

The link between information and communication technologies and global public health : Pushing forward

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Abstract

Global public health (GPH) continues to be a challenging field. It focuses on health-related issues that transcend national boundaries and thus requires global cooperation for implementing solutions to public health problems. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have the potential to contribute to GPH by improving the quality of healthcare services. The purpose of this commentary article is to discuss the nature and characteristics of the existing link between ICTs and GPH. The key underlying questions discussed in this article are (a) whether ICTs can truly reduce the burden of current GPH problems and (b) how to effectively achieve it. We selected three widely recognized GPH challenges: diarrheal disease among children under 5 years old, malaria, and type 2 diabetes mellitus. These are considered to be examples of salient global issues that, despite the availability of cost-effective preventive and therapeutic interventions, still remain a major burden of morbidity and mortality worldwide. We conclude that there is a growing global interest in ICT-related solutions in GPH. We recommend the development of more transparent frameworks, more theory-informed solutions, and clearer translational links between ICTs and GPH matters. Ten further specific recommendations are also discussed in this article..

Keywords

e-health, Policy, Telehealth.