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Pandemethics : towards a global health ethics for Impending pandemics in the 21st century

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Pandemethics: Towards a Global Health Ethics for Impending Pandemics in the 21st Century

#BuildingNewBridgesTogether: Strengthening Ethics in Higher Education after COVID-19

International Conference: Panel 4.

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Introduction

- The pandemethics suggested here comes from pandemic and ethics, to suggest an ethics that can inform pandemics in the way that just war theory was pre-emptive and prescriptive and as such would be applied ethics.
- This century began with a Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002
- Ebola discovered in 1976 continues to resurface in many parts of West and Central Africa, 2014, and currently outbreak in Congo, H1N1 2009
- No preparedness not just by the health service but also the security sector.
- Dilemma of securitization health issues and pandemics.
- Due to the experience of COVID 19, different sectors have come up with different initiatives to examine the impact of COVID-19

Introduction Con't

- However, without going to the causes of how our action was not informed to stop the spread we will not still be prepared for the next impending epidemic. Even the International Health Regulation under WHO already has an aim of "minimising interference with international travel and trade" which has changed with COVID 19
- This research proposes pandemethics as a field that would synthesize these initiatives and lessons learned.
- The implication is that we shall have a proactive framework for dealing with pandemics which are highly likely to form most of the 21st Century

Why Pandemethics?

- Global health security is far from being guaranteed (Kamradt-Scott, 2011), as shown SARS, H1NI, Ebola and now COVID 19.
- Infectious pandemics are likely to increase from our carelessness with the use of anti-biotics, carelessness with the consumption of wildlife, and increase scientific exploration on viruses and bacteria in the laboratories around the world for pure experimentation or as bioweapons.
- Globalization will continue and interconnectedness cannot be easily reversed.
- We have seen the abuse of executive and military power during COVID-19 because many had no precedence at the risk of all
- Conspiracy theories and Fake news have cause more harm especially from world leaders who easily blame other states or even the WHO
- A pandemethics like other fields of ethics is not aimed at being prescriptive per se but aims at guiding reason such that people and states might make informed decision with a yardstick.

Towards a framework: I. Before

- High level of preparedness and better reporting from WHO
- Preventive measures in the use of pharmaceutical products and control of Zoonosis and possibly criminalization
- Review of International Health Regulation (2007) to include when travel restriction may be advice and other measures
- Developing national and sub-national response to pandemic
- Development of individual ethics of responsibility
- Preparing leadership for pandemics with knowledge of leadership and health.
- Preparing other security arms for conduct during pandemics

II. During a pandemic

- Powers of the executive or the legislative during a pandemic
- Travel and trade
- Funding of international and national health organizations and personelle
- Responding to information overload, misinformation, conspiracy theories and Fake news
- Herd immunity or isolation, Sweden/Tanzania experience
- How to respond to Crime and violence, eg. Domestic violence, curfew breakers, rioters, etc. The role of national security (police and army).
- Responding **to local initiatives to the pandemic**
- **Public life and religious freedom**
- Food and other health securities needs

III. After the pandemic

- Accountability on handling the pandemic with consequences.
- Towards a vaccines and bioethics around vaccines
- Returning to “normal”
- Documenting the lessons learned
- preparedness for another pandemic

Challenges and Dilemma

- Securitization of the health issues
- National sovereignty versus WHO or similar architecture
- Pharmaceutical process/politics versus alternative medicines
- Clinical trials on human beings during the pandemic
- Censorship of information by a States to manage fear

Conclusion

- A pandemethics is an applied ethics that would synthesize lessons learnt from COVID19, SARS, EBOLA, HIV and proposed conduct before, during and after the pandemic and this could also be useful for epidemics.
- Ethics has defined humanitarian interventions and conduct of wars and since the threat in this 21sth century is likely to be a disease than a war, the world needs an ethics that would be formalized in the form of treaty to guild the conduct of action during a pandemic.
- While many international organizations such as WHO are often criticised by governments for not acting, their scope is often limited by the lack of international norms that can guide them. A pandemethics would bridge this gap and offer a more human security approach to pandemics that is useful to governments and global citizens. However, its scopes needs to be develop and higher education has the opportunity to make this contribution.
- Although pandemethics might be viewed as another buzz word, even such words, e.g. Human development, SDG, have shaped action and produced academic disciplines in this centuries.