

World Health Minute

“News you can use” – A new public health resource

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Inside track

The **World Health Minute (WHM)** provides quick access to global public health news. Its "news you can use" to inform investment, advocacy, development and implementation decisions. This week's WHMs are organised around the WHA committee A agenda. Short news summaries of frontline newspaper, blog and social media stories are presented in each agenda area; including, Preparedness, Health systems, Communicable diseases, Non-communicable diseases, and Promoting health through the life course. The DG election is a major focus, as well. Hot stories this week include: Ebola in DRC and vaccine opportunities; Amazon plans to move into drug business; New discoveries about human Ebola antibodies; Continuing harassment for breastfeeding in Asia; Jordan's first clean energy refugee camp; and lots of stories about the DG candidates. WHM will be at the WHA70 to bring you "inside talk" and commentaries in special WHA editions 22-24 May. You can follow us on the new WHM website- www.worldhealthminute.com To receive your WHM this week email franklin@worldhealthminute.com.

Extracts- May 19 issue

Preparedness, surveillance and response

Tackling Ebola outbreak in remote Congo presents a huge challenge: WHO

WHO said its assessment of the outbreak was that risk of spread is high at a national level, medium at an African level and low at a global level. WHO said logistical challenges of the outbreak are immense in this very remote and insecure part of the country. WHO added that as it deploys teams over the next few weeks it will begin to fully understand the scale of the problem it is dealing with (reuters.com: 18/05/17)

As Ebola outbreak grows, the question of using a vaccine becomes more urgent

As health officials and aid workers head to a remote corner of the DRC to respond to an outbreak of Ebola a key question remains: will the government authorize the use of a promising experimental vaccine? The vaccine had stunning results in a clinical trial in Guinea in 2015, but it has yet to be licensed for broader use. Science Insider spoke to Marie-Paul Kieny, a WHO assistant director who oversaw the agency's response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa 2014-16 and asked her about whether the vaccine will be used (sciencemag.org: 18/05/17)

+ 18 stories...

Health systems

Amazon's long shadow falls on pharmacies

According to a CNBC report, Amazon is considering a leap into the prescription drug business. It wouldn't be easy, but the industry and its investors ought not to dismiss the threat. If Amazon offered an experience that improves on existing U.S. mail order options in price or convenience, then it could disrupt retail drug stores. The pharmacy is the golden nugget in the vast majority of retail revenue for America's biggest drug stores (bloomberg.com: 17/05/17) (cnbc.com: 16/05/17)

India's drug makers need more time to meet international standards: industry group

India's big drug makers will need at least five more years to improve their manufacturing standards and data reliability to a level demanded by international regulators, said a senior official. The industry has struggled to improve factory processes and train staff since 2013, when major violations were found at India's then largest drug maker Ranbaxy Laboratories. Complaints have ranged from issues over hygiene and maintenance to concerns over falsifying manufacturing related test results and data (reuters.com: 17/05/17)

+6 stories

Communicable diseases

China offers anti-malaria and healthcare support to millions in Africa

China has recently decided as part of its new health commitments to provide Africa with the popular anti-malaria medication, Artemisinin, for five million people. It said it will lend support to build health systems and policies in the areas of disease surveillance, strengthening of prevention and treatment of malaria and other communicable diseases (leadership.ng: 18/05/17)

+4 stories...

Non communicable diseases

Bhutan is making its people healthier, happier, by beating non-communicable diseases

In 2014, Bhutan undertook a nationwide survey to get a scale of its problem. 39% of people were overweight or obese, 36% had raised blood pressure and half were not engaged in vigorous physical activity. Now Bhutan is zeroing in on NCDs. Tax on alcohol is 100%, there are strong tobacco laws ban production, sale and use in public...

Scientists get closer to making personalized blood cells by using patients' own stem cells

New research has nudged scientists closer to being able to create customized human stem cells capable of forming blood that would be safe for patients. This potentially opens up a window on what goes wrong in such blood cancers as leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma and offers the prospect for improved treatment of these cancers which affect millions (latimes.com: 17/05/17) (independent.co.uk: 17/05/17) (telegraph.co.uk: 17/05/17) (newscientist.com: 17/05/17)

+7 stories...

Promoting health through the life course

Spain's smoking ban tied to drop in preterm and underweight babies

One year after a nationwide ban on smoking in public took effect in Spain, women had significantly fewer premature or underweight infants, a recent study suggests. (reuters.com: 17/05/17) **+3 stories...**

WHO elections

The lead candidate for the world's top health job is being accused of covering up deadly epidemics

Dr Tedros Adhanom is being accused of allegedly covering up cholera epidemics in 2006, 2009 and 2011. The government labelled the outbreaks, which led to the deaths of hundreds of people, as acute watery diarrhoea, a symptom of cholera. Human rights organizations say the Ethiopians are pressuring health professionals not to refer to the outbreak as cholera (qz.com: 18/05/17) (washingtonpost.com: 18/05/17)

What makes a great WHO chief? A conversation with Halfdan Mahler

Dr Franklin Apfel recalls the wisdom of Dr Halfdan Mahler with whom he discussed what characteristics make a great Director General of the World Health Organization. (thenewsminute.com: 18/05/17)

Pakistan calls upon women of the world to support Sania Nishtar's candidacy for DG WHO

The National Commission on the Status of Women has issued a call to women all over the world to support the candidacy of Sania Nishtar of Pakistan to become the next Director General of the World Health Organization (arytvnews.tv: 18/05/17)

Attacks on WHO candidate are defamatory, colonial, Ambassador says

The African Union delegation to the United Nations came to a press briefing to express unshakable support for the Ethiopian candidate to be the next head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom. Recent accusations re cover-up of cholera epidemics in his country, the African ambassadors said are defamatory allegations and an *example of a colonial mentality* (jp-watch.org: 17/05/17)

Businesses from PepsiCo to Pfizer have a stake in who leads WHO

Bloomberg discusses the forthcoming director general election to lead the World Health Organization and links the issues WHO has a hand in to the interests of the business community. It lists the ten reasons why this election is of particular interest to businesses all over the globe (bloomberg.com: 17/05/17)

+6 stories

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