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Geopolitical Shifts and Global Health Security: Public Health and Epidemiology Perspectives

Vivian Kruh**Assistant Professor, Faculty of Nursing and Health, Nord University, Norway*

***Corresponding author:** Vivian Kruh, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Nursing and Health, Nord University, Norway

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Global health security is no longer shaped solely by pathogens or health care systems, rather it is also affected by geopolitical dynamics that increasingly influence how nations prepare for, detect and respond to health threats. In today's world, conflicts and wars remain one of the most profound disruptors of global health. These conflicts and wars now shape disease patterns, population vulnerability and the resilience of health systems and their consequences are fundamentally epidemiological. While pathogens remain biological in nature, the conditions that allow them to emerge, spread, or be contained are profoundly political.

Fragmentation of global governance and shifting of alliances because of armed conflicts and wars directly undermine health system capacity. This fragmentation deepens when there is destruction of hospitals, laboratories, supply chains, water and sanitation infrastructure hampering services such as vaccination, maternal care and chronic disease management that create long term health deficit that persist long after wars and conflicts ends. This same fragmentation also undermines early-warning systems, delays outbreak reporting and reduces trust in international institutions.

Moreover, during conflicts and wars, populations are also displaced, a situation which amplifies infectious disease transmission. Displacement into overcrowded camps further accelerates transmission given room for disease such as measles, tuberculosis, cholera and other water borne outbreaks to spread unchecked. Due to conflicts interruption in vector control programs,

diseases such as malaria, dengue and leishmaniasis to re-emerge or explode out of proportion. These disparities weaken collective preparedness and eventually complicate coordinated responses.

Armed conflicts and war continue to be one of the most direct geopolitical threats to health security in our modern era. Underfunded health system and Competition for supply chain can prolong outbreaks and deepen inequalities gap that is already out of control.

Migration due to conflicts and wars cannot be overlooked. Geopolitical conflicts and pressures influence migration flows, asylum policies and humanitarian responses, all of which have direct public health implication. Refugees and migrants often face higher burden of infectious disease, malnutrition and trauma, yet restrictive border policies can push movement underground, making surveillance more difficult.

Health systems worldwide are moving away from the traditional model where hospitals are the primary hub of care. Instead, they are transitioning toward digitally supported, community-based, and patient-driven models. This shift is driven by demographic pressures, workforce shortages, chronic disease patterns, and rapid advances in digital health technologies.

Geopolitical shift plays a central role in shaping global health security. They determine access to life saving technologies, the speed of outbreak detection, and the resilience of health systems. From a public health and epidemiology perspective, strengthening global health security requires renewed political cooperation,

equitable resources distribution, and robust surveillance system capable of functioning amid geopolitical uncertainty. Shifting from Hospital-Centred Health Care to Tech-Enabled Care.

From a public health and epidemiological perspective, geopolitical dynamics are no longer peripheral, they are central drivers of global vulnerability and resilience. Strengthening global health security therefore requires not only pathogen and scientific innovation but also renewed political cooperation, equitable

resources distribution, and robust systems capable of functioning amid geopolitical uncertainty.

Pathogens may be biological, but the world in which they spread is political. Conflicts, geopolitical rivalries, and shifting alliances now shape disease patterns, population vulnerability, and the resilience of health systems. Understanding these dynamics is essential for designing effective, equitable, and sustainable global health security strategies.