The occurrence of an influenza pandemic a century ago did not cause the global community, particularly the public health sector, to be vigilant and take preventive measures to reduce the impact or mitigate the ongoing pandemic. Understandably, there were so many victims in the previous century because science and technology were not as advanced as they are today, especially in medicine, communication, and public health. Today, it seems that scientists have neglected the great problems that occurred in the past, such as the stuttering response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic that started in 2019, during which the entire world appeared stunned in the face of the viral attack, which emerged so quickly and in waves.1 Furthermore, it is not incorrect to consider this pandemic event to be the third world war, involving the use of biological weapons that cannot be identified from where and against whom the attack was launched.

Around the 1950s, Leavell and Clark developed the concept of disease stages as “five levels of disease prevention,” which included “health promotion, specific protection, early diagnosis and prompt treatment, disability limitation, and rehabilitation.”2 Meanwhile, advances in medical technology and the role of economics in health have resulted in the development of medical science and a strong economy, which are solutions to deal with today’s health problems. However, the issue arises when deciding which of these two major issues should be prioritized or mainstreamed. Specifically, aren’t these two issues interconnected?

Some countries prioritize the economy in their policies, while others prioritize medicine in dealing with the pandemic. According to research conducted in three Asian countries, these two factors are indeed related. However, a firm decision derived from a single study is insufficient in choosing between both factors to produce a better result and conclusion since many other variables contribute to the different conditions of countries in many ways.

In the race against the pandemic, various parties and scientists are looking for ways to overcome it through research based on their abilities and thoughts. Some are focused on the host, investigating how humans can maintain their body strength and immunity to destroy the virus already inside the body, alongside avoiding viral exposure. Meanwhile, others intervene in the physical environment, either by attempting to kill the virus or avoiding it through social distancing. Conversely, others are attempting to find a way to disable the causal agent of the virus. Consequently, it appears that the virus has remained at the forefront so far since its inception because no effective treatment of choice has been discovered to eradicate the virus, and it continues to mutate, producing more virulent variants.

In addition, to ensure that these efforts are not in vain and meet ethical standards, they must be supported by evidence obtained through research. Meanwhile, many studies are focused on treatment and vaccination, which involves curing the sick and preventing people from getting sick, rather than preventing people from becoming infected. Unfortunately, some may view the situation as a business opportunity and develop research in its material aspects. Vaccines, plasma, drugs, or medical devices, such as oxygen and its tubes, or even medical services and facilities, are some of the aspects exploited in this regard because sick people are helpless consumers with no choice. The same is true for preventive equipment such as masks, face shields, and personal protective equipment (PPE). However, these may not matter to wealthy countries or people because they can afford them even if they are expensive.

Conversely, for emerging countries or people, this will worsen debt and economic difficulties, and social problems in the present and future years since the world’s situation after the pandemic is over cannot be figured out. Meanwhile, many countries experienced malaise during the pandemic a century ago, which caused new problems, including in the health sector. In addition, this could lead...
to a rise in mental health issues, which are known to be harmful to sufferers, their families, communities, and even the country. Is it expected?

Therefore, research and efforts to solve the pandemic problem must go hand in hand. When compared, research related to physical aspects is more appealing than that associated with the non-physical aspects, such as agent, host, and environmental factors. Furthermore, non-physical research, such as policy analysis, behavioral research, communication, information, and others, are less prevalent and can play a critical role in preventing the onset of the pandemic. Factors such as the discovery of appropriate policies and the behavior of policymakers, health workers, and the public, alongside effective communication patterns in dealing with crises, and useful information for the community and its control, all contribute significantly in reducing activities such as work at the specific protection, early diagnosis, and prompt treatment stages.

It can be concluded that the majority of the countries globally are attempting to overcome the pandemic, which is a public health domain requiring medical and economic interventions. At the same time, medicine and economics are the determinants of public health, though there are others. Also, the international community has ignored research on how to avoid viral-human contact and the capability to keep viruses at bay, which explains why health promotion has been neglected since the onset of the pandemic.

Abbreviations

References

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate
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Competing Interest
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