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The WHO report from March 22, 2023, highlights the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to medicines for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Here are the key points from the report:

#### Impact of COVID-19 on NCD Medicines Access

**Disruption of Services:** The pandemic caused widespread disruptions in healthcare services, leading to reduced access to essential medicines for NCDs, including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and cancer.

**Supply Chain Issues:** Lockdowns, restrictions, and resource reallocations affected the supply chains for medications, resulting in shortages and delays in the availability of critical treatments.

**Healthcare Utilization:** Many patients avoided seeking medical care during the pandemic due to fear of infection, which led to a decrease in diagnoses and treatments for NCDs.

**Data Collection Challenges:** The pandemic hindered the collection of reliable data on NCDs, making it difficult to assess the full extent of the impact on patients and healthcare systems.

**Increased Mortality Risks:** The lack of access to necessary medications and healthcare services likely contributed to increased mortality rates among individuals with pre-existing NCDs.

#### Recommendations for Improvement

To address the challenges highlighted by the pandemic, the WHO emphasizes the need for:

**Strengthening Health Systems:** Enhancing the resilience of health systems to ensure uninterrupted access to essential medicines during emergencies.

**Integrating NCD Care:** Incorporating NCD management into primary healthcare services to improve access and continuity of care.

**Enhancing Supply Chains:** Developing robust supply chain mechanisms to prevent future disruptions in the availability of medicines.

Promoting Telehealth: Utilizing telehealth services to ensure patients can access care and medications without needing to visit healthcare facilities physically.

Data Monitoring: Improving data collection and monitoring systems for NCDs to better understand the impact of disruptions and inform future responses.

## Conclusion

The WHO report underscores the urgent need to prioritize access to medicines for noncommunicable diseases, particularly in the context of global health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Strengthening health systems and ensuring the availability of essential medicines are crucial for improving health outcomes and reducing the burden of NCDs worldwide.