposed building blocks and overall framework are relevant for both prevention and disease-management in health care settings. This is especially important given that most chronic conditions are preventable. In an international review meeting, policy-makers judged these strategies, as well as the overall framework, to be robust across a range of scenarios that developing countries might face, including an HIV/AIDS epidemic, a flight of skilled human resources to the private sector, general economic collapse, and a change of government. Participants also felt that the framework was applicable to a range of chronic conditions, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and long-term mental disorders.

Next steps for the project include country demonstration projects in the implementation of strategies described in this report. This process will be completed in close collaboration with public health partners.

This report represents an important step towards preparing policy-makers, health service planners, and other relevant parties to take action that will reduce the threats chronic conditions pose to the health of their citizens, their health care systems, and their economies.



Derek Yach

Executive Director

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Executive Summary

The dramatic increase in chronic conditions, including noncommunicable diseases, mental disorders, and certain communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS demands creative action. The World Health Organization created this document, *Innovative Care for Chronic Conditions: Building Blocks for Action*, to alert decision-makers throughout the world about these important changes in global health, and to present health care solutions for managing this rising burden. Every decision-maker has the potential to improve his or her health care system's ability to address the growing problem of chronic conditions. Today's choices influence the future.

In addition to health policy-makers, persons with the interest and ability to influence health care systems at national and/or local levels (such as Ministries of Finance and Planning, donors, and development agencies) are encouraged to assimilate the information contained within this report regarding chronic conditions. The message is timely and pertinent for all countries, regardless of resource availability.

Advances in biomedical and behavioural management have substantially increased the ability to effectively prevent and control conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS, and cancer. Growing evidence from around the world suggests that when patients receive effective treatments, self-management support, and

regular follow-up, they do better. Evidence also suggests that organized systems of care, not just individual health care workers, are essential in producing positive outcomes.

In developing countries, chronic conditions present mainly at the primary health care level and need to be handled principally in these settings. Yet, most primary health care is oriented toward acute problems and the urgent needs of patients. As part of overall improvement efforts, an evolution in primary health care is imperative. A primary care system that cannot effectively manage HIV/AIDS, diabetes and depression will soon become irrelevant. Primary health care must be reinforced to better prevent and manage chronic conditions.

Improving health care for chronic conditions also means focusing on adherence to long-term therapies. Patients with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic conditions are often prescribed essential drugs as part of their overall disease management plan. Yet, adherence to long-term treatments is remarkably low. Although patients are frequently blamed for failing to follow regimens as they are prescribed, nonadherence is fundamentally a failure of the health care system. Health care that provides appropriate information, support, and ongoing surveillance can improve adherence, which will in turn reduce the burden of chronic conditions and enhance patients' quality of life.

Decision-makers can take actions that will reduce the threats chronic conditions pose to the health of their citizens, their health care systems, and their economies. Their actions regarding financing, resource allocation, and health care planning can significantly diminish negative effects. Armed with essential elements for improvement, informed decision-makers can make a difference.

The eight essential elements for taking action are as follows:

1. Support A Paradigm Shift

Health care is organized around an acute, episodic model of care that no longer meets

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