What are our future challenges?
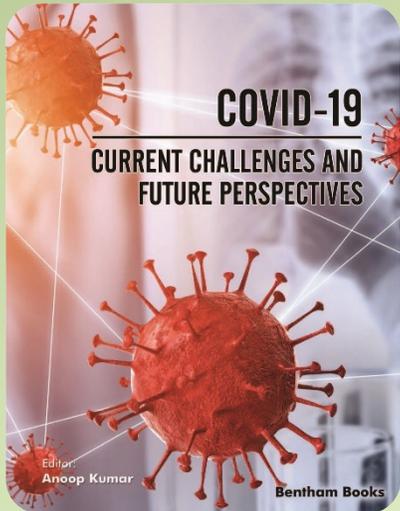
10.2174/9789811498640121010017

- ECDC Report "Lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic" 2023

- The *Lancet* Commission *on lessons for the future form the Covid-19 pandemic* 2022

- WHO: *From Emergency Response to Long Term Covid-19 Disease Management* 2023

Thursday, 25th May 2023

1. ECDC Technical Report:
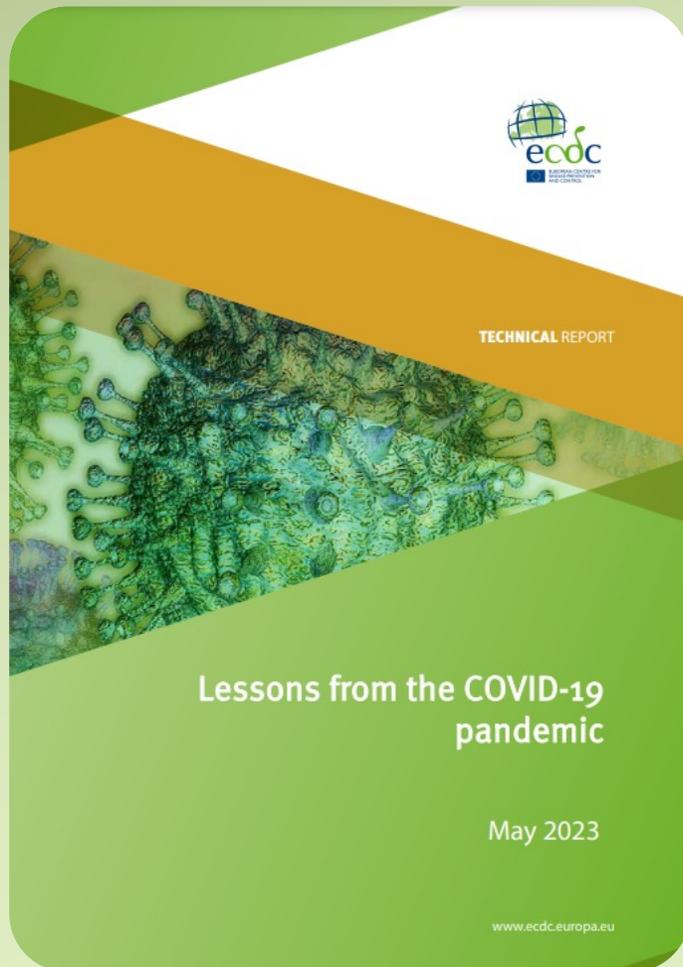
- Serves as an input to revise the pandemic or emergency preparedness plan(s) and strengthen the recovery phase

- Between 2021-2022 ECDC identified and collected lessons and insights from Member States and public health stakeholders

- 4 main lesson areas were categorized:

1. Investment in the public health workforce

2. Preparing for the next public health crisis

3. Risk communication and community engagement

4. Collection and analysis of data and evidence

4 Lesson areas:

Figure 3. Lesson areas identified by ECDC from the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: ECDC

- 4 areas are closely interconnected

- All of them serve as a key component in response to health threat

Lesson Area 1: Investment in the public health workforce

- Map the existing workforce through workforce capacity assessment and forecast Member States' needs

- Invest in public health training programs for a skilled public health workforce; invest in the current workforce to increase quality and trained specialists

- Mobilize young professionals, experts or retired staff from countries not affected by the event

- Specific procedures to facilitate public health response in centralized and de-centralized systems

Lesson Area 2: Preparing for the next public health crisis

- Better representation of public health experts at higher levels in decision making process

- Advisory committees should be intersectoral and the risk should not be assessed only from a public health perspective; communicate and share results of systematic literature reviews on NPIs, lessons learned…

- Facilitate intersectoral advice; facilitate sharing of lessons learned among Member States; facilitate the evaluation of the implementation of NPIs

- Update legislation governing the control of communicable diseases; foster international cooperation on topics such as sharing of data, equipment and resources

Lesson Area 3: Risk communication and community engagement

- Strength the capacity to communicate and deliver messages by multi-disciplinary teams; organize trainings in risk communication for European public health professionals; leadership in communication; increase ECDC activities such as infographics, videos…

- Better understanding of how to engage with hard-to-reach populations and communities; manage mis- and dis-information

Lesson Area 4: Collection and analysis of data and evidence

- Digitalization and automatization in the collection of data should be encouraged; create better and stronger surveillance systems

- Analysis and follow-up of emerging scientific evidence to support new recommendations

- Pre-design web outputs for situation awareness; tools to assess Member States' laboratory capacity

- Strengthen capacity for laboratory testing and genomic sequencing

To sum up…

In the future:

- Role of non-health sectors in the preparedness plan should be outlined;

- Resource issues, reinforcing public health staff, strengthening IT, better surveillance systems (…) should be put prior to an emergency

- Consider new legislations on topics such as NPIs, travel restrictions, time of implementation

2. The *Lancet* Commission on lessons for the future form the Covid-19 pandemic

The Lancet Commissions

The *Lancet* Commission on lessons for the future from the COVID-19 pandemic

Jeffrey D Sachs, Salim S Abdool Karim, Lara Aknin, Joseph Allen, Kirsten Brosbøl, Francesca Colombo, Gabriela Cuevas Barron, María Fernanda Espinosa, Vitor Gaspar, Alejandro Gaviria, Andy Haines, Peter J Hotez, Phoebe Koundouri, Felipe Larraín Bascuñán, Jong-Koo Lee, Muhammad Ali Pate, Gabriela Ramos, K Srinath Reddy, Ismail Serageldin, John Thwaites, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, Chen Wang, Miriam Khamadi Were, Lan Xue, Chandrika Bahadur, Maria Elena Bottazzi, Chris Bullen, George Laryea-Adjei, Yanis Ben Amor, Ozge Karadag, Guillaume Lafortune, Emma Torres, Lauren Barredo, Juliana G E Bartels, Neena Joshi, Margaret Hellard, Uyen Kim Huynh, Shweta Khandelwal, Jeffrey V Lazarus, Susan Michie

- As of May 31st 2022 there were 6.9 million reported deaths and 17.2 million estimated deaths due to Covid-19

→ This number highlights both a tragedy and a global failure at multiple levels

→ Some failures include: lack of timely notification of the initial outbreak, lack of coordination among countries; failure to ensure adequate and equitable supplies and distribution; failure to combat disinformation…

The aim is to *propose a guide for strengthening the multilateral system to address global emergencies and to achieve sustainable development*

Recommendation for ending the Covid-19 pandemic and preparing for the next

- Failure in global cooperation during the first 2 years of the pandemic

- Need to reinforce basic tools of pandemic control such as universal vaccine coverage, usage of face masks, safe workplaces, physical distancing, protocols for international travel…

We need to:

1. Strong monitoring and coordinated surveillance systems

2. Intensify the investigation into the origins of the virus since the public's trust in science is at risk

3. WHO should remain the lead institution for the response to emerging infectious diseases

4. Draft and negotiate new agreements on pandemic preparedness and response by possibly creating a new Pandemic Treaty

5. Reform the WHO governance by creating a new WHO Global Health Board to support the decision-making process on controversial issues

6. Prevention of pandemics from natural spillovers by fostering a One Health approach; prevention of pandemics from research-related activities by increasing international and national biosafety, biosecurity and biorisk management

7. The G20 should implement a 10-year effort to ensure that all WHO regions have the capacity to research, develop, produce and distribute all the essential tools for pandemic control

8. Increased share of national income to health systems; in the case of low-income countries, development aid should be provided to ensure that all countries have strong public health and healthcare systems centred around primary care

9. Prepare a pandemic preparedness plan since most countries lack one

10. Creation of an integrated and flexible Global Health Fund with three core financing windows: commodities for disease control, pandemic preparedness and primary health systems

11. The Covid-19 pandemic is a setback for suitable development globally therefore, it is important to adopt a package of financing policies to move forward

3. WHO: From Emergency Response to Long Term Covid-19 Disease Management 2023
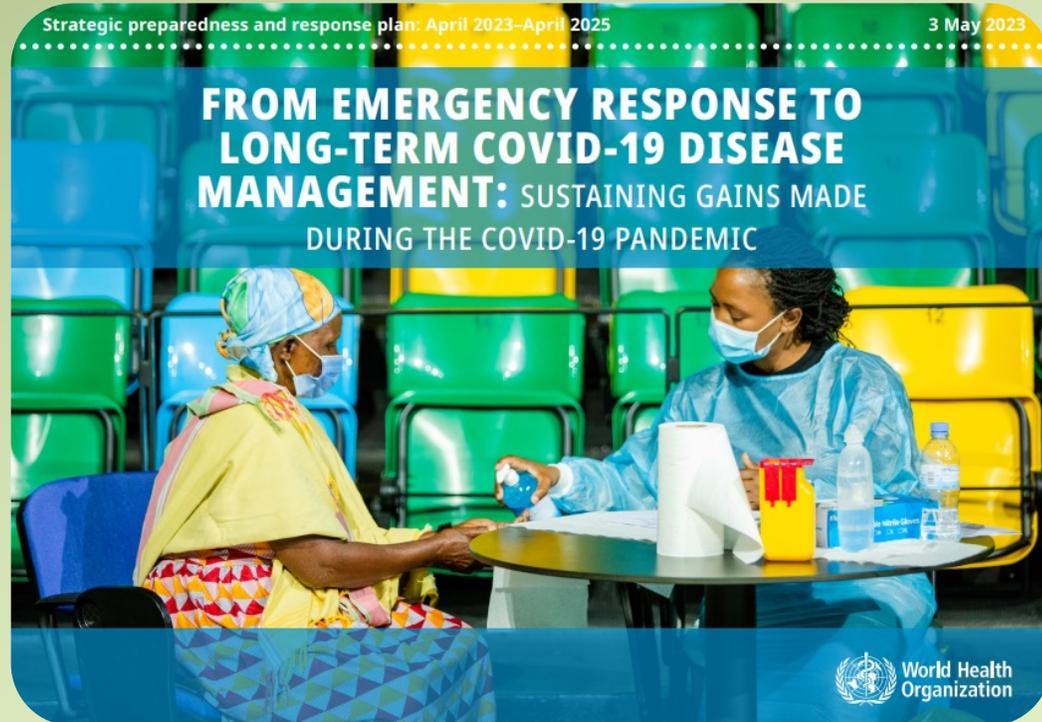
"In the wake of so much loss and disruption we must now restore, reinforce and strengthen health systems- which have been devasted – while sustaining the gains made during the pandemic".

- This Plan is an opportunity to strengthen public health for a future response to pandemic and epidemic

Five components of health emergency preparedness, response and resilience

Figure 2 | Five core components of COVID-19 preparedness, readiness and response

- Collaborative surveillance
- Community protection
- Emergency coordination
- Access to countermeasures
- Safe and scalable care

Source: WHO (2023)

1. **Collaborative surveillance:**
   - Sustain robust surveillance using the One Health approach

   - Develop stronger data collection and reporting systems to report meaningful impact data

2. **Community protection:**
   - Need for credible, trusted, relevant, timely, accessible and actionable health information

   - Build trust

3. Safe and scalable care

- Prioritize efforts to integrate Covid-19 clinical care pathways into primary health care systems

- Create and maintain an agile health system to ensure continuity of service during Covid-19 (or other emergencies) supported by tools

4. Access to countermeasures

- Encourage countries to invest in research about epidemic and pandemic pathogens

- Foster formal and informal interactions between scientists worldwide

5. Emergency coordination

- Multisectorial coordination

To conclude…

- There are still many challenges and it is difficult to prioritze them

- For example, equitable access to life-saving tools, adequate workforce, advanced research, address inequities, focus more on the One Health approach…

- So, **what should be our next focus?**
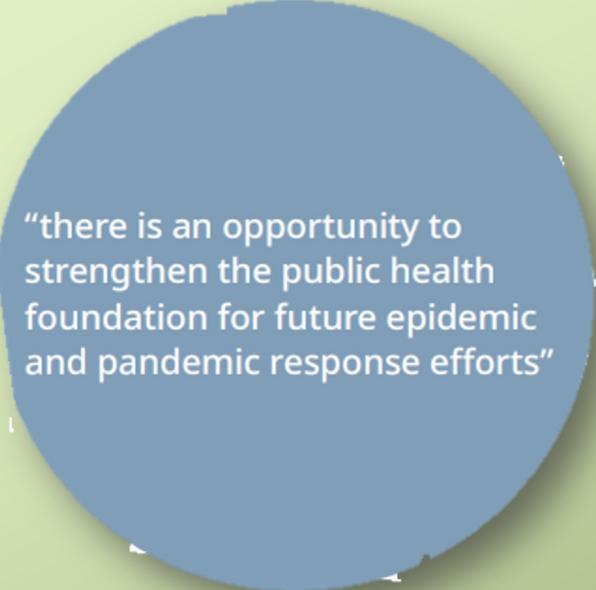
"there is an opportunity to strengthen the public health foundation for future epidemic and pandemic response efforts"

Source: WHO (2023)

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