

Report highlights tremendous burden from infectious diseases in SEAR countries

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Researchers at CDDEP, in collaboration with leading experts in the field, have produced the "Infectious Diseases in the South-East Asia Region" report, which examines cross-boundary challenges in communicable disease control in countries in the South-and South-East Asia region. The report emphasizes infectious diseases related to other sources of disease burden in the region and communicates overall trends

in the health and economic burden they impose.

Despite [substantial progress](#) in recent years, which has seen reductions in deaths from HIV and malaria and an increase in tuberculosis treatment coverage, the South-East Asia region continues to bear a significant proportion of the communicable [disease](#) burden worldwide. South Asia has the third largest HIV epidemic globally and the highest TB burden, accounting for more than a quarter of the global burden. The second highest incidence of malaria, amongst all WHO regions, occurs in the southeast Asia region, and India bears the third-highest proportion of malaria cases globally.

Malnutrition makes the South-East Asian population particularly vulnerable to neglected [tropical diseases](#) (NTDs) alongside emerging [infectious diseases](#) from arbovirus infections, dengue, chikungunya, Japanese encephalitis, and the continuing concern of a pandemic influenza outbreak. Furthermore, [drug-resistant infections](#) cause 58,000 deaths in newborns every year, in India alone, and continue to threaten the effectiveness of life-saving antibiotics across the region.

COVID-19 has disrupted the control of other infectious diseases in myriad ways, hindering routine vaccination programs, impeding the distribution of bed nets against malaria, and reducing TB services, among others. With the rollout of vaccines against the novel coronavirus and the ebbing of COVID-19, it will be essential to devote our full collective attention to the control of infectious diseases that have long plagued this region and continue to constitute a significant proportion of the avertable disease burden.

"As the battle against the pandemic continues, so too must our progress against communicable diseases, for which WHO will continue to pull out all stops in support of our Member States, partners, and the Region's near 2 billion people.," said Dr. Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional

Director, WHO SEARO

More information: cddep.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2021-02-highlights-tremendous-burden-infectious-diseases-east-asia-region.pdf

Provided by Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy

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