Country level research on health systems in the context of Covid-19 Guidelines, 14 September 2020

Guideline Aims

This guideline proposes a set of research themes and questions about health systems in the context of Covid-19 that aim to:
1. Highlight the most important health system **changes** in response to Covid-19.
2. Document **state-driven models of engagement with the private sector** during Covid-19.
3. Document **demands, strategies and tactics, and successes in resisting privatisation and commodification** of health care services, whether by health activists or actors within the state.
4. Identify **sources of "strength" or "resilience" in public health systems** tasked with responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.
5. Ensure a measure of **comparability** of country level data.

Research themes

Country level research will focus on three themes:
1. Struggles Against Privatization in times of Covid-19
2. Equity and the Covid-19 Health Systems Response
3. Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Covid-19
4. Health systems preparedness and response to Covid-19

Proposed Questions

The questions below can be answered using a variety of methodologies (e.g. reviewing media, policies and published literature, personal experiences, interviews, participant observation, etc.). Each country circle should decide which methodologies are best suited to their context. Similarly, each country could decide on the format to present it, eg. written case study, video testimonials etc.

Privatization in times of Covid-19 and struggles against it

1. Has the government taken steps to decommodify and/or nationalise health care services in your country? What pressures drove it to take these steps?
2. In what ways did your country engage the private health sector for Covid-19? What was the experience of the engagements? What were its implications for financing and out of pocket expenditure?
3. Has privatisation of health services increased or decreased during the pandemic? What forms did it take?
4. Which groups within the state and civil society have been most vocal in critiquing privatisation of health care and profiteering by the private

sector during the Covid-19 pandemic? Have these groups formed new alliances or reanimated old ones, or are they organising separately?

5. What actions have the PHM country circle taken to oppose (continued) privatisation within the health system?
6. If you think about the experience with the Covid-19 pandemic in your country, would you say this has changed the dominant consensus so that people are generally more critical of privatisation within the health sector?

Equity and the Covid-19 Health Systems Response

1. Which three groups in your country have been most negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic? How effectively has the health system been in protecting and promoting their health needs (not only Covid-related)?
2. Which three groups in your society have benefited most from the pandemic? How have they benefited?
3. Have new contours/sources of inequality within the health system become visible in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic? Please describe.
4. To what extent have health workers protested against inequalities within the health system? Have these protests come from particular workers (e.g. CHWs, doctors in rural areas or under-funded public hospitals) rather than others (e.g. doctors in research and teaching hospitals, urban centres, etc.)? What has been the government's/private hospital management's response to these protests?

Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Covid-19

1. How have CHWs been incorporated into your country's Covid-19 response? Have any special provisions, such as additional incentives been made for CHWs for their work on Covid-19?
2. What special challenges have CHWs faced in the context of the pandemic?
3. Have CHWs' safety been protected to the same extent as other health workers in the context of Covid-19?
4. Are CHWs able to continue caring for chronically ill patients at home, provide the regular non-Covid services, or have fears about Covid-19 infections and lack of institutional support prevented them from accessing patients?
5. Have there been any protests by CHWs in your country? How has the government responded to these protests?

Health systems preparedness and response to Covid-19

1. If you think about your country's Covid-19 response, how would you rate the performance of the health system? You can look at systems and strategies for (a) prevention through behaviour change(like social distancing) (b) testing (c) contact tracing, (d)facilities and protocols for isolation and quarantine, (e)treatment of the severe case including

intensive ICU care, (f) building up surge capacity including additional beds and staff and (g) with regard to financial protection.

2. What strategy is being used for the regulation (in terms of costs, quality and ethics) of public and private healthcare?
3. Have the Covid-19 related services been available to people free of cost? What has been the experience of publicly-funded health insurance schemes?
4. What challenges have people who tested positive for Covid-19 had to face?
5. What challenges have health workers and workers from allied services had to face? Have certain groups faced higher challenges?
6. What has been the impact on non-Covid services?
7. What has been the level of transparency with regards to sharing of Covid-related data by government? What have been some of the concerns related to data fidelity (reliability) and with regard to data privacy?
8. What have been the three successful strategies/interventions related to Covid-19?
9. What have been the three most problematic strategies/interventions?
10. Do you think lessons have been learnt for management of future pandemics with better preparedness? Looking at differentials within the country and through critical analysis what would be the main lessons for the future?