

Contemporary Health

Week 3 – Session 1

Activity 3.1.1 – Choosing a Local Health Focus

This activity is an opportunity for you to contribute to your e-Portfolio. This activity will also be useful for your Course Paper. In this activity, you are developing the following competencies:



Scholarship



Systems Thinking

INSTRUCTIONS

- There are 2 Parts to this worksheet.
- Part 1: Choose a local health issue.
- Part 2: Map a timeline of your chosen issue.

Part 1: Research a local health concern

There are many health-related challenges that impact the health system in South Africa, from structural concerns, the burden of disease, and socio-political or environmental factors.

Given your understanding of pressing health issues, choose a focus area to research. In the box below, paste useful references that give you a better understanding of your chosen health concern:

The South African concern that I chose to look at is the burden of non-communicable diseases (Acronym NDCs). Some of these diseases that I looked at were diabetes, hypertension, and also cardiovascular health concerns, and how these were influenced by difference socio-economic and socio-political inequalities and how there are limited healthcare access to be treated.

Literature to support my statement.

Mayosi, B. M., & Benatar, S. R. (2014). Health and health care in South Africa—20 years after Mandela. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 371(14), 1344-1353.

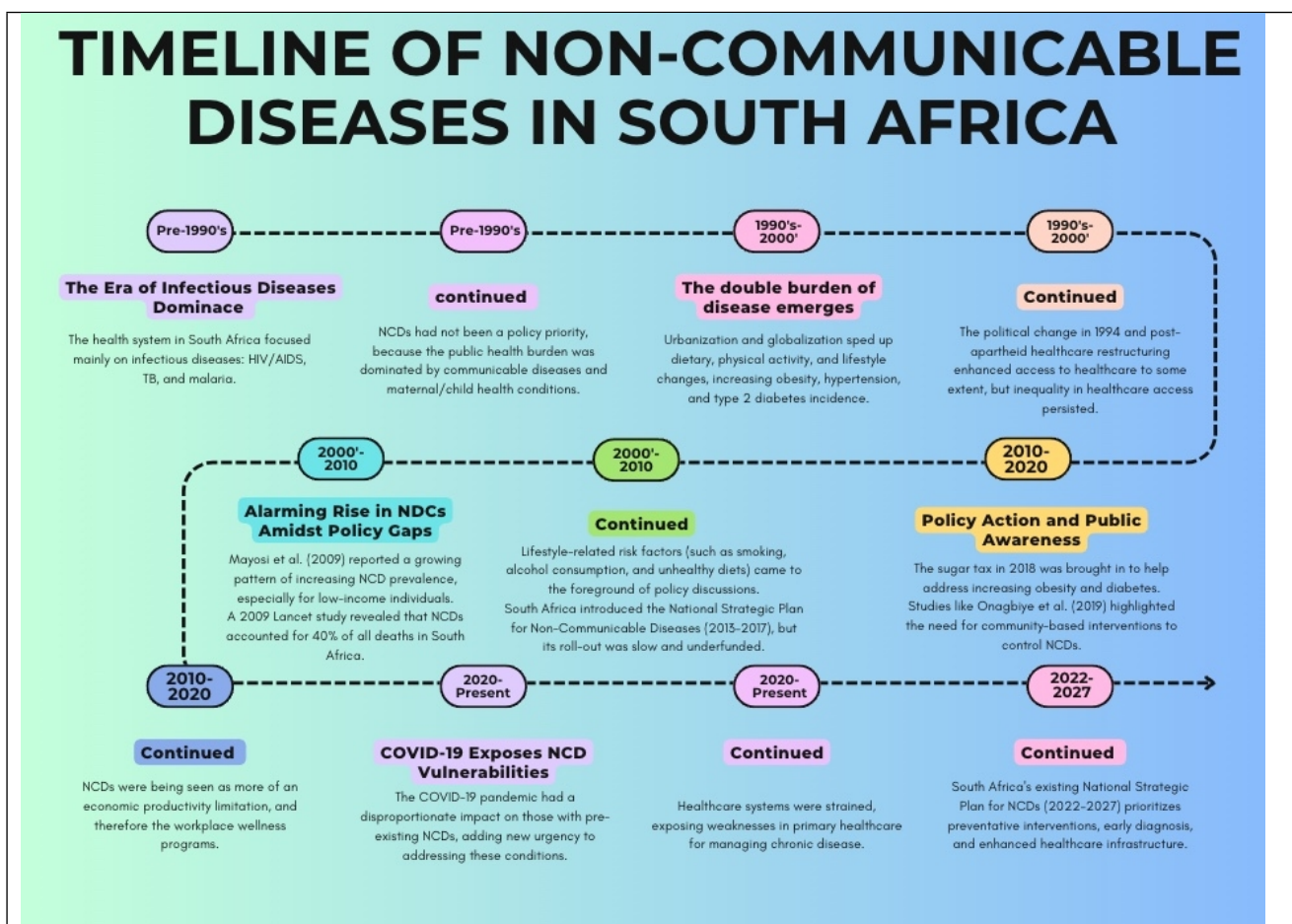
Bradshaw, D., Norman, R., & Schneider, M. (2007). A clarion call for action based on refined DALY estimates for South Africa. *South African Medical Journal*, 97(6), 438-440.

World Health Organization. (2020). *Noncommunicable diseases progress monitor 2020*. World Health Organization.

Dockx, K., Van Remoortel, H., De Buck, E., Schelstraete, C., Vanderheyden, A., Lievens, T., ... & Vandekerckhove, P. (2019). Effect of contextualized versus non-contextualized interventions for improving hand washing, sanitation, and health in rural tanzania: Study design of a cluster randomized controlled trial. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(14), 2529.

Step 2: Map a timeline of your chosen issue.

Health issues are complex, interrelated and changing. From the literature that you have sourced, can you trace a timeline of your chosen health issue. This does not have to be a linear historical analysis, but rather your own picture of how the issue you have chosen has changed over time. Can you justify, from your mapping of the issue, why your chosen concern should be an area of focus?



Justification of the NCD framework that I chose:

For a justification to be made we firstly need to ask the question, why should we focus on non-communicable diseases in South Africa?

NCDs have a high mortality rate in South Africa, contributing to almost 51% of the total deaths in South Africa (WHO, 2022). Diabetes in South Africa is currently the leading cause of death in the country. The problem area of NCDs is that it links directly to the social determinants of health. With increasing areas of poverty, discrimination and inequalities problems arose in dietary patters and limited access to sufficient healthcare, this problem worsens the NCD framework in marginalised underdeveloped communities. With the rise of NCDs it also had an impact on the economic status of

South Africa, the strains of NCDs contributes to the strains on the healthcare system and the workforce and productivity of medical professionals.

By mapping the problem of rising NCDs in South Africa, I can highlight the different inequalities, discrimination and the policy reforms that has contributed to the growth of non-communicable diseases in South Africa. NCDs should be made a priority to prevent any other strains on the healthcare system.

The South African NDP, aims to reduce but let yet eliminate NCDs by 2030, they plan to do this by implementing programs that strengthen primary healthcare, as well as early detection on non-communicable diseases. Such as regulating tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy diet plans. If we focus on the NCDs and how to reduce them then only can we develop a goal of eliminate them, focusing on NCDs aligns to both global and local (national) commitments in prevention strategies, early intervention methods, and policy reforms that migrate the long-term impacts of NCDs.