



Health Changes and Opportunities in Arab Countries

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Introduction

- The Arab world, despite its wealth and natural human resources, fared poorly in many aspects of development.
 - Literacy, unemployment, slow economic growth, low productivity, and lack of innovation and competitiveness.
 - Military spending
 - Rapid expansion of Arab populations especially in countries with limited resources.
 - Consequences of war, sanctions in different countries in the Arab world.
 - Distribution of wealth (oil).
 - Lack of planning in general and for health in specific.

Health Statistics

- Population
 - Total population 281 million
 - Growth rate 1.3-3.7%
 - Life-expectancy 62 years for men and 65 for women.
- Disease Burden
 - Distribution of cause of is:
 - Communicable diseases 40% .
 - Non-communicable diseases 45% .
 - Injuries 15% .
 - Indicators vary widely (infants mortality rate from 10.2/1000 to 75.3/1000 live births).

Health Systems

- Rank poorly compared with other countries.
- Expenditure on health care as part of gross domestic product is 1.5-10.1% (public expenditure is 55%).
- Health policy in the Arab world has not adequately focused on sociopolitical determinants of health.

Significant Health Impacts on Environmental Changes in Saudi Arabia

- Health hazards of environmental pollution
- Scarcity of quality drinking water
- Increasing incidence of breast cancer
- Shortage of health care professionals

Significant Health Impacts on Environmental Changes in Saudi Arabia

- Water contamination and water quality
- High incidence of breast cancer
- Demands on health care facilities
- Primary health care centers
- Lack of public health education
- Lack of enforcement of environmental standards and law.

Recommendations

- Implementation of existing environmental standards.
- State and governmental programs for environmental issues.
- Increase public awareness of environmental hazards
- Environmental research.

Continuation...

- University nursing programs recruit more nursing students to tackle the critical shortage of nursing professionals due to health impact from changes in the environment.
- A combined state and local governmental programs of enforcement and education should be implemented, which reduces environmental pollution.