



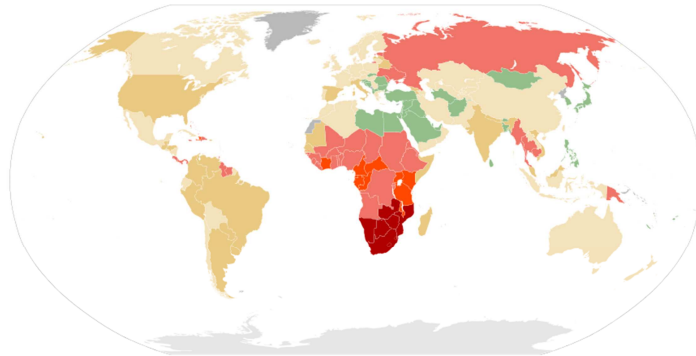
PORGMUN Research Paper

FACILITATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF FINANCING AND COORDINATING R&D FOR PRIORITY HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

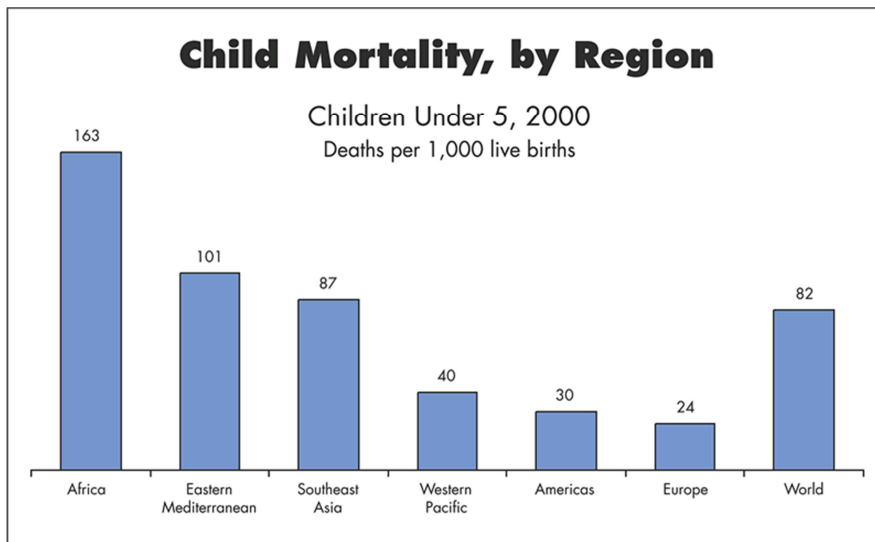
Introduction

As seen during the recent events in equatorial Africa and the outbreak of the Ebola virus, developing countries (i.e. countries with a low standard of living, industrial development ratio and Human Development Index) are obviously susceptible to uncontrolled spread of diseases in a very short time period. These events only seem to be the tip of the iceberg of the long lasting problems that the citizens of developing countries have to struggle with. It is already known that it might be very difficult to find a source of fresh clean water in sub-Saharan countries. Due to this, thousands of people suffer from bacteria induced infections causing fevers, abdominal pain, dehydration and in the worst scenarios death.

In addition, Africa has the highest number of patients suffering from HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection) and sub sequential AIDS syndrome (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). This is not only caused by the lack of proper contraception, but also the lack of technologies necessary for curing and suppressing the symptoms of the disease.



One of the problems is that R&D of developing countries is not a priority for the major pharmaceutical companies while it bears no immediate profit and is generally a long term investment. Economically speaking, this is a major mistake, while improving healthcare and thus the general standard of living would vastly increase productivity; it is understandable why this is not a primary concern for pharmaceutical industry. However, the mortality rate of underdeveloped countries is stunning and while developing countries have the largest natality ratio, no more than 30 % of the population has a longer lifespan than 50 years. And of course, Africa, as the continent with the highest rate of poverty, has the highest child mortality rate in the world.



All of these problems are non-present in developed countries thanks to the high level of healthcare and its availability. It is a shocking display of the growing differences, the “widening scissor blades” between the third world countries and the rest of the world.

WHO involvement

Of course this topic is being addressed by the WHO (World Health Organisation, operating under the United Nations Economic and Social Council). The Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property (PHI) Team is responsible for promoting innovation in the discovery, development, production and delivery of essential health technologies. The key activities of PHI include:

1. Facilitate the establishment of sustainable alternative ways of financing and coordinating R&D for priority health technologies for developing countries in light of market failures
2. Develop policy guidance and provide technical assistance on management and application of intellectual property with a view to promote needs based innovation and access to patent protected essential medicines and health products
3. Facilitate technology transfer to and build capacity in developing countries for the manufacturing of strategically selected health products in order to improve access.
4. Establish WHO global leadership on innovation related to the essential health technologies including point of care diagnostics
5. Facilitate monitoring and evaluation of GSPA-PHI (Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property) in 2017 in order to provide evidence for its impact and direction
6. Develop and lead the Global Cooperation on Assistive Health Technology (GATE).

However, the key is the cooperation of governments in order to reach these goals.

INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

While local governments mostly understand that this is a problem that has to be addressed, they generally lack the necessary funds to promote these goals. In comparison, the USA spend 8 000 dollars per capita per annum on public healthcare, some of the poorest countries have less than 50 dollars p.c. p. a. for dealing with incomparably worse health conditions.

Thus, local governments **significantly rely** on economic support from the international community as well as individual governments. However, it is also important to endorse not only the governments, but pharmaceutical industry to cooperate with this endeavor.

SUMMARY

The key problems are both on the international and local level. It would certainly help to endorse the distribution of simple technologies which would help in everyday life, such as portable malaria testing devices or water sanitizers. But it is also important to make the funding more effective and to distribute the necessary funds properly. It is also important to create pressure on the public and increase awareness of the situation, while all of these problems might impact the whole world, especially in cases of epidemics that can mutate and grow unattended.

Further reading

- a. The publication on achieving global public health agenda
http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/pdfs/achieving_global_public_health_agenda.pdf
- b. The WHO's Global Strategy and Plan of Action
http://www.who.int/phi/publications/Global_Strategy_Plan_Action.pdf?ua=1