

Public Health Committee

Debate Topic: Should governments prioritize preventive care and community health initiatives over treatment of existing illnesses, and if so, how can this shift be implemented effectively in health administration

In the realm of public health, there exists a significant controversy surrounding the allocation of resources between preventive care and treatment of existing illnesses. This debate revolves around the question of whether government-funded healthcare systems should prioritize preventive care initiatives over the treatment of existing illnesses, and how such a shift could be effectively implemented in health administration.

Currently, numerous countries around the world are facing a significant strain on their healthcare system. Investing in activities such as vaccination programs, health screenings, and education on healthy lifestyle choices can lead to better health outcomes, reduce the burden on healthcare systems, and lower long-term costs.

On the other side, treatment of existing illnesses emphasizes the importance of providing medical care and treatment for individuals who are already sick or have a medical condition. It can be argued that effective treatment is essential for addressing the immediate health needs of individuals and improving their quality of life.

The implementation of a shift towards preventive care often faces challenges such as resource allocation, changing healthcare practices and policies, public awareness and participation, and measuring the long-term impact of preventive interventions. Finding the right balance between preventive care and treatment is crucial in ensuring a sustainable and effective healthcare system.

Foreword

Dear Stakeholders,

Welcome to CurisCaseStudies' first conference! We are thrilled that you have chosen to partake in our Public Health Committee. In every healthcare system, strategies need to be implemented specifically focusing on prevention versus treatment. By focusing on whether government-funded healthcare systems should prioritize preventive care initiatives over the treatment of existing illnesses.

The basis of this committee is imaginatively built on the perspectives of healthcare providers, patients, and the general population. For information regarding the specific issues addressed by this committee along with any relevant character descriptions, please refer to the background guide provided on pages 3-4.

The committee's task is to determine if healthcare systems going forward should focus more on the prevention aspect of health via activities or more on treating the existing patients who are suffering from illnesses. Stakeholders need to collaborate and work together weighing the pros and cons of each way of focusing on health.

Good luck,

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Stakeholder Descriptions

When considering which path to focus the future of health on, various stakeholders play important roles and have a vested interest in their appropriate and responsible use. Additionally, different stakeholders may have overlapping roles and interests, and collaboration among them is often crucial to addressing the challenges related to antibiotic use and resistance effectively.

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

1. Intensive Care Nurse in a third-world country

As an ICU nurse in a third-world country, I see firsthand the challenges of prioritizing between preventive care and treatment of existing illnesses. Our healthcare system is often overwhelmed by the sheer number of patients requiring immediate treatment for serious illnesses and injuries. While preventive care is essential for long-term health, the reality is that many patients here cannot afford basic healthcare services such as something as basic as hand soap. Every day I see families who have to let their loved ones go or patients as young as two years of age who are suffering from life-altering bacterial infections. It takes a mental toll to see and tell the patients and loved ones that there is no cure currently to treat their pain rather at most I can offer medication which takes the pain away from the patient while bit by bit they slowly are dying. I wish there was more research done focusing on the treatment for a variety of illnesses.

2. Family Doctor in Canada

My job as a family doctor means I see firsthand the importance of vital healthcare innovations such as vaccines in reducing the burden on our healthcare system and improving overall health outcomes. Investing in preventive care initiatives such as vaccination programs, health screenings, and education on healthy lifestyle choices can significantly reduce the number of preventable illnesses and injuries that lead to emergency room visits. Just recently, I saw a patient who was clinically sick with the flu to the point which I needed to call an ambulance during the visit, upon asking the patient while waiting for the ambulance to arrive whether they received a flu shot or not, it was revealed they have not since 2015.

3. Emergency Room Doctor in the United States

As an emergency room doctor in the United States, I see the immediate impact of illnesses and injuries on patients every day. Our healthcare system is designed to provide high-quality care when patients need it most, and our focus is on addressing the immediate health needs of individuals who come through our doors. I work tirelessly to treat existing illnesses and injuries, providing the best possible care to improve outcomes and save lives. I commonly see so many visits to which should have not happened, if only there was more emphasis on things like education on the dangers of drunk driving.

PATIENTS

4. Patient 1- diagnosed with cancer

As a cancer patient, I've experienced firsthand the challenges and complexities of managing this disease. Every day consists of being in endless pain and mass amounts of chemotherapy. I feel every day is a challenge and being diagnosed with cancer has made me acutely aware of the importance of research in the fight against cancer. While I believe that preventing cancer in the first place is crucial, I also recognize the life-saving impact that effective treatment can have on those already diagnosed.

5. Patient 2 - In the hospital for flu

Having been admitted to the hospital with the flu, I can't help but think about the importance of taking proactive measures to prevent illnesses like this. It's been a tough experience, and I wish there were more emphasis on preventing the flu in the first place. As a single mother working three jobs and taking care of twins, I was never made aware of the importance of getting vaccinated. My biggest wish is that there is more awareness surrounding the importance of getting vaccines to avoid having to be admitted to the hospital like I do.

6. Patient 3 - Child in the hospital for an illness

I miss my toys! I am in a strange place right now surrounded by big machines with oddly shaped lines and loud beeps. My parents visit me every day and sometimes my parent's eyes are red and watery, I feel in pain every day but I try to hide the pain from my parents. I asked someone in a blue suit who works where I am staying and they say as of right now there is no way to stop the pain forever, I wish there was a way.

GENERAL POPULATION

7. Factory Worker with Kids

As a factory worker, I believe that our healthcare system should focus on what's most practical and cost-effective. Who knows how much researching new cures will cost? Often it can cost us taxpayers millions but at the same time will educating people on things like handwashing even work? Most workers I meet do not even pay attention to the meetings provided by human resources unless it affects our paycheque.

8. Grandchild

I wish for my grandmother to live a long life. I learned in school that the older you get, the worse your body gets. You get sick more often and do not have the chance to play as much as you want. I hear my grandma always has pain in the back and takes a variety of medicines. I am worried as time goes on will the pain get worse, I want someone to figure out how to solve her pain for good!

9. Digitally Active Middle Aged Parent

I read on the family group chat that there was an article sent out saying that the soap found to be used for handwashing will give you cancer! The chemicals to kill all the bacteria can actually be absorbed through the skin. I am never going to wash my hands with soap as I do not want cancer.

Guiding Questions:

WITHIN-SECTOR DEBATE QUESTION (BY SECTOR)

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- How do limited resources impact the ability to provide both preventive care and treatment of existing illnesses in your healthcare setting?
- What are the main barriers to accessing preventive care in your community or country?
- What role do cultural beliefs and practices play in the prioritization of preventive care versus treatment in your healthcare setting?

PATIENTS

- Are the current campaigns to encourage healthcare prevention such as handwashing, vaccination, etc effective?
- What are some ways healthcare systems could better educate and inform individuals about preventive measures to avoid illnesses like cancer/the flu?
- What roles do research and innovation play in improving treatment options for cancer/flu/other illnesses versus preventive efforts?

GENERAL POPULATION

- Is research cost-effective?
- How long will research in medicine take to significantly extend the average life expectancy?
- How can healthcare providers address concerns and misinformation, such as the fear of chemicals in soap causing cancer, to promote effective preventive measures?

Guiding Questions:

CROSS-SECTOR DEBATE QUESTION

Should governments prioritize preventive care and community health initiatives over treatment of existing illnesses, and if so, how can this shift be implemented effectively in health administration

- **If yes:** propose various community-based health initiatives over the next few years to prevent illnesses (ex. Limiting the spread of the flu)
- **If no:** determine the possible drawbacks of community-based health initiatives and propose how the research solves the drawbacks found