


HEALTHCARE AS A PART OF NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

The public health, healthcare, and emergency management systems represent a cornerstone of national health security. The purpose of this paper is to show the importance of healthcare as part of national security. The ways of prevention, as well as the preservation of the health of the nation are considered, which in turn is a prerequisite for the development of the state. Good prevention practices applied around the world are shown. The development of proper strategy for increasing the quality of healthcare is very important for the proper development of each county in the world. Every Government in the world should take proper care of the health of its citizens.

Keywords: Healthcare management, National Security, Development, Healthcare Strategy, Public administration

INTRODUCTION

Public health is part of our national health care. Global health is not often thought of as a national security issue, but development professionals and military leaders have been coming together in the belief the two are “closely tied together.” Preventing the spread of infectious disease and promoting global health are increasingly seen as ways to promote a country’s stability without using military force. Demonstrating compassion for the neediest in the world, it seems, can also make us safer at home.

Strengthening global health helps prevent potential threats to national security by ensuring stability in the developing world. As Rear Admiral Thomas Cullison, USN (Ret.) has said, global health engagement abroad can “deny a base to those who would like to see countries stay unstable; they will help develop close relationships—both military and civilian—between countries; and they will create friends out of what could potentially have become enemies.”

Historically, health has occupied the lower echelons of national priorities. Over the past decade, however, national policy-makers have increasingly recognized the deleterious impacts that health crises may have on national interests. As a result, particular health issues occasionally have been elevated within national agendas, especially if they have implications for foreign policy and/or they are perceived as threats to national security (Global Health Enhances National Security, 2012).

Identifying a health issue as a foreign policy or security issue, or both, may lead to higher prioritization and more attention from top policy-makers, in turn, bringing greater political support and more funding. While health professionals may welcome the higher profile and greater resources given to their issues, characterizing a health issue as a national priority (and particularly as a security issue) may change the understanding of a health threat, put relatively greater emphasis on the views of those outside the health community and potentially alter the approach to solving the problem. Consequently, care should be taken in deciding which health issues should be given priority on par with national security issues and included explicitly in national foreign policy.

We support the assertion that “while it is clear that health issues often intersect with security issues, not all health challenges represent security concerns”. Health issues that do not pose security threats should not be contextualized as such, since doing so may detract from overarching public health and foreign policy objectives. At the same time, however, we believe that efforts to address all types of health issues through foreign policy contribute to overall improvements in diplomatic relations, which may enhance the security of countries.

HEALTH AS A NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERN

Promoting economic development and preventing political instability are core priorities for every government, and are generally the primary motivations underlying national security policy. Research has demonstrated that acute and chronic changes in health status have direct and indirect impacts on security, and that epidemics may lead to destabilization, political unrest, civil disorder or long-term deterioration of the economic viability of a country or region. Such health issues receive attention from senior policy-makers when they are possible threats to

international, regional, national and individual security, or potentially may affect the economic welfare of a country or region (Price-Smith, 2002).

The recent recognition that health issues have implications for national security has resulted in part from health officials' concerted efforts to educate policy-makers about the potential security impacts of certain disease-related events, whether naturally occurring (such as pandemic influenza) or in the form of intentionally released agents (such as acts of biological warfare or bioterrorism) (DP Fidler., 2005. C McInnes, K Lee. 2006).

Identifying a health issue as a security issue, as happened with HIV/AIDS and pandemic influenza, may bring more funding, political prominence and attention from senior policy-makers. This leads to more political support, increases in resources and higher prioritization. However, when the public health aspects of an issue outweigh its economic and security considerations, such as with polio, policy-makers and health professionals must resist the temptation to depict it as a security or economic threat, despite the increased political visibility and availability of resources that this might offer. Characterizing a health issue as a security threat often results in it being addressed through programmes and policies developed for law enforcement rather than public health. The result may be that a disproportionate emphasis is placed on assigning responsibility and levying sanctions to control the threat, as opposed to more traditional health models that identify and ameliorate risk factors and behaviours that contribute to the threat.

Additionally, characterizing a health issue as a security concern may assign a stigma to any assistance that is provided. Since good health is a common value shared among all people, international health programmes are naturally suited to being used as tools of diplomacy among countries that do not have a broad common agenda. Pegging health programmes to security programmes may undermine this opportunity for bridge building, to the detriment of both foreign policy and public health concerns. The role of "Global health diplomacy," as defined by Adams, Novotny, and Leslie, consists of combined efforts to both improve global health and international relations, especially in impoverished and politically insecure places. Health care is believed to be an effective tool for promoting peace. As such, it is often discussed and enacted at the upper echelons of foreign policy and international law. For example, Kickbusch, Silberschmidt, and Buss describe global health diplomacy as, "multi-level and multi-actor negotiations and processes that shape and manage the global policy environment for health ... it is where the compromises are found and the agreements are reached in multilateral venues, new alliances and in bilateral agreements." Diplomats now negotiate public health matters, and likewise, health experts and global health organizations are now part of high-level diplomatic talks (Kickbusch, Silberschmidt, and Buss 2007).

Diseases and failing health systems are widely seen today as threatening to international security, and consequently, global health diplomacy is a vital and popular foreign policy tool. According to the Office of Global Health Diplomacy, located within the U.S. Department of State, “The United States invests in global health as an expression of American compassion, to strengthen fragile states by promoting social and economic progress, to protect America’s security, and as a tool of public diplomacy”(U.S. Department of State 2015).

PUBLIC HEALTH AS A PART OF DIPLOMACY AND SECURITY

Cooperation and assistance targeted at public health challenges that are put in the context of foreign policy may broaden partnerships and build diplomatic relationships. In this way, the act of promoting global health enhances the security of countries. When countries work together to successfully address a global health challenge, be it a localized epidemic or a potential threat to international security, the world becomes a healthier and safer place. Maximizing the opportunity for such partnerships requires paying close attention to the nature of public health threats and carefully considering whether or not they are truly security threats.(National Intelligence Council. United States, 2000.)

THE ROLE OF HEALTHCARE IN BULGARIA

Health for the Bulgarians has always been one of the most important things in life. The main law of the country – The constitution of Bulgaria – gives the equal right of healthcare to every citizen. The current healthcare system is a complex bureaucratic structure that was created during the years of Socialism (1945-1989) and is still going through deep reforms to meet the modern standards. After the accession of Bulgaria into the European union in 2007, the health policies of the Government aim to meet the requirement of the EU. Bulgaria is in the European region of the World Health Organization and is following the European policy for health and well-being: “Health 2020”. However, numerous issues are yet to be solved, including the economical instability of the healthcare system, the underfunding of hospitals and the unaffordably high prices of medication. In Bulgaria, healthcare plays a main role in national security and foreign policy. It has always been seen as a basic element in the field of security and defence (but not only).

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF BULGARIA - THE BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR HEALTHCARE

This is the central institution that is responsible for the implementation of the official government policies throughout the country. The main administrative body on the management of the

National health system is the Minister of healthcare who is assigned by the government and is responsible for the control on the activities of all institutions. A High Medical council, which includes representatives of the National health insurance fund, all Medical universities and the Bulgarian Red Cross is elected by the minister. This High council discusses and makes decisions for the national health strategy, draft legislation, the criteria for the admission of students in medical universities, scientific priorities in the area of medicine and the annual draft budget for healthcare. A significant influence on the healthcare in Bulgaria has the Bulgarian medical association, which was established in 1901 and is the second professional medical association in the world (after the British Medical association). During some periods in history, the Bulgarian medical society has even had the functions of a Ministry of healthcare.

Regional health inspectorates are responsible for the administration of district hospitals and the application of the government policies and international standards locally, control over all medical activities, the provision of statistical information and also ensure that laws like the ban on smoking in public places are effectively enforced. There is a health inspectorate in every administrative region of the country.

The structure of interaction between the organizational units in the Ministry of Health thus provides the regional and national security within the framework of Bulgaria, guaranteeing the health and life of the Bulgarian citizens. This is a national approach under development and improvement, based on the need to improve the efficiency of the health insurance of the population as well as in view of the constantly rising and dynamic processes that require measures to be taken to increase the security of our citizens and the population of the country.

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Establishing an expert health board to the National Security Advisory Council. Such a proposal is made by the Bulgarian Medical Association in a letter to the President. A major function of the Board will be to provide support and assistance on health-related issues. "Considering the fact that the nation's health is a major state priority, it should be valued not only as a foundation for state security but as standing above all interests and parties, Health care can not serve to secure the interests of one or another political party or group, but should be non-partisan and in favor of patients.

In addition, we believe that one of the main statesmanship priorities should be to create the necessary conditions for the work of doctors, such as free medical care, as far as medicine is an art, not an administrative and limited activity, to obtain decent pay and not Last but not least to increase the prestige of the medical profession among the public, " (Expert board for healthcare, 2016).

In every country in the world, this matrix of relationships between individual authorities and organizations responsible for protecting the population is different in content but in the same way, To gesture the health and life of the person, to improve the quality of life of people, and through this (through this publication) to ensure the very existence of the respective peoples and entire nations.

All of these should take into account the specificities of the environment in which they are implemented and on the other, their correlation with relevant policies and strategies applied in these areas of the socio-economic development with which healthcare is inextricably linked, it affects them or depends on them. So from this point of view, the following activities are carried out in the below pointed directions:

DISEASE DETECTION

- Support increased access by health authorities to the world-wide laboratories participating in the WHO's Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN)
- Enhance early detection and alert systems that aim to identify public health threats through both established and innovative sources of information, such as social media
- Strengthen model development and wide deployment of novel diagnostics
- Develop agreements and implement mechanisms to improve rapid sample sharing of non-influenza pathogens with potential for transnational spread, for public health purposes
- Strengthen laboratory systems' ability to detect pathogens accurately and safely
- Enhance detection and reporting of public health threats affecting refugee, internally displaced, and migrant populations

PREVENTION OF SPREAD OF PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS AND DISEASES

- Provide information, tools, education, and infrastructure support to build or strengthen food safety systems and regulatory capacity
- Promote the appropriate and responsible use of antimicrobial agents in all settings, including clinical practice and livestock production
- Develop multi-sectoral policy frameworks and advance regulatory oversight for managing materials used in diagnostics research and biosurveillance activities
- Promote biosafety and biosecurity training
- Engage with foreign counterparts to curb spurious/falsely-labelled-falsified/counterfeit medicines that threaten public health, trade, innovation, and security
- Help provide and/or improve training for supply chain professionals

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

- Foster and refine emergency alert systems and risk communication capabilities
- Build on existing response networks and promote establishment of and linkage among Emergency Operations Centers to enhance real-time communication and coordination during public health emergencies
- Establish and train multi-sectoral rapid response teams with access to near real-time information systems and the capacity to help identify the likely source of a disease outbreak or agent release
- Improve the availability of public health emergency medical countermeasures by increasing global production capacity, procurement, and stockpiling while taking into account the access and functional needs of at-risk populations
- Strengthen the infrastructures, policies, and operational frameworks needed to rapidly deploy public health medical countermeasures (MCMs), personnel, and other public health and medical assistance across countries in response to emergencies
- The research community can develop rapidly deployable template protocols to better coordinate the effective conduct of scientific investigation and research before, during, and after public health emergencies (National Health Security Strategy, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The public health, healthcare, and emergency management systems represent a cornerstone of national health security. Responses to adverse health incidents, such as the 2014 Ebola epidemic, demonstrate that much work remains to be done to ensure that public health, healthcare, and emergency services systems are able to work together day-to-day, mutually supporting one another so that they can seamlessly scale up to handle increased requirements or demands during the mitigation, response, and recovery phases of the incident life-cycle. All of these systems rely on a skilled workforce.

The nation has made progress toward establishing the foundation for such integration. Regional planning alliances and healthcare coalitions have proliferated. The Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP), for example, has expanded its focus on building community health resilience by fostering the development of health care coalitions (HCCs) that include hospitals, long-term-care facilities, community health centers, emergency management, and public health agencies, in planning of building emergency response capabilities into routine public health and healthcare delivery systems. In addition, the growing adoption of electronic health records is facilitating health system integration.

Integrating the expertise and specialized knowledge and skills found in the public health, healthcare, and emergency management systems will enhance a community's resilience without duplicating services under different organizations or strategies. Activities have been undertaken to build a highly competent health security workforce, including the identification core competencies for disaster medicine and public health.

The priorities for the objective of seeking to sustain and build on recent progress by strengthening healthcare coalitions and planning alliances, building on and improving routine services and systems, focusing on the needs of at-risk individuals, strengthening workforce education, increasing the number of trained workers and volunteers, and effectively managing and using that workforce.

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