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TRANSFORMATION OF GLOBAL HEALTH: SOME ASPECTS OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSE TO NEW CHALLENGES IN POST-COVID CONDITIONS

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Abstract. The article discusses some realities and prospects for transformation of global health as a purposeful institutional response of international communities to the challenges of a changing world and the most important factor in ensuring security. The growing importance of the global security factor in this area continues make issues of the consequences of new transformations in global health an integral part of international politics. Many challenges arise that characterize not only increasing of the burden on national health systems, but also the paths leading to new modernity in the field of global health. Amid growing danger state of health security, changing values and rising expectations, determine the adoption of new systemic decisions by WHO and global health participants and revision of traditional approaches in order to effectively respond to modern challenges.

1.   Introduction

In the context of new transformations and international contradictions, global challenges-such as increasing danger-are becoming more pronounced in the field of healthcare. As a key factor in the development of human populations, health, being a blessing and happiness for every individual, is a necessary condition for the safe existence of modern societies. Health and security, possessing fundamental and universal significance, are inextricably linked and represent one of the basic rights of every individual, forming the foundation for ensuring their safety.

In today's new social realities, where public health is vulnerable to both infectious and non-infectious diseases, no state can achieve the necessary results in the qualitative transition to sustainable development without a high level of healthcare. At the level of national healthcare systems and international structures, the state of health and the

understanding of its value are crucial. The new understanding and attitude toward global health (Afshari *et al*., 2023) issues at these institutional levels depend on many factors.

Today, the safe development of humanity is an objective necessity and it is directly related to the problems of preserving public health at local, regional and global levels. (Asadov *et al*., 2024). Many aspects of this issue underscore the importance of a new survival paradigm for humanity, primarily linked to ensuring safety and improving the quality of life for the planet's inhabitants.

Global health issues, which are primarily supranational in nature and deal with problems related to health and disease, remain a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a systematic approach and joint efforts from all interested actors. This issue is particularly relevant in the complex and contradictory realities of the modern world, where public health has found itself at the crossroads of two narratives-mediatization and militarization (Shok, 2021). In this regard, the opinion voiced back in 2004 by the well-known expert David Fidler deserves attention, who noted that "a revolution will occur in public health in the 21st century, which will not be technical in practice but political. The previously obscure and ambiguous sphere of public health politics will emerge from its ambiguity and become the subject of intense discussion" (Fidler, 2004) at the level of nation-states and international politics.

Assessing and interpreting the impact of numerous risk factors on health is challenging and all of this underscores the multifactorial nature of global health formation, which has become more integrative than earlier concepts of international healthcare. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences have had a significant impact on the understanding of global health. COVID-19, one of the most serious challenges humanity has faced in recent decades, not only significantly affected global health but also changed the context in which it operates. The resulting crisis vividly demonstrated the unpreparedness of national and international healthcare systems and economies for new conditions. At the same time, in the post-COVID period, the global community, alongside pressing issues such as modern conflicts and climate change, is especially concerned about health and the potential consequences of large-scale threats.

COVID-19 and the measures aimed at mitigating its effects have activated global health agendas, effectively turning it into one of the key instruments of global security. It is no coincidence that today, one of the directions of scientific research in the field of security is related to global health issues and its transformation. This is due not only to the emergence of new significant demands in the field of global health but also to the fact that today, the state of international security cannot be considered separately from the ability of people to lead healthy lives and implement health-preserving, improving and strengthening measures under specific socio-economic, political and other conditions (Goldin *et al*., 2017).

Today, the field of global health is experiencing a critical moment of transformation (Lencucha, 2024). This process is characterized by unequal resource distribution and power hierarchies that consolidate decision-making processes primarily within institutions based in North America and Europe, as well as the broader context of interaction and exchange between the Global North and South.

Amid reflections on the vast consequences of the pandemic and the likelihood of similar large-scale challenges, the understanding of the inevitable continuation of the global health transformation remains extremely relevant. Today, the need for revolutionary transformations-serving as indicators of societal change and the formation of a new system of social relations (Asadov, 2024) - is a growing objective necessity.

This suggests that at the level of national and international structures, there is a search for the most appropriate approaches to advancing policies related to global health issues. In these new conditions, the increasing need to create an effective system for ensuring the safety of human activity is one of the main motivations for joint actions by people and communities at various levels. Studying the individual aspects of their joint efforts is a necessary component of understanding the role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in building an effective global health system, which has been a key part of its policy in recent decades.

Of course, achieving this goal with the resources of a single organization is not feasible. This highlights the need for enhanced coordination and readiness within the international community to respond to new challenges aimed at preserving and strengthening health.

To address these challenges, this article attempts to analyze certain aspects of the genesis of global health, which, in light of serious challenges facing humanity, is undergoing new processes of transformation. It is necessary to recognize that the realities of the post-COVID period and the prospects for global health transformation open new opportunities for the formation of an adequate collective response by interested actors to large-scale emergencies. At the same time, in the context of strong interconnectedness of global processes and the need to advance collective efforts to adapt to evolving challenges, the practice of pursuing narrow national interests persists, which may continue to expose the global community to real dangers in the future. Studying this process, which has recently received mixed assessments in socio-political and scientific discourse, allows for a rethinking of the consequences and prospects of new transformations, ultimately laying a solid foundation for forming a new global health system.

2.   Methodology

The study of global health is inherently interdisciplinary and is conducted within various individual sciences as well as at the intersection of different fields of knowledge. It presents a complex methodological and procedural challenge, which is determined by the unique characteristics of the object under study (Dmitrieva, 2020). The theoretical and methodological basis for studying global health, particularly in the context of understanding the content and consequences of certain aspects of the transformation process, as well as employing new approaches to addressing anticipated challenges in the post-COVID period, is rooted in general scientific methods. The particular features of these new transformations in the field of global health are aligned with the reassessment and re-evaluation of certain aspects of the development logic of the international system for response and security in the realm of global health.

3.   Results and Discussion

The need for transformations in healthcare is now greater than ever. This process is lengthy and while generating new opportunities, requires focused efforts from all involved parties to achieve new goals. The transformation of global health is characterized by the emergence of new actors and institutions, as well as the interaction of competing ideas about global health. At the same time, this demands a holistic perspective-a rethinking of how current health policies meet the growing needs of

contemporary societies. Specifically, how the existing system of emergency prevention and response to modern challenges operates must be re-examined. It should be acknowledged that this task remains a key priority within the concept of global health, which is one of the central topics of contemporary health discourse.

Today, the heightened attention to global health (Janes *et al*., 2022) issues is an objective necessity, which necessitates considering certain approaches to its formation. The development of scientific understanding of global health dates back to the second half of the 20th century. This concept was established to improve health and protect the lives of individuals from increasing global challenges and threats, many of which have supranational aspects. The main strategies for strengthening health were developed and formalized in a series of documents (such as the "Global Malaria Eradication Program"), which were adopted within the framework of the World Health Organization (WHO). The term "global health" was first used in WHO's report on the "Global Fight Against Diseases" and in the U.S. House of Representatives' report "Global Health Policy" (1971). A significant boost to WHO's policy development came from the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (Canada) in 1986. The need for new approaches to the development of global health was explained during subsequent conferences by significant changes occurring in the world.

In recent decades, the policy aimed at the development of global health (Gubina, 2009) has generated a broad range of initiatives implemented not only at the level of individual states but also within international organizations and specialized bodies. The active inclusion of issues related to the safe development of modern society on the agenda of these actors, for whom health protection is an essential imperative of international humanitarian cooperation (Asadov, 2019), has involved a wide range of organizational and regulatory activities. During this period, better opportunities arose for a new global strategy-the issue of "global health" development, which has essentially become a core political value for humanity in the 21st century (Karpenko, 2018).

Researchers view global health as ensuring that the world community meets the health needs of all people on the planet. Its primary goal is equal access to healthcare services for everyone, regardless of territorial boundaries (Cueto *et al*., 2006). There are similar definitions of global health, describing it as the ability to achieve positive outcomes through global cooperation based on democratic principles, or as an activity aimed at addressing society's survival challenges.

At the same time, global health from a geopolitical perspective is considered a "multilateral system of international cooperation" (Karpenko, 2018) and a humanitarian response to the global challenges faced by human civilization, including the deterioration of the environmental situation, pandemics and other threats to human health and survival. It remains a subject of debate. The diversity of perspectives surrounding this concept underscores this fact. Some authors suggest not confusing global health with international health, which is defined as a branch of public health (Sim & Wright, 2023; White & Nanan, 2008). Specifically, international health is viewed as a tool for combating transnational health threats and this definition is both noteworthy and widely used (Koplan *et al*., 2009).

Without delving into a detailed analysis of similar definitions, it is important to highlight the viewpoints of some researchers who note that, most often, global health refers to health-related issues that transcend national borders, as well as joint actions by the global community (Beaglehole & Bonita, 2010). Meanwhile, some experts (Malqvist & Powell, 2022) propose adopting a new concept, shifting the focus and direction beyond

the colonial legacy and narrow definitions of health as merely a human condition. This new concept could be framed as health, sustainability and transformation. These experts argue that global health should be seen as more than just ensuring access to healthcare, advocating instead for a broader approach that includes social, economic and environmental determinants that affect health on a global scale. As history shows, significant changes in healthcare often arise after major upheavals. The global changes of recent years have increasingly set the stage for the merging of global health and international politics. The very concept of "global health" is being transformed, with key priorities, actors, coalitions and principles of the global health governance system taking shape (Shok, 2021). The transformation process of global health, where core values are increasingly brought to the forefront through the activities of specialized international actors, is accompanied by the emergence of new challenges and the persistence of negative trends in some regions of the world. At the same time, specialists are increasingly focusing on the emergence of new global healthcare development trends and the reasons driving these changes. In this context, the conclusions of experts cited in various documents that examine key challenges in global healthcare deserve attention (Yamey *et al.*, 2015; ROSCONGRESS Building Trust, 2021).

In improving the system's response to new challenges, alongside the significant problems identified during the pandemic, adherence to basic principles of interaction at all levels of the healthcare system remains crucial. A promising direction in global health has been the advent of the digital transformation era, where new approaches and technologies play a central role. The pandemic led to the rapid digitization of healthcare, and at the same time, the implementation of digital innovations-especially artificial intelligence-requires a deep rethinking of processes in the healthcare field. Alongside significant changes in global health, there has remained a known practice of inefficiency in the role of individual participants within the global health system. In particular, issues of non-compliance with the principle of timely risk detection and response stand out. An analysis of current healthcare reform processes in various countries shows that the declared basic principles of certain international forums remain unchanged for countries and at the global level.

In this regard, under new conditions and amidst the intensification of humanity's critical problems, the need not only for mechanisms of broad partnership cooperation but also for a rethinking of the model of shared responsibility among all interested participants-especially in forming global health policy-is becoming increasingly evident. The creation of sustainable channels for engaging civil society in this process will continue to be of significant importance. During the pandemic, civil society organizations acted as important players in emergency response. Their role in healthcare and the expansion of their capacities are acquiring particular significance in the activities of WHO and its partners. In 2021, WHO Europe launched a new initiative aimed at further involving civil society organizations and expanding their capabilities.

As is well known, the need for joint actions and cooperation among various social institutions in this field dates back to the middle ages when diseases and epidemics spread rapidly across regions. Strengthening healthcare systems was not the primary goal of most global health initiatives aimed at combating specific diseases. The history of the past centuries shows that with globalization, which generates social tension around the spread of various diseases-plague, cholera, smallpox, yellow fever, polio and others-there has been a changing understanding of their growing impact on societies. At the same time, the clear signs of the increasing influence of these trends and their consequences, as well

as the crises they create, lead to the consideration of global health as an important factor in personal, national and international security.

Today, numerous international non-governmental organizations are working to improve public health and combat dangerous diseases. This confirms the broad opportunities available to change the lives of millions of people through existing channels of cooperation with various international humanitarian actors. Cooperation with them is regulated by WHO legislation. At the same time, this cooperative practice is a crucial aspect of WHO's role in leading global health. Cooperation in such organizations can take place at the state, national and regional levels, as well as through private initiatives. The aftermath of World War II led to a serious reassessment of many issues related to human survival, including the necessity of creating a global healthcare system. Many organizations that emerged in the post-war period, mostly non-commercial voluntary structures working for the common good, continue to play an essential role in advancing global health. In healthcare, these were institutions such as hospitals, health centers, clinics under charitable organizations, missions and philanthropic organizations. As they accumulated experience, these institutions developed a deeper understanding of the dynamics of health and healthcare issues and the socio-cultural principles of society. They achieved results that governments could not attain due to resource limitations.

By leveraging the professional expertise and social skills acquired through work, often under difficult conditions (armed conflicts, financial hardships), the non-governmental sector soon became an alternative expert in specific areas, gradually transforming into a new instrument of policy and a new actor in international relations. With growing recognition, funding and influence globally, the profile and composition of participants in this sector changed. Today, these actors may represent a cooperation of trusts, development banks, commercial companies, foundations and alliances operating both nationally and globally. Given the increasing influence of these actors on the world stage, their significant impact on the development of global health is rising. Accordingly, under these conditions, WHO cannot ignore the participants in this sector, who have recently been initiating many new proposals concerning health and security.

In the post-COVID period, the participation of interested actors in the development of global health will take on a more substantive and active character. At the same time, the coordinating role of a well-known global institution, which "stands guard over the health of the world's inhabitants" is subject to the influence of new political trends from current geopolitical realities and certain international structures, with countries using the organization to advance their own goals. As the system of international relations becomes more complex and competition and conflict situations expand, organizations like WHO, along with some other international structures, find themselves in challenging relationships with certain key participants. At the same time, against the backdrop of growing global crises and new sources of danger, there is increasing recognition within the global community that health and humanitarian protection-including equal access to primary care and collective protection from transnational threats-are shared responsibilities. WHO and its participants bear joint responsibility for taking the lead in addressing global health problems, shaping the research agenda in healthcare, setting norms and standards and other actions related to meeting the humanitarian needs of individuals and society.

Health diplomacy, as part of international humanitarian cooperation (Bychkova, 2024), not only expands the range of issues that need to be addressed but also significantly helps in finding solutions to the complex questions faced by international organizations.

WHO's effectiveness in regulating such complex issues and implementing global health policy largely depends on how effectively it cooperates with various international governmental and non-governmental organizations, specialized UN agencies, civil society and the private sector. To ensure fairness and take effective global measures on this critical issue, WHO has always sought to pay special attention within the framework of UN system institutions (Harman, 2020). At the same time, ensuring a global regime for controlling the spread of infectious diseases, which has historically been one of its main functions, allows WHO to systematically coordinate and implement measures aimed at timely detection and successful containment of current and future threats. Given the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and the likelihood of other large-scale challenges, this task is particularly relevant for the organization, which plays a coordinating role, including in the reform of global healthcare.

Nevertheless, this transformation process in global health should not be considered solely in terms of defining its main development vectors, as it remains one of the most challenging areas of international life in rapidly changing conditions. This field is under the strong influence of the formation of a new world order, which requires further research and understanding.

4.   Conclusion & Suggestions

The numerous challenges and emerging lines of confrontation both within countries and at the international level suggest the inevitability of reducing collective efforts aimed at resolving large-scale emergencies. A global challenge like the pandemic has severely tested the international healthcare system and revealed systemic problems and inequalities in the realities of modern international relations. These large-scale emergencies have shown that infectious diseases are difficult to contain within national borders, despite the attempts by many countries to build their own protective health shields. At the same time, the politicization of the pandemic and the tendency of states to fight the coronavirus independently have created additional barriers to effective cross-border cooperation, hindering the timely implementation of collective measures to combat the threat. These actions have damaged joint efforts in global health development, revealing the unpreparedness of both national systems and international specialized structures.

Undoubtedly, the current minimization of the role of such international practices as socio-political consolidation at the level of WHO and other international specialized institutions gives rise to rethinking the impact of this trend, including its influence on the prospects for healthcare reform. Moreover, it is important to note that under new conditions, the role of individual actors in this system is steadily increasing, attracting growing interest from the international community and WHO. This is not only critically important for promoting the fulfillment of WHO's mandate, which requires transnational collective actions, but also opens up new paths of engagement and funding opportunities for such actors. However, achieving this goal solely through the resources of one organization, without alternative mechanisms requiring strict international regulation, seems unattainable.

In the new conditions, not only has global medicine evolved, but people's perception of their own health has also changed. New opportunities have emerged for depoliticized cooperation (Krivorotov, 2021). However, despite the institutional changes in global healthcare, some societies continue to face numerous events that pose risks to

the health and safety of individuals. Globalization and the impact of various negative trends and challenges continue to increase social inequality. On the one hand, advances in production and technology lead to new stages of development, but on the other hand, new challenges adversely affect human health and the environment. New diseases are emerging, more resistant to the changing environment. Health inequality and other issues highlight the inadequacy of the system's ability to effectively respond to the new challenges of a changing world.

The trend in global health development in the post-COVID period suggests that the growing focus on global health preservation is entirely logical (Kwete *et al*., 2022). This underscores the need to improve the roles of key actors and legal mechanisms to address the pressing issues of a rapidly changing world. Given these and other unaddressed problems in the development of global health, there is a need to rethink the modernization of healthcare services, the creation of initiatives for updating training and retraining systems for healthcare professionals, the reorganization of medical institutions and the development of health prevention systems using digital technologies and artificial intelligence for sustainable development.

Thus, an analysis of certain aspects of healthcare transformation observed during the so-called post-COVID period suggests that a new phase of global health is taking shape. These transformations provide a fresh perspective on the activities of key institutions in the global healthcare system. Increasingly, there is an understanding worldwide that the qualitative transformation of global health depends not only on state-run and private healthcare institutions but also on the active role of the international system in responding to new challenges. In this regard, it is critical to maintain WHO's ability to engage in multifaceted activities aimed at global health development, considering the current issues of a fast-changing world.

In light of new problems and challenges in ensuring health security, which affect even developed countries, this issue is becoming increasingly relevant for actors shaping global health policy. Despite ongoing contradictions between the need for international regulation and the fundamental challenges facing WHO, the organization is working to improve access to healthcare systems and address the needs of people in difficult and critical situations with humanitarian consequences. Expanding WHO's partnerships with certain international humanitarian actors in global health development is a growing necessity that calls for establishing effective channels of close international cooperation. Thanks to the multifaceted activities of these entities, favorable conditions are being created for the resilience, stability and sustainability of the relationships involved in ensuring global health security.

In the process of transforming global health, the emergence of new strategies and initiatives in healthcare makes it increasingly necessary to view health as a purposeful institutional response by the international community to the challenges of a changing world and as a critical factor in ensuring security in this area. New strategies for achieving "health for all" must respond to modern realities, including armed conflicts, social inequality, poverty and environmental problems that claim millions of lives. All of this not only contributes to the active search for appropriate responses to the realities and growing challenges of the changing world from WHO and its traditional partners but also expands the scope of international cooperation and shared responsibility through new, more effective mechanisms and actors from civil society. For the benefit of global health, this requires, among other things, the creation of new partnership channels and effective response systems at various levels.

A new vision of the global health transformation process, against the backdrop of growing diverse challenges, remains a pressing issue that requires further scientific and practical consideration. Given that today's conflict-ridden international relations are one of the main problems facing humanity, expanding diplomatic channels around advancing global health policy with the involvement of competing global powers could become a necessary mechanism for dialogue to develop the humanitarian imperatives of global security.

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