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The Lakshmi Mittal and Family
SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE
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REIMAGINING INDIA'S HEALTH SYSTEM
A Lancet Citizens' Commission

The Lancet Citizens' Commission on
Reimagining India's Health System
Newsletter

Dear Friends,

We are delighted to present to you the August edition of the monthly newsletter by the Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System. This month's newsletter delves into the uncertainty of disease outbreaks and the need for better preparedness. The mental health challenges faced by medical students are highlighted, calling for systemic changes. We explore how AI is transforming healthcare, enhancing efficiency and patient care. Demographic shifts in India are impacting health indicators, revealing both challenges and opportunities. A government survey finds that 80% of public health facilities are substandard, highlighting the need for significant improvements. We emphasize the importance of a healthy workforce for economic vitality and discuss the responsibility of India's health system to keep its aging population healthy and productive. Our highlight event, "Technology for Universal Health Coverage (UHC): Perspectives from India and the NHS," provides insights into leveraging technology for achieving universal health coverage.

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This Month's Highlight

Technology for Universal Health Coverage (UHC): Perspectives from India and the NHS

The webinar "*Technology for Universal Health Coverage (UHC): Perspectives from India and the NHS*" aims to promote the technology workstream of the Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System and facilitate the sharing of best practices between India's Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the UK's NHS.

Participants will explore the barriers and enablers to healthcare technology adoption, examine ethical and technical considerations in handling patient data, and the innovative use cases for emerging technologies in healthcare. This event offer a platform for bilateral collaboration and learning, enhancing healthcare delivery through technology through engaging discussions, presentations, and interactive sessions.

Date: Monday, September 23, 2024
Time: 9am - 5:30pm BST / 4am - 1:30pm EST / 1:30pm - 10pm IST

The Royal Society of Medicine

Technology for Universal Health Coverage (UHC): Perspectives from India and the NHS

Join us for this unique and insightful webinar aiming to promote the technology workstream of the Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System and facilitate the sharing of best practices between India's Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the UK's NHS.

Monday 23 September 2024
9:00am to 5:00pm BST

RSM members: £18 - £36
Non-members: £33 - £66

Online

Book now: www.rsm.ac/Tech4UHC

Views & Opinions

What we know we don't know is when and where our next disease outbreak will be

Over the past 30 years, the number and diversity of outbreaks have risen dramatically, from AIDS to Zika. This is driven by factors such as travel, population density, human displacement, deforestation, and climate change, says microbiologist and virologist *Gagandeep Kang*.

In an increasingly interconnected world, the threat of contagious diseases transcends borders with unprecedented speed and impact.

Mental health of medical students can no longer be ignored

The National Medical Commission had constituted a Task Force for the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Medical Students in response to the alarming incidents of 122 suicides by medical students in the last five years. The Commission's online survey showed that a whopping 27.8 per cent of undergraduate students had mental-health conditions and 31.3 per cent of postgraduate students had suicidal thoughts. Clearly, mental health cannot be neglected anymore — it needs a calibrated policy, writes *K. Sujatha Rao*.

How AI is transforming healthcare

If Artificial Intelligence (AI) is everywhere, how is healthcare utilising it? During the inaugural Dakshin Healthcare Summit in Hyderabad, Dr. *Vijay Chandru*, founder of Strand Life Sciences, highlighted the opportunities AI brings to the healthcare industry. He pointed out that AI has great potential in healthcare, particularly in screening applications. From a screening point of view, it is definitely promising, for example, in oral cancer screening.

The impact of demographic shifts on India's health indicators

India has been undergoing rapid demographic changes for over three decades. With a population of 1.44 billion, it is one of the fastest-growing economies and the world's most populous country. This growth presents both challenges and opportunities in the realm of public health. The population pyramids of India reveal notable demographic shifts over the last decades. In 2011, 8.1% of the male population and 8.6% of the female population were aged 60 and above. By 2036, these percentages are projected to increase to 13.9% for men and 16% for women.

80% of public health facilities are substandard: Government survey

Nearly 80% of public health facilities in India do not meet the minimum essential standards for infrastructure, manpower, equipment and other benchmarks. This shocking detail has emerged from a self-assessment exercise carried out by govt in which public health facilities from states and UTs covered under the National Health Mission (NHM) were asked to fill in details, such as the number of doctors, nurses or basic medical equipment they have, writes *Durgesh Nandan Jha*.

For India to get better

The health of India's vast populace is, of course, important for its own sake. It is also a critical component of rapid growth—think of it as the cause, not the effect, of India becoming a global giant. A healthy workforce will be the life-force of our economy. The challenges before us are stark. While making health accessible and affordable to the masses is critical, there has to be a major emphasis on tackling the new epidemic of lifestyle diseases that are classified as noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), writes *Sonali Acharjee*.

A health system that truly cares

India became the world's most populous country in the 75th year after independence. As the nation moves to celebrate 100 years of post-colonial freedom in 2047, it aspires to be respected as a leader in the comity of nations, with the productive power of its vast and demographically young human resources propelling accelerated, equitable and environmentally sustainable global development. This casts a great responsibility on the country's health system to keep India's population healthy and productive as it ages, writes *K. Srinath Reddy*.

Featured Partner

The **Population Council Institute** works to improve lives in India through innovative research for data-driven and evidence-based impact. It confronts critical health and development issues in India from ensuring access to health services, ending malnutrition, and improving reproductive health to building resilience to environmental risks and achieving gender equality.

Help us develop a roadmap to achieve universal health coverage in India by visiting our website: https://www.citizenshealth.in/

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