

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR HEALTHY OUTCOMES

Global Health Security and You

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Lesson Description

Understand the global health security agenda and ways to improve the efficiency of health care through improvements in data and communication infrastructure.

Lesson Objectives

1. What is global health security?
2. What are the key elements necessary for the collection, analysis and dissemination of health information?
3. Why is it important to give citizens access to digital tools to support the collection of reliable health data?

Discussion Questions

1. The Global Health Security Agenda is a multi-sectoral approach to help build the capacities of countries to guard against infectious disease threats, making global health security a national priority. Governments and civil society have a role to play in helping to prevent, detect and respond to human and animal infectious diseases. Can you think of ways that ordinary citizens can also contribute to this effort? Are there opportunities for individuals to engage with their elected leaders, health care professionals, and nongovernmental organizations to, as Dr. Rutta says in the lesson, build “resilient health systems and contingency planning to stop an epidemic and prevent it from turning it into a pandemic”? Do you know what to expect from your government, or even what you should do to “prevent, detect and respond” in a health emergency or epidemic?
2. In this lesson, Dr. Rutta notes that the collection, analysis and dissemination of accurate health information is critical for making effective policy and programmatic decisions that will ensure that resources get to where they are needed most. Do you know where to go for the most updated, accurate information your government provides on health care and disease outbreaks? What are the challenges you encounter when accessing that information? What tools do you find most useful, timely and accurate? Are these tools available to the general public? What ideas do you have for ensuring accurate and timely health information reaches people in your community?
3. Well-trained and responsible journalists have a role to play in reporting on health crises – fostering dialogue, addressing rumors, and providing accurate health information. Rumors about how diseases spread and inaccurate information on what constitutes safe or unsafe behaviors can cause panic, fuel epidemics, and stigmatize. What are the media sources you trust most to provide accurate health information? Why? Do journalists that you trust provide the sources for the information they convey? When you hear information from a radio or television professional, do you assume they are always right? In what ways do journalists in your community

demonstrate that they have properly researched or sourced the information they provide? Do you fairly evaluate the information you receive?

Developmental Actions

1. Familiarize yourself with your local and national government's health security planning.
2. Seek out credible sources of health information and share them with others in your community.
When you hear health information, ask about the source of the information and research it yourself to determine if it is credible.

About the Presenter: Dr. Edmund Rutta received his doctor of medicine from the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and later went on to achieve a master's in Public Health from Tulane University. As a part of his career, Dr. Rutta worked in Tanzania for the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) for the Refugee Assistance Program serving in various capacities including medical officer, medical coordinator, and program manager. Dr. Rutta has spent much of his time participating in and facilitating many workshops on various global health topics. He is a USAID Global Health Fellow in Washington D.C. currently working as a senior tuberculosis technical advisor. Prior to his work at USAID, he worked at Management Sciences for Health in Arlington, Virginia where he also served as a technical advisor. His research primarily includes the topics of development of health systems, epidemiology, pharmaceuticals, and tuberculosis.