

The Chatham House Centre on Global Health Security

Current and recent work

About the Centre on Global Health Security

The Centre examines key global health challenges and how they manifest themselves as problems of international affairs and global politics. It seeks to inform policy by translating evidence into options for decision-makers around the world to consider to improve national and global health security. A characteristic of its approach is the engagement at all stages of its projects with those in the countries where the outcome of the work would be implemented.



Chatham House roundtable held in February 2018 in Abuja on sustainable laboratories for high-consequence pathogens in Africa.



Dr. Tom Frieden, Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, carefully removes his gloves as he exits the ELWA 3 Ebola treatment unit in Liberia, as Dr. Jordan Tapper, CDC, awaits his turn in the decontamination line.
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The Centre on Global Health Security seeks to generate ideas for enhancing global health security by conducting independent research and analysis and by convening the relevant communities to stimulate discourse in the internationally recognized, politically neutral forum of Chatham House and in countries that are the focus of its work. Examples of current and recent areas of work include:

Preparedness for public health emergencies

The Centre has been involved with several initiatives that emerged from the West African Ebola outbreak. Some of its experts were members of international evaluation panels that examined governance of the response, while support to other panels was provided through expert briefing papers and facilitation of roundtable discussions. Further work in this area included the convening in Monrovia of West African health ministers and other senior stakeholders to evaluate the recommendations of the various evaluation panels, and roundtables on monitoring preparedness for major public health events, on the impact of outbreaks on the travel and tourism sectors, and on the role of the military in outbreak response.

The Centre is also collaborating with Public Health England and the International Association of National Public Health Institutes on a project that aims to improve public health system preparedness by developing a set of country-level indicators that national public health institutions can use to monitor progress towards building capacities for preparedness for public health emergencies.

The Infectious Disease Risk Assessment and Management (IDRAM) Initiative, led by the Centre in collaboration with International SOS and Public Health England, supports the extractive industry to understand, assess and mitigate the risk posed to the sector by emerging infectious disease outbreaks and encourages greater collaboration. Work has included research to understand experiences, field testing of an audit toolkit developed to improve risk assessment and management on established mining sites, and desktop scenario exercises on how to identify gaps in preparedness and improve outbreak response coordination.

Another project, in partnership with Chatham House's International Security Department, aims to help three African cities improve their level of preparedness for biological threats, from outbreaks to bioterrorism. The work, conducted in close collaboration with city officials and other key stakeholders, includes understanding each context and developing tailored plans for biological emergency response.



West Africa Global Health Fellows, Dr Ama Pokuaa Fenny, Edward Owusu Nyarko and Dr Ritgak Tilley-Gyado having completed their 12-month fellowship.

Recent and current project partners

- The International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI)
- Public Health England
- The Graduate Institute, Geneva
- International SOS

Extended Centre expertise

The Centre also attracts other research groups and organizations wishing to have an informed individual participate in their work or contribute as an adviser. Examples include membership or chairing of external advisory groups, contributing to international conferences and providing advice to heads of state and ministers on implementation of ideas.



Professor Sueerie Moon addresses the panel at the Chatham House event, "Question Time: Electing the Next Director-General of the World Health Organization". The event provided an opportunity to hear from the candidates and put questions to them.

African Public Health Leaders Fellowship

The Centre, together with the Graduate Institute in Geneva, offers an annual fellowship for mid-level and senior public health managers in Africa with leadership potential, to support the development of the next generation of public health leaders in Africa. The fellowship helps participants build the knowledge, insight and skills to develop and deliver national public health programmes, strategies, plans and policy in their own countries. A hallmark of the fellowship is its mix of intensive orientation, interaction with African leaders in public health and high-level remote mentoring. The major requirement is that fellows complete a relevant independent project, under virtual mentoring, while maintaining their jobs in their home countries. Graduating fellows leave with enhanced skills, networks and support for playing a significant role in realizing the full potential of public health in the region.

The Universal Health Coverage Policy Forum

The goal of universal health coverage (UHC) is currently a major driver of the global health agenda. Recognizing that moving towards UHC is inherently a political process, Chatham House established the UHC Policy Forum in 2015 to address issues relating to the political economy of UHC reforms, in particular to determine and advise on the economic and political costs and benefits of different UHC strategies. The Forum, which brings together leading experts in global health, infectious diseases, health security, health systems, health economics and the politics of health reforms, has become a leading player in the UHC landscape. It has advised heads of state and other high-level political leaders in countries including: India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi and the United States. The Forum works closely with WHO and has a close collaboration with The Elders on their UHC programme. In collaboration with Chatham House's Public Health Africa Policy Forum, there is an established programme of work to enhance policy and political commitments to accelerating UHC reforms in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Public Health Africa Policy Forum

The Centre's Public Health Africa Policy Forum, which convenes a wide range of policy-makers, government officials, academic institutions and other relevant stakeholders in Africa, aims to foster collaborative research and analysis and create a pool of Africa-based experts to develop public health policy options that are evidence-based, sustainable and appropriately tailored for the region. Since its establishment in 2016, the Forum has engaged with several Africa-based institutions and stakeholders. Issues addressed by the Forum include global collaboration for better health security and resilience in Africa; and primary healthcare policy, universal health coverage and health security in Nigeria. The Forum also supports other groups by providing technical support and advice and by facilitating contact with policy-makers and experts in the region.

Governance of Global Health

The Centre has been active in the sphere of global health governance for several years. Most recently, following an influential Chatham House working group report on the role of WHO in global health governance and other relevant work, the Centre hosted an unprecedented convening of WHO Director-General candidates to publicly debate election issues.

One Health

The Centre has a broad One Health-One Planet workstream. One of its projects involves refinement and tailoring of a community-based One Health outbreak detection system for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that has been successful in Thailand and Tanzania.

Other work in this area focuses on how One Health is being and can be operationalized. This has included an analysis, in collaboration with Zoetis, of 100 One Health networks across Europe, Asia and Africa. Further work in this area will explore the feasibility of establishing regional One Health platforms or centres of excellence. The Centre is also a coordinating partner in the BALZAC project, which studies the behaviour of people working in the Bangladeshi poultry farming and trading system. Policy options for improving influenza control in the poultry sector have been developed and are being tested with stakeholders. The Centre is also a member of the One Health consortium PANDORA-ID-NET (Pan-African Network for Rapid Research, Response, Relief and Preparedness for Infectious Diseases Epidemics). The work involves facilitating the development of a framework for conducting clinical trials during outbreaks of zoonotic diseases. The Centre has also convened roundtables exploring challenges in operationalizing One Health and how best the effectiveness of One Health networks can be measured.



A poultry market in Almapara, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Disease surveillance

The Centre has several projects focused on public health surveillance. Examples include technical and strategic support for the development and operationalization of the West African Network for Infectious Disease Surveillance and the recent development of a web-based interactive guide to facilitate the sharing of public health surveillance data. The guide aims to help create the right environment for data sharing and support good practice. It is accompanied by a model data sharing agreement that can be tailored to various circumstances. Another of the Centre's projects involves adapting a community-based One Health surveillance system for the DRC that has been used in Thailand and Tanzania, where communities use a mobile phone app to report symptoms in themselves or their neighbours, sick animals or unusual environmental hazards. The project, conducted in partnership with International SOS, has involved a feasibility study in two provinces in DRC where the Centre has been working with the extractive industry on the IDRAM Initiative. The Centre is currently developing an implementation plan to further tailor and operationalize the system in DRC and examine options for its wider application.

The Scope of Health Security

Health security – essentially the protection from threats to health – is increasingly recognized as one of the most important non-traditional security issues. The Centre addresses the broad scope of health security, covering both of the often-intertwined aspects of health security – collective health security, which is focused on reducing the vulnerability of societies to disease threats that spread across national borders, and individual health security, which concerns personal access to safe and effective health services, products and technologies.

Antimicrobial resistance

The Centre embarked in 2013 on a programme to address antimicrobial and antibiotic resistance. This has involved several activities including a major conference in 2013 and the establishment of a working group on new business models to stimulate the development of new antibiotics, which produced a major report 'Towards a New Global Business Model for Antibiotics Delinking Revenues from Sales.' This work contributed to the conclusions of the UK's Review on Antimicrobial Resistance under the chairmanship of Jim O'Neill. Chatham House was also a partner in DRIVE-AB, a project of the European Innovative Medicines Initiative on 'Driving reinvestment in research and development and responsible antibiotic use'. Other activities have covered issues related to agricultural use of antimicrobials and the potential role of human and animal vaccines in reducing antimicrobial resistance.



Scanning electron micrograph of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA, brown) surrounded by cellular debris. MRSA resists treatment with many antibiotics. Credit: NIAID



A lab technician works inside a biosafety cabinet at Nigeria's National Reference Laboratory in Abuja.

Sustainable laboratories for high-consequence pathogens in Africa

Outbreaks such as the 2014–16 West African Ebola epidemic have highlighted weaknesses in the region's disease surveillance and laboratory capacity, especially for the rapid diagnosis of high-consequence epidemic-prone diseases. Sophisticated laboratories are sometimes built or imported to bolster a country's capacity, using the standards and templates applied in high-income countries. However, it can be difficult or even impossible to sustain these facilities. The Centre has been engaged in this issue since 2012, when it began convening stakeholders to consider the alternative approach to laboratory biosafety and biosecurity in which the design of new public health laboratories would be better matched to the local risks, needs and resources. Continuing its work in this area, the Centre is developing a laboratory 'prior assessment tool' to guide discussions between partners interested in establishing a new or repurposed public health laboratory; developing a list of core specifications for sustainable laboratories that would be suitable for risk-based tailoring; and investigating the appetite for and feasibility of establishing a regional laboratory skills training hub in Africa.



Map of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Health development and the Belt and Road

The Belt and Road Initiative, formally launched in 2013, is a Chinese development scheme that includes countries in East Africa and the Mediterranean linked to southern China by sea; and countries in Central Asia and the Middle East along a series of overland passages to Europe.

In August 2017, the Chinese Government convened representatives from more than 30 countries and leaders of international health organizations to discuss the initiative with Chinese leaders in public health. In December 2018, a joint Hong Kong School of Medicine and Chatham House series of panel discussions between international and Chinese public health experts – *The New Silk Road to Health* – identified potential health benefits and risks from the Belt and Road Initiative. The Centre is partnering with Hong Kong University, The Lancet/CAMS Commission, China Medical Board, and the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex to develop work further examining how best to maximize the opportunities and mitigate the risks posed by the Belt and Road Initiative.

For more information:

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Health in conflict settings

The Centre has a broad programme of work on health in conflict settings, in partnership with several other institutions. Current and planned work includes: research and recommendations around reporting mechanisms for tracking attacks on healthcare facilities during armed conflict; investigation of the short- and long-term impacts of attacks on healthcare, and of the effect that conflict has on public health; examination of issues faced in trying to pursue universal health coverage for populations exposed to protracted conflict, and discussion at the Munich Security Conference of the implications and challenges were a deadly outbreak to occur in a war zone.