

The COVID-19 Pandemic: Towards Other Threats

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Abstract:

Introduction:

Life is full of uncertainties. Humankind faces droves in natural and man-made disasters, urging the need for strong public health preparedness for effective intervention. In the realm of public health, disasters are considered ecological disruptions that result in deaths, injuries, illness, or damage that cannot be effectively managed by the application of routine procedures or resources. Besides, they could be emergencies (any occurrence that requires an immediate response); hazards (caused by a natural phenomenon); incidents (a natural or human-made event requesting a response to protect life or property); or natural disasters (a rapid, sudden-onset phenomenon with profound effects) [1]. Thus, actions should be exerted in multi-pronged approaches where diverse jurisdictions, agencies, and authorities might be involved to prevent injury, illness, or death.

Globally, there has been recognition of the peril of biological and chemical threats as well as epidemics. Accordingly, in response to these concerns, countries should exert their efforts to bolster public health preparedness to ensure public safety. An array of preparedness plans to minimize morbidity and mortality are crucial and require securing funding, mechanisms for surge capacity, including ongoing assessment of needs, identification of alternate triage and treatment sites, workforce training and psychosocial support of the public.

How close we live daily to biological threats is now obvious in the era of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In Ethiopia, after confirming the first case of COVID-19 on March 3, 2020 G.C., the government has taken disaster relief measures [2]. They have been tied up to a multitude of activities in leadership, communication and managing information, planning for and improving practice, protecting worker health and safety to minimize social disruption and economic losses.

Public health preparedness is necessitated due to the devastating consequences on health care systems becoming paralyzed. Accordingly, the Office of the Prime Minister along with sector offices were responsible for sketching the strategy,

while the Health Ministry was been responsible for implementing the action plan, coordinating across the government tiers as needed, and reporting to the Prime Minister. The Planning and Development Commission, as well as the Ministry of Finance have been accountable for overseeing budget allocations and working with the Health Ministry to direct funds to priority areas.

Given the limits on the government's resources, it was essential to use public finances in a way that delivered the greatest impact possible - and that was a difficult prospect. Hence, landmark calls for collaboration, coordination, and cooperation - the three Cs - among the regional and federal governments. Communication strategies for risk-reduction behaviors, including social or physical distancing, hand washing, and "respiratory etiquette" were noticeably carried out uniformly, with a single voice. This pandemic has also opened the eyes of each sector for the need for personal protective equipment, medical and pharmaceutical supplies.

Perhaps, the silver lining of this pandemic is how it has awakened the country to the interconnectedness and the broad nature of the emergency response and inculcated a spirit of citizenship in all. Noticeably, the Novel Coronavirus pandemic has served as a conduit to many lessons that should be garnered for further policy discussions. Reflecting on the government's responses in this pandemic will be necessary in how to respond to future biological and chemical threats and challenges.

One of the first improvements that should be enhanced is how the federal governments prioritized a whole-of-government approach, bringing together all levels of the federal, regional, local governments, as well as various sectors and government departments, into coordination [3]. Another important lesson is how the administration's primary goal was to ensure the well-being of citizens, working in tandem with state and local public health officials in their effort to address the pandemic. This has encompassed the provision of health guidance based on factual information, elimination of state bureaucratic red tapes that would prevent strategic leadership and hobbles public health resources.

Restrictions of activities were carefully cascaded as well at appropriate level with decisions based on current and anticipated situations, while there a fair balance was stricken between preserving both life and liberty to avoid worsening the “costs of the cure”.

Overall, the efforts exerted by our government have given us a sense of direction and leadership and has re-ignited a renewed sense of community among the populace. People have taken on a sense of duty, which is essential for nurturing of egalitarian characters, cultivating authentic social well-being and developing the trait of thoughtfulness decision making [4].

References:

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