

Contemporary Health

Week 5 – Session 1

Activity 5.1.1 – Exploring Policy

This activity is an opportunity for you to contribute to your e-Portfolio as well as your Course Paper. This activity will also help you develop the following competencies:



Scholarship



Systems Thinking

INSTRUCTIONS

- There are 2 Parts to this worksheet.
- Part 1: Identifying Policies
- Part 2: Speaking to Policy

Part 1: Identifying Policy

Consider the local health challenge you have been thinking about for the past few weeks. Have you found any policies (international, regional, or local) that speak to your issue. There might be broad policy directive that the WHO will release to guide national governments. At the same time, there might be specific local health guidelines in place to implement an existing policy. For this part, search the internet and share what you find. Include references, links and websites that you find helpful:

Approximately 75% of total worldwide deaths occur from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which include cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and chronic respiratory disease. NCDs cause 86% of premature deaths among low- and middle-income nations (The Guardian, 2024). NCDs form a serious health issue in South Africa, calling for comprehensive global, regional, and national policy.

Global Policies

WHO Global Action Plan 2013–2020 for the Prevention and Control of NCDs: This strategy seeks to reduce premature NCD death by 25% by 2025 with nine universal goals and a set of policy options to member states (World Health Organization, 2013).

Policies at the regional level:

African Union Initiatives: As a measure against the increasing challenge of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), the African Union is striving to implement policies that are compliant with the WHO's Global Action Plan.

South African local policies:

National Non-Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Strategy Plan 2022–2027: With a focus on prevention, treatment, and care interventions, South Africa has developed this plan to address the rising NCD burden (National Department of Health, 2022).

Additional Resources:

The World Health Organization's Noncommunicable Diseases department has extensive information on global trends in NCDs, action plans, and solutions.

The South African National Department of Health contains information on regional health policy, law, and noncommunicable disease prevention programs. Coordinated efforts at all levels are needed to address NCDs and execute effective policies and interventions.

References:

Health Department, National. (2022). The National Strategy Plan for Non-Communicable Disease Prevention and Control, 2022–2027. taken from of ICCP-PORTAL.ORG

The Guardian, 2024. A global health crisis: as The Guardian says, living longer does not necessarily mean being healthier. taken from the Guardian website.

WHO (2013). Global Action Plan for Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Control, 2013–2020. taken from WHO.INT.

Step 2: Speaking to Policy

Having looked for different forms of evidence that speak to the policy domain related to your local health issue, what picture have you found? Is there a huge amount of policy directed literature on your topic, or is there a sore lack of information? When you look at what is out there, does it speak to the specificities of your problem? Briefly describe the policy landscape related to your health problem:

South Africa has a somewhat well-developed non-communicable disease (NCD) policy environment, with many national, regional, and international policies addressing the issue. Nevertheless, implementing the large corpus of policy-directed literature remains challenging, particularly in resource-constrained settings.			
Availability	of	Policy-Directed	Literature:
There is a wealth of international policy documentation on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), particularly from organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs (2013–2020) and its Implementation Roadmap (2023–2030) provide comprehensive frameworks for addressing NCDs (WHO, 2013; WHO, 2023). Similarly, after recognizing the increasing burden of NCDs, the African Union aligned its approach with WHO standards.			
The National Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2022–2027, which outlines specific objectives for prevention, treatment, and healthcare system integration, has been put into effect nationally in South Africa (National Department of Health, 2022). Proactive measures are demonstrated by other local initiatives, such as laws imposing a sugar tax and restrictions on the sodium content of processed foods.			
Policy	and	Implementation	Gaps
Despite the existence of policy literature on NCDs, there are significant gaps:			
Many programs, especially in low-income communities, place an emphasis on prevention but lack explicit, legally binding implementation measures. Broad policy frameworks frequently fail to adequately address the unique characteristics of the South African context, such as the relationship between NCDs and infectious diseases like HIV, food insecurity, and poverty. There is no data on the effectiveness of interventions like the sugar tax in South Africa or school-based HPV vaccination campaigns in promoting long-term health gains.			

The	Whole	Policy	Environment
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Though there are still implementation issues and context-specific deficiencies, South Africa has a solid policy basis for treating NCDs. More specific and enforced methods are required, particularly for disadvantaged populations, even while global and regional policies provide organized guidelines. To determine how present policies affect NCD trends and how interventions might be customized to the particular health environment of South Africa, more study is required.

References:

National Department of Health. (2022). *National Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases 2022–2027*.

World Health Organization. (2013). *Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013–2020*.

World Health Organization. (2023). *Implementation Roadmap 2023–2030 for the Global Action Plan on NCDs*.

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