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News release

Health in the Americas publication addresses impact of COVID-19

Latest edition details the impact of the pandemic, highlights a reduction in life expectancy and presents lessons for the future

Washington, DC, 27 September 2022 (PAHO) – The 2022 edition of Health in the Americas, the flagship publication of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), highlights the impact of COVID-19 on the populations of the region, which was often the epicenter of the pandemic with more than 177 million cases and 2.8 million deaths.

Launched during the 30th Pan American Sanitary Conference, the publication provides an overview of the health situation in each country of the region, underlining a drop in life expectancy and outlining the challenges ahead for health systems, which were at times overwhelmed during the pandemic but demonstrated significant resilience.

"The pandemic has directly and indirectly affected the health of people and threatened progress against various diseases," said Sebastian Garcia Saiso, Director of PAHO's Department of Evidence and Intelligence for Action in Health. "We hope the publication will help decision-makers and inform public policies to resume progress towards better health for all," he said.

Health in the Americas highlights that life expectancy in Latin America and the Caribbean fell 2.9 years, from 75.1 years in 2019 to 72.2 in 2021, according to estimates from the United Nations World Population Prospects 2022. Although by smaller numbers, life expectancy also declined in North America, with a reduction of 1.8 years.

"The drop in life expectancy can be reversed if countries move forward with vaccination against COVID-19, strengthen their health services to provide care for all, and reduce

inequities that impact health," García Saiso said.

The report underscores that the region accounted for 37% of all cases of COVID-19 and 45% of all deaths globally. Although North America accounted for 55% of all cases in the region, 62% of all deaths occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Continuity of care and health care professionals were also greatly affected by the pandemic. By the end of 2021, 93% of countries reported interruptions in the provision of essential health services in all modalities, and, as of November 2021, 41 countries and territories reported nearly 2.4 million cases among healthcare workers and 13,081 deaths.

Available only in digital format, Health in the Americas includes data visualization tools and maps that allow information to be compared and analyzed. It also updates the health profiles of countries and territories in the region in a standardized format that includes data on more than 80 interagency indicators, including maternal and child health, communicable and non-communicable diseases, risk factors, and mortality.

Health in the Americas was first published in 1954 on a quinquennial basis. In 2017, a decision was taken to turn it into a digital publication and to increase its periodicity, delving into specific topics of regional importance. Last year, the first under this new format, the focus was potentially preventable premature mortality.

All issues of Health in the Americas can be viewed on the publication's website: <https://hia.paho.org/es>

Links

Health in the Americas 2022

<https://hia.paho.org/en>

United Nations World Population Prospects 2022

<https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/MostUsed/>

WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

<https://covid19.who.int/>

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The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) works with the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of its population. Founded in 1902, it is the world's oldest international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office of WHO for the Americas and is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American system.