

Scholars define global health, call for partnerships between developed and developing countries

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Despite increasingly frequent references to global health from media, scholars and students, the term is rarely defined. And when it is defined, it is often merely a rephrased definition of public health or an updated definition of international health. What, then, is global health?

In a commentary in *The [Lancet](#)*, Jeffrey Koplan, MD, MPH, and colleagues from the Consortium of Universities for Global Health raise this question and offer a definition of global health. Likewise, the authors discuss what it means for global health to be genuinely global.

"The global in global health refers to the scope of problems, not their location," say the authors. "Global health has to embrace the full breadth of important health threats." Such threats vary widely and include issues such as [climate change](#), epidemic [infectious diseases](#), [tobacco control](#), obesity and migrant-worker health, among many other issues, they say.

Furthermore, the complexity of mitigating health threats calls for a multi-disciplinary approach and genuine partnerships, a pooling of experience and knowledge, between and among developing and developed countries, according to the authors.

The commentary argues that without an established definition, important differences in philosophy, strategies and priorities among physicians, researchers, funders, media and the public might be obscured.

Furthermore, the authors state that unless global health is clearly defined, "we cannot possibly reach agreement about what we are trying to achieve, what approaches we must take, the skills that are needed, and the ways that we should use resources."

Based on historic, semantic and practical considerations, the authors offer the following definition of global health. "Global health is an area for study, research and practice that places a priority on improving health and achieving equity in health for all people worldwide. Global health emphasizes transnational health issues, determinants, and solutions; involves many disciplines within and beyond the health sciences and promotes interdisciplinary collaboration; and is a synthesis of population-based prevention with individual-level clinical care."

Source: Emory University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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