



Integrated Holistic Health

Mind, Body & Environment

Our goal is to promote a state of SAMYUKT AROGYA - 'SAMYUKT': Integrated, Holistic Health: Mind, Body and Environment. Aligned with the WHO definition of health, "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity", the C20 Integrated Holistic Health Working Group (IHH-WG) 2023 iterates that health promotion and disease prevention must be addressed at the levels of mind, body, and environment. Building on commitments made by previous G20 leaderships, IHH-WG expands the scope of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (UN-SDG3), Good Health and Well-Being, proposing inclusive, equitable and holistic solutions for building healthy communities.

The consolidated policy recommendations are:

- ◆ Adoption, implementation and sustainability of a National Mental Health Programme in all G20 countries, extending into the community, public health institutions and private sector, entailing screening and follow-up at both community and institutional levels, with special emphasis on the vulnerable - women, children, and marginalised communities.
- ◆ G20 commitment to enhance community and primary healthcare systems by integration of Digital Health Platforms contextualised to the country, with a guarantee of “ACCESS FOR ALL” for preventative care, therapy, and health system delivery for both communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).
- ◆ A uniform One-health policy to be agreed upon by G20 member nations through an Inter-sectoral Global Framework and Treaty for Zoonotic diseases and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) encompassing surveillance, data sharing, and alerts, research and shared infrastructure and management.



Introduction

Health is key to meeting the Sustainable Development Agenda by 2030. Health has a strong and direct influence on the economy of nations. The global GDP fell by 3.4% in 2020, translating to a 2 trillion USD economic loss due to COVID. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for global healthcare cooperation, given the imminent likelihood of similar pandemics in the future. It is imperative to build consensus among United Nations member States on all fronts to be better prepared.

To address this, we aim to accelerate progress towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) - ensuring everyone has access to quality, affordable healthcare.

UHC requires promoting universal access to preventative and curative approaches. The interdependence of environment, climate, and health is clear, as is the connection between mental and physical well-being. Embracing a holistic approach to health is now an urgent necessity. Under the 2023 C20 Chair, Mata Amritanandamayi Math (MA Math), the Integrated Holistic Health (IHH) WG engaged over 5,000 people from 1,054 organisations in 86 countries. Through inclusive processes, key policy recommendations and best practices were selected via twenty-eight online and in-person events culminating in a summit in Faridabad, Haryana. Representatives from civil society, indigenous communities,



patients, caregivers, experts, and marginalised groups, including those with diverse SOGISEC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics) participated in these efforts.

The C20 IHH WG builds on commitments made by previous G20 Leaderships. Bali 2022 urged achieving Universal Health Coverage while addressing food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). Rome 2021 committed to support countries to improve resilience by addressing critical sustainability challenges. Riyadh 2020 prioritised the tackling of AMR and environmental causes of disease

using the One-Health approach and advancing efforts in communicable and non-communicable diseases. Osaka 2019 envisioned an inclusive society that allows each individual to perform to one's full potential, with promotion of healthy ageing, and people-centric health promotion and prevention that are aligned to the life-course approach. This year's C20 IHH working group widened the scope to include different facets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (UN-SDG3), Good Health and Well-Being, to develop inclusive, equitable and holistic solutions for health.



Policy Recommendations

I. Mind - Advocating a Mental Health Policy

Before the estimated five-fold increase in depression and anxiety globally since COVID-19, at least 1 billion people had mental health conditions, representing 418 million disability-adjusted life years and a burden of 5 trillion USD annually. Mental health conditions lead to loss of productivity, driving under-

employment, social isolation, and poverty. Today, 90% of mental illness goes undiagnosed and untreated, a gap largely driven by stigma, discrimination, and human rights violations. The 2023 C20 IHH-WG includes Mental Health and Wellness for the first time.

Our policy recommendations to the G20 are:

- Adopt and sustain a comprehensive National Mental Health Literacy Program.
- Incorporate and integrate a Mental Health Education Program into the National School Curricula by 2025, to include:
 - Awareness and knowledge of signs and symptoms of mental distress, reducing bullying, harassment, and stigma against those with or without mental illness.
 - Suicide awareness and prevention; integrating skills and activities that promote mental fortitude, positive decision-making, and peer support.
 - Provide Community & Institutional Mental Health Training to healthcare workers to promote suicide awareness and prevention.
- Deliver basic assessment tools for common mental health disorders and suicidal behaviours to support lay-counselling training among school counsellors, village social workers and non-specialist health workers.
- Ensure the availability of mental health services in all community hospitals, corporations, universities, government and other institutions.
- Training should be supported by health system networks so that acute mental conditions can be triaged by higher-level professionals.



- Develop robust, evidence-based mental health programs that promote knowledge and mind-strengthening life skills (e.g., meditation, yoga, cognitive skills) for advancing positive mental health and resilience, preventing mental illness and suicidal behaviours, and reducing mental illness symptoms, with special emphasis on the underprivileged - women, children, marginalised communities, and caretakers and those grieving the loss of their near and dear ones.
- It is vital to include community engagement as well as civil society organisations to make this process more effective.
- Ensure free and quality mental health care is integrated into all primary care services by 2030.
- Scaling up interventions and services across community-based, general health and specialist settings - In a country-by-country approach as per the WHO Special Initiative on Mental Health, considering that the status of mental health care differs greatly across nations.
- Mental health care must be integrated into relevant public health programmes (e.g. for HIV and gender-based violence prevention, disabilities) in addition to primary care services.
- Increase number and quality of community based mental healthcare providers via incentivization schemes.

II. Body- Implement a Life-Course Approach to Chronic Diseases incorporating Digital Health Applications

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, NCDs continue to be the top cause of mortality and morbidity globally, with low-middle-income countries (LMICs) bearing a disproportionate burden of NCDs. NCDs account for 74% of all deaths (41 million) globally annually and 80% of all “premature” deaths between 30 and 69 years of age. The likelihood of premature deaths from NCDs is six times higher in LMICs than in high-income countries. Modifiable risk factors include unhealthy diet, tobacco and alcohol use, sedentary lifestyle, and air pollution. The global burden of NCDs is estimated to be \$47 trillion over the next two decades, unless adequate preventative and control measures are implemented.

LMICs are also burdened with treatable conditions complicating maternal and child health such as nutritional deficiencies, which have proven low-cost measures of mitigation. Given the increasingly ageing population globally, geriatric health and wellness, palliative and end-of-life care become priorities requiring critical attention.

An overarching theme that emerged from discussions among the various health sub-groups included usage of digital platforms for universal health coverage. The other common theme that emerged across the health sub-groups included a life-course approach to addressing NCDs, maternal and child health and wellness, nutrition and mental health alongside steps to improve health literacy.

The Life Course perspective looks at health as an integrated continuum where biological, behavioural, psychological, social and environmental factors interact and influence health outcomes throughout a person’s life. A woman’s health and nutrition as she enters reproductive age directly affects her future child’s birth weight and order, nutrition, future risk of obesity and therefore potential contraction of NCDs and mental health conditions. Addressing the health and wellbeing of future generations requires immediate measures to ensure the health of all persons of reproductive age in order to prevent future disease.



A Digital health mission integrating services across the healthcare sector, including diagnostics, therapy, demography, health condition, and health delivery, would facilitate diagnosis, monitoring, adherence, preventative aspects and promote access to health information. Platforms similar to the ones created for COVID-19 could be replicated for other communicable and NCDs. The digital health platforms should integrate health literacy into the health delivery system spanning mental health, maternal and child healthcare, palliative and end-of-life care, and traditional and complementary healthcare systems.

Given the ubiquity of handheld devices and wide penetration of mobile networks, a Digital Health policy for G20 nations needs to be framed, including surveillance, monitoring, preventative and awareness indicators for both communicable and NCDs. Digital health policies should address deployment of myriad cost-effective digital tools, such as artificial intelligence, in a manner that prioritises ethics and person-centeredness, while increasing healthcare access, improving quality, reducing costs and ensuring privacy.



The policy recommendations to the G20 are:

- Integrate the life course approach into public health strategies, which addresses health disparities and improves overall population health for NCDs and maternal and child health. The life course approach incorporates health information from maternal, paternal, and individual perspectives. For example, if a mother has gestational diabetes, that child has a significantly increased likelihood of contracting diabetes in their lifetime. Appropriate preventative measures and follow up must be incorporated into that child's healthcare.
- ▶ Holistic Perspective: Public health services should adopt a holistic perspective that recognizes the inter-connectedness of different gender specific life stages and their impact on health outcomes, considering the interactions between various factors such as genetics, early life experiences, social determinants, and lifestyle choices.
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- ▶ Strengthening public health systems to provide free and quality integrated management of childhood illness as per WHO guidelines by 2025.
- ▶ Prevent and control micronutrient deficiencies in women of reproductive age and other vulnerable groups through dietary interventions, including dietary improvement, food fortification, including salt double-fortified with iodine and iron, supplementation, and public health measures: de-worming and improving Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) - with an emphasis on menstrual and sexual health.
- ▶ Develop an integrated nutrition plan using the life-course approach: Promote dietary diversity by including organic, non-genetically modified and locally sourced nutritious food items into beneficiary food baskets in existing meal initiatives.
- ▶ Ensure free access to family planning services in all public and community healthcare centres and educational institutions, including family planning programs, sex education in schools, and the availability of low-priced over-the-counter contraceptives.

- Employ digital platforms for surveillance, monitoring, preventative care, therapy, awareness, adherence, and follow-up, factoring in post-procedure care. These must be integrated into existing healthcare systems to facilitate access for populations who currently are not able to access consistent quality healthcare.
 - ▶ Digital platforms must be leveraged for effective and holistic life-course approaches to healthcare solutions.
 - ▶ Utilise digital platforms to accelerate immunisation and vaccination drives, to reach a target of 90% childhood immunisation by 2025.
- Create evidence-based guidelines for integrative care specifying the scope of different traditional and complementary medical systems (T&CMs) in managing specific diseases to enable the general public to make informed decisions.
 - ▶ Develop research methodologies in alignment with the epistemological framework of T&CMs to generate evidence of safety and efficacy.
 - ▶ Facilitate evidence-based integration of T&CM into mainstream health care to address unmet healthcare manpower needs, improve holistic treatment outcomes, and promote physical, mental, and spiritual health and wellness.



III. Environment - One-Health

The health of people is inextricably linked to the health of animals and our shared environment. According to WHO, climate change is the single biggest threat to human health which could directly lead to 250,000 deaths per year by 2030. New or endemic zoonotic diseases, Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), vector-borne diseases, anti-microbial resistance (AMR), food safety and food security all link environment, climate and health. Climate change lowers food productivity, both agrarian and marine, compounds mental health issues, contributes directly to nutrition, maternal & child health, poor outcomes in NCDs and majorly contributes to emerging infectious diseases. Poor practices in multiple industries, including livestock farming, and hospital and immunisation programme management are increasing AMR and decreasing the ability to treat it.

The IHH-WG deliberations focused on one-health and AMR, strengthening cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector, and improving healthcare service delivery. Placing an emphasis on access to and availability of safe,

effective, quality, and affordable medical countermeasures such as vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and digital health innovations and solutions to support UHC. The current global leadership must work together for the formulation of a “Global Public Health Convention,” with its core obligation being to protect Global Public Health, preventing profit-driven industry exploitative practices, and prioritise the needs of Global South.



The policy recommendations to the G20 are:

- Establish robust, inclusive, intersectoral, cross-Ministerial national One-health task forces by 2030 that comprehensively integrate critical sectors such as agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, environment, finance, forestry, and foreign affairs with health, addressing urgent health priorities such as emerging pathogens and zoonotic diseases.
 - ▶ Task forces must be endowed with adequate resources and specific timelines, accompanied by measurable outcomes to help foster inter-disciplinary research and collaboration.
 - ▶ Strengthen surveillance through capacity-building programs inclusive of improved management of zoonotic diseases such as rabies and emerging pathogens, communicable disease programs including HIV, TB, Malaria, NTDs, and snakebite.
- ▶ Ensure accessibility to low cost WHO-approved diagnostics and treatment, prioritising at-risk populations.
- ▶ Ensure that existing minimum standards for animal health services are met and set obligations to improve biosecurity in the production, transportation, slaughter, and retailing of animals to reduce the transfer of pathogens. This needs to include care and welfare practices on farms to both reduce the use of antimicrobials and support natural ecosystem health.



- Create a Global Framework for Addressing AMR – including surveillance, monitoring and strategic planning, similar to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control by 2025.
- ▶ Involve human, animal, and environmental health sectors, and engage with civil society organisations, community leaders, and international cross-sectoral stakeholders.
- ▶ Implement stringent legislative control of antimicrobial dispensing for use in both humans and animals, including effective antibiotics stewardship programs and community engagement initiatives.
- ▶ Ensure Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Right (TRIPS) and Intellectual Property waivers for the protection of Global Public Health implementing Universal access to Health services, including lifesaving drugs/medicines, diagnostics and related health services as “Global Public Health Goods” and allowing worldwide right to use, re-produce and ensure supply globally.



Conclusion

G20 leaders must recognise that it is time for a radical paradigm shift in addressing public health. We are in the midst of a global mental health crisis, particularly among youth which cannot be left unaddressed by G20 leaders. The accelerating pace of climate change has made it abundantly clear that a One-health model of public health is the only path forward towards protecting human and animal health and safeguarding the environment. Siloed public health

approaches that ignore the interactions between people and nature will leave us unable to address current and emerging pathogens and incapable of confronting the next pandemic. However, advances in digital technology, machine learning, and artificial intelligence can dramatically reduce inequities in access, provided G20 leaders ensure that these technologies are deployed with health equity as a core principle.

