



## Examining the Economic Impact of Tropical Diseases in Pre-Pandemic Times

Huits Martin\*

*Department of Infectious Diseases, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

### DESCRIPTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has created one of the major problems to global health in recent history. The tropical diseases are not immune to its effects, despite the fact that it has had an adverse impact on life and organizations worldwide. Tropical diseases are illnesses caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, and fungi found in tropical and sub-tropical regions. They can be fatal if left untreated or managed properly. Some of the more common tropical diseases include malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever, leishmaniasis, Chagas disease, and trachoma. Though they are often overlooked due to lack of awareness or financial constraints to provide medical care due to limited resources in lower-income countries where these illnesses occur more frequently, tropical diseases can have an enormous economic impact.

These diseases can lead to disruption in local economies as individuals become ill or die from them which affects productivity and labor force as well as disrupts supply chains leading to trade and commerce losses. This blog post will assess the potential economic impact of tropical diseases amidst the COVID-19 pandemic by looking at some of the key factors that contribute to it such as disruption in labor force due to illness or death from disease alongside other impacts like increased healthcare costs and trade restrictions.

The effects of tropical diseases on the world economy are far reaching. Though globalization has been a blessing for many, it has also made it easier for infectious diseases to spread more quickly than ever before. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tropical diseases such as dengue fever, malaria, and chikungunya caused significant damage to economies worldwide. Now, with the COVID-19 pandemic, assessing the potential economic impact of tropical diseases becomes even more important. The economic impact of a tropical disease can be seen in both direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include medical expenses incurred from diagnosis and treatment while indirect costs are associated with losses in productivity due to absenteeism and disability. In pre-pandemic times, estimates suggested that malaria alone cost developing countries up to 2.7% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), lower per capita income is associated with higher rates of malaria-related deaths due to a lack of access to effective prevention methods and treatments. During the COVID-19 pandemic however, many healthcare providers have had difficulty accessing resources needed for treatment and prevention as well as being overwhelmed by an influx in COVID-19 cases. This has had an intermittent effect on availability and access to preventive measures that could protect populations from other tropical diseases which hampers efforts at controlling their spread as well as their long term economic impact. On top of this, government shutdowns due to lockdowns have led to reduced economic activities throughout all sectors including agricultural production resulting in food insecurity amongst vulnerable populations which increases their risk for contracting tropical illnesses further disrupting economies already weakened by COVID-19 measures such as travel restrictions and job losses and put it simply without access to preventive measures or resources needed for diagnosis or treatment, a population's susceptibility to develop chronic illnesses increases exponentially leading them further into financial insecurity and debt while simultaneously exacerbating existing health inequalities across racial lines or between high and low income communities.

When this potential economic damage caused by tropical diseases amid the COVID-19 pandemic, governments must focus on increasing access to preventive practices among vulnerable communities such as those living in extreme poverty or remote areas where these illnesses tend to be most prevalent. Additionally, providing adequate resources for early detection and timely treatment should be a priority for governments looking towards reducing long term costs associated with these conditions which can range from increased medical expenses incurred by individuals struggling with chronic illness or delayed workforce participation resulting from disability amongst other factors. In conclusion, assessing the potential economic impact of tropical diseases amidst the Covid-19 pandemic is essential if we are ever going to tackle global poverty due both directly or indirectly associated with

**Correspondence to:** Huits Martin, Department of Infectious Diseases, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands E-mail: marta\_bruce@email.com

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these factors, or even prevent them from spreading even further than they already have been through globalization prior to this crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant economic impact on countries around the world. However, its

effects are further compounded by an increase in tropical diseases, which can have a detrimental impact on global economies.