



## GLOBAL URBANIZATION AND IMPACT ON HEALTH

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### Abstract:

#### Introduction:

Our present day city is inhuman.....It is becoming morose with every day that passes. If it is inhuman it cannot be better for the health of mankind, it creates grave problems for man. C. A. DOXIADIS (1967, quoted in Weinstein 1980, p.72)

Local and national government and multilateral organizations are all grappling with the challenges of urbanization. Urban health risks and concerns involve many different sectors, including health environment, housing energy, transportation, urban planning and others.

For the First time in history more the 50% of the world population lives in the urban area, by 2050, 70% of the world's population will be living in towns and cities. The world is rapidly Urbanizing with significant changes in our living standards, lifestyles social behavior and health 'says' Dr. Jacob Kumaresan, director of the World Health Development based in Kobe, Japan. 'while urban living continues to offer many opportunities, including potential access to better health care today's urban environment's can concentrate health risks and introduce new hazards"

One of the most profound demographic changes, comparable only to population growth, is the current urbanization at the world's population. In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, England was the only majority urban country in the world by 2020 the human population at earth will become unbound.

The consequence at the inadequate, crowded and often windowless housing for the rural migrants pouring in to the cities are congruent with western experience. Tuberculosis has become a scourge in the cities of Asia and especially in Africa.

Measles is a fetal disease in many population. These and other infectious diseases have become raging epidemics as people's immune systems have become compromised by HIV infection, so that instead of dying later of AIDS people die from tuberculosis quickly. Bubonic plague periodically flares up in cities. In 1994, temperatures of over 120 F in India had left many animals prostrate and people crowded in to slums where grain was stored. Excess fleas, store food, crowded people and the plague bacilli demonstrated again that such conditions can create the panic of pneumonic plague transmission. Contagious diseases thrive with urbanization Rapid growth and the impossibility at new sewerage and portable water supplies keeping pace with new dwellers and settlements, water-borne diseases are again a major health hazard. El Tor cholera was introduced from Asia in to South America the 1980s to become a serious public health problem.

Motor vehicles are a major contributor to air pollution. Health challenges particularly evident in cities related to water, environment, violence and injury, noncommunicable diseases (cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes) unhealthy diets and physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol as well as the risks associated with disease outbreaks. City living and its increased pressures of mass marketing, availability of unhealthy food choices and accessibility to automation and transport all have an effect on lifestyle that directly affect health.

The World Health Organization has chosen the theme of urbanization and health for World Health Day 7 April 2010, in

recognition of the effect urbanization has on our collective health globally and on every individual its goal is to draw worldwide attention to the theme of urbanization and health and involve governments.

International organization, business and civil society in a shared effort to put health at the heart of urban policy.

Malnutrition is a problem in the new cities. More urban woman bottle feed their babies. More urban people turn to corn or cassava flours and other food source that can be quickly prepared and turn their backs on the millets sesame seeds, groundnuts and there wholesome food at the countryside. Minerals and vitamin deficiencies proliferate.

Everywhere mobility changes are at the heart of health changes. Vehicular accidents increase and have become a major cause of death. Migration into cities and circulation between village and city disseminate tuberculosis, cholera and sexually transmitted disease. Agricultural families suffer at planting and harvest time from the loss of good workers with nutritional consequences to both rural and urban populations.

The mental and social stress of the such rapid and extreme change, of culture conflict between ethnic groups and generations, of despair, isolation, loneliness, and crushed hopes, lead to mental and social diseases. Alcoholism increases. Sexually transmitted diseases increase, Infertility consequent to gonorrhoea can result, adding to the special stress or AIDS can increase. Mental illness has become a serious problem in many rapidly growing cities and has added substantially to the recognition of the important role that the indigenous health practitioners of various cultures have to play in coping with ill health.

What can cities do to meet the challenges?

1. Promote urban planning for healthy behaviours and safety.
2. Improve urban living conditions, including access to adequate shelter and sanitation for all.
3. Involve communities in local decision. Making.

4. Ensure cities are accessible and agefriendly.

5. Make urban areas resilient to emergencies and disasters.

**City facts:**

- More than half the world's population non live in cities.

- By 2030, six out of every 10 people will be city dwellers, rising to seven out of 10 people by 2050.

- Between 1995 to 2005 the urban population of developing countries grew by an average of 1.2 million people per week or around 165000 people every day.

- One in three urban dwellers lives in slums or a total of 1 billion people worldwide.

- Globally road traffic injuries are the ninth leading cause of death and most road traffic death occurs in low-and middle-income countries Almost half of those who die in road traffic crashes are pedestrians, cyclist or users of motorized twowheelers.

- Urban air pollution kills around 1.2 million people each year around the world , mainly due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. A major proportion of urban air pollution is caused by motor vehicles, although industrial pollution, electricity generation and in least developed countries household fuel combustion are also major contributors.

- Tuberculosis (TB) incidence is much higher in big cities. In New York city. TB incidence is four times in national average in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 83 % of people with TB live in cities.

- Urban environments trends to discourage physical activity and promote unhealthy food consumption. Participation in physical activity is made difficult by a variety of urban factors including overcrowding, high-volume traffic, heavy use of motorized transportation, poor air quality and lack of safe public spaces and recreation / sports facilities.

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