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**Introduction**

The history of public health is derived from many historical ideas, trial and error, development of basic sciences, technology, and epidemiology. In modern era, James Lind’s clinical trial of various dietary treatments of British sailors with scurvy in 1756 and Edward Jenner’s 1796 discovery that cowpox vaccination prevents small pox have modern-day applications as the science and practices of science and practice of nutrition and immunization are crucial globally (Theodore H. Tulchinsky, et al: The New Public Health).

Public health is a discipline and a part of health care system in which the promotion of healthy lifestyle amongst the population is paramount to life. Health is the total good of the body, business which is needed for sustainable development, and a fundamental right of citizen, and hence, the duty of the state to ensure that the health needs of is adequately met.

Sequel to the Shanghai Declaration which emphasized that health and well-being are essential for sustainable development. Therefore, national health policies, strategies and plans informed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2020 Health policy framework of the WHO European Region are vital to achieving health improvement across the globe.

To maintain a healthy population is fundamental in ensuring and sustaining global security, making public health a global concern. The importance of public health necessitated member States of United Nations to adopt the 1978 Alma-Ata Declaration of “Health for All”. In line with this mandate, the American Institute of Medicine coined its mission for public health as *“Fulfilling society’s interest in assuring conditions in which people can be healthy.”* (source: American Institute of Medicine).

1. **Describe the different concepts and perspectives of Health.**

The concept of health and its definition is subjective. This is because what health means to one person differ from another, depending on the context and their needs. Hence, the different concepts and perspectives of Health include:

‘Health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing, not just the absence of disease or infirmity. Good health helps people live a full life’ (Source: WHO 1948).

 WHO description of health particularly linked it to public wellbeing, and conceptualizes health as human right requiring physical and social resources to achieve and maintain it. According to description, the concept of health is viewed from two perspectives. From a broader dimension, health can be defined as “a condition or quality of the human organism expressing the adequate functioning of the organism in given conditions, genetic or environmental”.

Thus, the concept of health can be viewed as health been multi-dimensional and envisages three specific dimensions (physical, mental, and social), some other dimensions like spiritual, emotional may also be included (Source: Gebrezgi Gidey et al, Introduction to Public Health).

However, the Croatian medical journal proposed three perspectives to health:

1. Health is the absence of any disease or impairment
2. Health is the state that allows the individual to adequately cope with all demands of daily life (implying also the absence of disease and impairment).
3. Health is a state of balance, an equilibrium that an individual has established within himself and between himself and his social and physical environment.

From aforesaid, health is perceived as the absence of disease, while arguing that such inference is better left with the medical professionals to determine and declare an individual healthy. Putting a conclusion on the concept of health, Huber et al. (2011) perceives health as ‘the ability to adapt and to self-manage’, which includes the ability of people to adapt to their situation as key to health.

1. **How do you perceive health?**

Personally, I perceive health as been free from sickness and disease; being physically, emotionally, financially and mentally balanced. It is also the citizen’s right to enjoy health benefits from its government. It beholds on individuals and communities to adopt a healthy lifestyle and demand from its government to be in the state of health.

To achieve health for all is a collective responsibility of the public, governance and those whose responsibilities are to provide healthy services to the general populace. For individuals, it is their responsibility to ensure that the lifestyle they choose to live is one that does not compromise their wellness. And this requires making the right choices on what to eat, where to be, healthy relationship and attitude towards work and leisure.

 Health as a fundamental human right makes it a Government’s obligation to its citizenry. To ensure citizens’ health, the government should invest resources to provide standardized and functional health care system that is available, accessible, and affordable. This will limit health care disparities among its citizens, and medical tourism to foreign countries.

To effectively deliver good health care services requires strong synergy and effective collaboration among all and sundry. To deliver health care services are enormous, requiring collective efforts to enact health policies, plans and programmes that functional, geared towards the wellness of the populace. It should be noted that public health is multi-sectoral in delivering priority health investments at all levels as are exemplified below:

* 1. The development of effective health policies geared towards improving the standard of health of the population.
	2. Provide assistance to vulnerable communities during emergencies with resilience recovery plans.
	3. Ensure adequate delivery of cost effective healthcare services to the people at all levels (urban, semi-urban and rural areas).
	4. Encourage health education and sensitization activities to promote healthy behaviours among the people.
	5. Invest in awareness campaign in disease preventing and curtailment.

**3. List the various determinants of health a community.**

The health of populace has shown to be affected by different interrelated factors including individual lifestyle, social circumstances and environmental factors. Some of these factors are seen to be influenced, while others are perceived to be more challenging in nature. Some scholars categorize determinants of health into social versus other factors.

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are four determinants of health include:

1. Societal characteristics
2. Health or medical care services
3. Biological and Genetics
4. Health behaviors/practices.

The degree of each factor is shown in the pie chart below:



Fig 1: Determinants of health (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Other public health scholars suggest other factors that influence the health of individual Households and the communities in which they reside, with slight changes to promote and increase healthy population and wellness. According to the Colleaga article, health of population is often influenced by a combination of factors listed below:



Fig 2: Core Determinants of Health (Source: www.colleaga.org)

1. Individuals’ background
2. Social and Physical Environment
3. Available Social Support Networks
4. Social-economic Status
5. Employment & Working Conditions
6. Education & Literacy Level
7. Health care Services
8. Healthy Child Development
9. Culture and Religion
10. Gender
11. Personal Health Practices & Coping Skills
12. Biology & Genetic Endowment

**4.** **Outline the strengths and weaknesses, the preventive measures demanded by each model.**

Gebrezgi et al, 2006 describes a model as ‘a representation of a system that specifies its components and the relationships among the variables like graphs, charts, and decision trees’ thus highlighting the mode of disease prevention to 19th and 20th century.

The proponents of the 19th century model rely on its **contagious theory**. The strength of the contagious theory was on the emphasis of keeping sick people away from healthy people. This was in order to curb the infection rate among the community residents. The advantage of this model is still evident today, which is been adopted as part of the public health protocol in preventing the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

The contagious theory supports establishing safety barriers around identified infected households and affected localities, periodic fumigation, washing the bedsheets and clothes of sick persons with antiseptic. Another strategy of implementing this model includes the quarantine of travelers in designated isolated areas for a specific period of time.

Despite the noticeable strengths of the 19th century model, there were certain short-comings identified to hinder total protection of healthy people from contracting infections in spite of them been isolated from sick people.

Another theory of that supported the 19th century model is the **supernatural theory**. Thistheory believes that cause of diseases are due to supernatural powers, as punishment for transgressing against the commandments of God. The theory emphasized the need for people to abstain from any behavior that encourages living an unclean life. However, the proponents of this theory while drumming support on the belief that sin causes disease, were indirectly supporting the idea that government need to address issues leading to poverty.

Others theories of the 19th century model include the theory of personal behavior which held that disease infection results from wrong personal behavior. The theory posits that people are responsible for disease outbreak following their unhealthy lifestyles. An example include poor hygiene, improper diet, lack of exercise, and emotional tension. According to Gebrezgi et al, 2006, this theory does not blame the poor for the getting infected but blamed contracting disease as a result of socio-economic living standard.

The 20th century model relied on the Germ theory which posits that microorganisms are responsible for disease infection. The theory advocates for the administration of antibiotics and vaccines as treatment for microbial infections. This position was however criticized by Thomas Mckeown, argued that improving living standards was responsible for the reduction of disease not the discovery of antibiotics and vaccines. He further stated that occurrence of all major infectious diseases witnessed reduction in case load decades before the invention of antibiotics and vaccines.

**5. What is the influence of globalization on community health?**

Acosta and Gonzalez, 2010 stated that globalization has become one of the most peculiar concepts in recent times with divergent perception. They described globalization as a complex and multi-dimensional in nature which has led to contentious discussions in its meaning. The argument is not limited to its significance as whether it is serving its intended purpose of presenting the interest of all or its meant to benefit just a few groups of persons or national interest.

Globalization has diverse effects on the society including community health of a population. Although its proponents try to assure the society that its impact is for the well-being of the general populace. For instance, it assures people, particularly the poor, of a better health benefits and economic wellbeing. However, the impact of globalization on health is better viewed from different perspectives - positive, negative or mixed (Source: Gebrezgi Gidey et al, 2006).

Dr Kelley Lee of the Centre on Global Change and Health, London School of Hygiene &
Tropical Medicine in a statement said it would be over simplistic and inaccurate to describe globalization as either “good” or “bad” for health. He argued that technological advancement such as telecommunication, cross border data flow, Internet facility, satellite networks and wireless telephones are all thanks to globalization.

Stating further, globalization has made brought bilateral benefits between high-income countries and low-income countries. This is evident on population mobility through the migration of health professionals, trades and investments. This has offered benefits to understaffed health systems in high-income countries but at the expense of capacity in the developing world – brain drain.

The speed of modern transportation systems has also been attributed to facilitate the means by which infectious diseases can transmit around the world within a few hours (e.g. SARS outbreak in 2002/ 2003). It has encouraged marketing and advertising of western consumer goods, facilitating the global spread of modern “lifestyle” diseases such as smoking, obesity within the populations of low and middle-income countries.

6. **Do you think that globalization affects the overall health situation of your country?
How?**

Yes, I think globalization has affected the overall health situation of my country, Nigeria. It has brought about the good, the bad, and the ugly. The interconnectivity brought about by globalization is a major contributing factor with underlying and direct impact on the health of Nigerians. For example, increase in disease outbreaks, drug-resistance pathogens (malaria, tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS) and cross-boarder movement of health workers for greener pastures.

Although through technological advancement, globalization has increase prevention and treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases, the negative effects of globalization have affected the determinants of health peculiar to the Nigerian context, such as: economic livelihood, education, agriculture, water, sanitation and hygiene, health infrastructure, just to mention but a few.

Globalization through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has also brought access to improved standard of living healthy and wellbeing of the populace. This medium has facilitated better awareness on health education, research and training healthy living activities. The launch of the Internet facility led to the globalization of the world, as it recognizes no national bounders.

Other side effect of globalization can be seen on the increase in emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases in Nigeria. Polio was thought to be eradicated in 2019, only to re-emerge in 2020, which is attributed to increasing resistance to drugs. The speed of modern transportation systems has favoured the means through which infectious diseases can possibly spread around the world within few hours. E.g. the detection of COVID-19 variants (Delta and Omicron) in the country from inter-border carriers is evident of the negative effect of globalization.

Another ill of globalization is facilitating the ease of migration by the elite and the rich for medical tourism to developed countries where quality health care is available at lower cost. This has therefore, limited the commitment of the political class to invest more on improving the various levels of health care delivery in the country.

Globalization has contributed to Environmental pollution that are harmful to human, animal or plant, life and the general environment, and may arise through the natural events, industrial and human activities or the interaction of all (Otukong, 2002: 3). A major environmental hazard in Nigeria is the influx of generating sets (Generators), constituting to noise and air pollution resulting to lose of lives (e.g. electrical shock, inhalation of generator fumes - contain carbon monoxide).

**7. Define public health and discuss the similarities and difference with clinical medicine.**

*‘Public Health is the science of protecting and improving the* ***health*** *of families and communities through promotion of healthy lifestyles, researching disease and injury prevention, and detection, preventing and responding to infectious disease. Overall, Public health is concerned with protecting the health of entire population’.*

– Centre for Disease Control Foundation

The American Public Health Association defined public health as "the practice of preventing disease and promoting good health within *groups of people*, from small communities to entire countries".

In 1988, the Institute of Medicine defined public health as "what we, as a society, do *collectively* to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy".

While CEA Winslow states that *‘Public health is* *the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organized efforts and, informed choices of society, organizations, public and private communities, and individuals’*.

The understanding of public health concept and clinical medicine are vital and are interlinked to improve individual and public health. Although their roles have continuously changed over time, their objective is to ensure the provision of better health care for individuals and the entire populace.

The distinction between public health and clinical medicine lies on the premise that public health looks at health from the perspective of populations. Public health professionals work to prevent the spread of illness in a particular population, which can be as small as a single neighborhood or as large as an entire country. Their work is largely preventive, as they take steps to ensure that a population has clean food and water, and design informational campaigns to teach the public about health and wellness.

However, clinical medicine looks at health from the perspective of individuals. For instance, a patient with Malaria is been attend to by a Doctor who listens to the patient’s description of symptoms, diagnose and prescribes the appropriate medication for the Nurse to administer to the patient for relieve. Meanwhile, the public health approach is different as the public health professional takes a holistic look at the community to investigate the prevalence, cause of Malaria outbreak and the number of case load.

Since public health is concerned with the health condition of a defined group of people, it then beholds on the government to take actions to promote, protect and preserve the health of its citizenry. On the other hand, clinical medicine is concerned with diagnosing and treating diseases in individual patients. This has evolved predominantly from a medical and nursing service to involve enormously multifaceted team of experts.

The public health consists of direct and indirect methods of handling populations’ health. Direct method includes immunization of children, birth controls, hypertension control, and diabetic case studies. Indirect methods includes, such as raising standards of environmental safety, portable water supply, sewage disposal, and improved nutrition, etc.

Additionally, while clinical services focus on the health of one individual at a time, public health has a much broader focus and works to ensure the health and wellbeing of groups of people at community level. And its roles and functions go far beyond providing direct services to the communities.

**8. Mention the role of public health in the health care delivery system**

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health systems as ‘all organizations, people, and actions whose primary intent is to promote, restore, or maintain health’. These actions in turn affect the determinants of health with direct preventive and curative activities. It includes six interconnected building blocks (a performing health workforce; service delivery; operational health information system; access to essential medical products, vaccines, and technologies; provision of adequate financing; and leadership and governance).

Public health is fundamental aspect of the health system in promoting and protecting the health of populations through action at the international, national, state and local level. According to mission World Health Organization (WHO), public health aims to provide maximum benefit for the largest number of people. It emphasized on the need to have a well-functioning health system capable of responding effectively to the expectations and needs of the population through:

1. Strengthening the health conditions of individuals, families and communities;
2. Ensure defense of the population against threats to their health;
3. Protect community from the financial implications of unpleasant health conditions;
4. Provide equal access to people-centered health care services;
5. Encourage community participation in decision-making that affects their well-being and health care delivery system.

In addition to the above, the US public health system outlined ten (10) roles of public health in a continuous process as shown below:



Figure 3: The 10 Essential Public Health Services (Source: US public health system)

The US public health system identified some core activities in public health to include the following:

1. Preventing disease epidemics
2. Protecting the environment, work place, food and water ;
3. Promoting healthy behavior;
4. Monitoring the health status of the population;
5. Mobilizing community action;
6. Responding to disasters;
7. Assuring the quality ,accessibility, and accountability of medical care;
8. Reaching to develop new insights and innovative solutions and
9. Leading the development of sound health policy and Planning

**9. What are the challenges of public health practice?**

The primary aims of public health are disease prevention and health promotion. However, in today’s world, there have been varying health challenges limiting the effective public health service. They include:

1. Fast transmission of infectious diseases and the possible global pandemics;
2. Harmful lifestyles;
3. Problem of population behavioural change resulting to increased mortality and morbidity from non-communicable diseases;
4. Climate change impacts on health, including effects of environmental pollution;
5. Effects of national disasters, conflicts and mass travels population leading to antimicrobial resistance of pathogens;
6. Workplace injuries and health occupational hazards;

For Nigeria, the following are observed to limit the delivery of public health service in the country:

1. Inadequate Public health infrastructure: Infrastructure is vital tool for planning, implementing, assessing, and strengthening public health at all levels (communities, states, and nation). It assures the capacity to prevent disease, promote healthy living and respond to emergency (severe) and ongoing (protracted) public health threats. All public health services depend on the provision of basic facilities to provide a full package capacity to prevent disease, promote health.
2. Motivation and incentives: Today’s public health leaders and practitioners must be able to work and be comfortable and effective in this environment. They must deal with all the determinants of health, interface effectively with other sectors and learn to work within those other sectors’ agendas. There are profound and urgent training and development needs in all these areas.
3. Inadequate workforce and capacity building: Public health service requires appropriately trained and service-oriented experts, who know and acknowledges the reality that public health policies are established in a world of complexity, uncertainty and political interest. This is vital in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.
4. Lack of commitment in mainstreaming the SDGs and Health 2020 in government public sector. The SDGs and Health 2020 make it clear that public health and well-being should be resolved in whole development programmes across all sectors of Member States’ governance and policy frameworks. In general, the aim is to create government prioritized policies and budgets that are health-oriented, based on health impact evaluations and focused on sustainability, within the framework of the SDGs.
5. Low publicity of public health program at rural level (e.g. immunizations, infectious disease monitoring, cancer and asthma prevention, injury prevention, drinking safe water and sanitation). Effective public health education requires health professionals who are competent in multifaceted and technical skills, up-to-date information systems, and capacity to assess and respond to community health needs.

**Conclusion**

The concept and importance of public health service came into existence in ancient times. An effective "public health" system ensures that most of the population’s health needs are accomplished through access to affordable quality public health and clinical services. However, while efforts are geared towards providing a balanced health service, there are interrelated health determinants that affect the health of individuals and the communities in which they live.

A major achievement of public health is the launch of vaccination programmes. Vaccination has resulted in the eradication of chickenpox; elimination and curb of poliomyelitis, control of Malaria, etc and other infectious diseases around the world. The need to gives more attention to the SDGs and Health 2020 agendas in development programmes across all sectors of Member States’ governance cannot be over emphasized.

In solving the challenges confronting the public health, it is pertinent to shift from narrowly confinement of health care, to a wider multi-sectoral health framework. It is therefore necessary for nations to plan their health development actions within the overall SDGs and to identify priorities investments that will have greatest impact on the health and well-being of its populace.

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