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Module 02: Critical Thinking

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CHOLERA OUTBREAK 515...

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CHOLERA OUTBREAK

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Dr. Kent Acheson INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (2017), Cholera disease is an infectious disease which is caused by the ingestion of contaminated water and food in one's stomach. As a result, it leads to dehydration and sometimes leads to death. It is prone to areas whose environment is filthy and damaged. A country like Zimbabwe has been a victim of it in the past 1992 to 2008. **2 THE MOST TRAGIC CASE IN ZIMBABWE WAS IN 2008 WHERE AROUND 700 CASES WERE REPORTED AND DEATH CASES IN ONE CITY.** After this case, cholera became rampant as it reached into other neighboring countries that emergency was declared (Fisher, 2009).

More health care problems in Zimbabwe arose as a result of the financial crisis, infrastructure crisis and healthcare system breakdown. In addition, there was a lack of health practitioners in the medical facilities which led to many hospitals being closed down. Limited access to health facilities have highly contributed to this tragedy. In this way, human rights have been violated in 2000 to 2009 where many people died due to lack of food. This script provides the assessment and description of the case in Zimbabwe then provides recommendations to the case (Brown, 2003).

DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH AND FINANCIAL ASPECTS IN ZIMBABWE

The role of Zimbabwean government is to prevent the spread of an infectious disease like cholera, provide the maintenance funds for health facilities, and ensure easy and affordable access to health care services and promoting healthy living in Zimbabwe (Tizora, 2009). Unfortunately, all these objectives have remained to be a theory and have not been made effective by the government to the people.

In Zimbabwe, there has been the issue of poor environment surrounding, poor health services, unaffordable and insufficient access to health and lack of funding to the health care systems which has largely contributed to the widespread of cholera. In 2008, 2024 people were reported killed from this infectious disease. **2 THE LACK OF SANITATION AND SAFE WATER HAS INCREASED THE SPREAD OF CHOLERA IN MOST OF ZIMBABWE PROVINCES.** As a result, health centers were closed down while others were functioning without functioning toilets, enough food, water, soap for patients and the health practitioners.

Additionally, the medical exams to the medical science students were canceled for there was not enough ink to print the papers. Also, there was no governmental fund support in medical schools. As a result, most medical colleges were closed down. Moreover, to this, there was no electricity in the mortuary where the corpse was left to rot (Tizora, 2009). The free medications provided to the patients but instead, they were sold to them at very high prices that they couldn't afford. All these worsened the living conditions of people in Zimbabwe (Mason, 2009).

2 AGENCIES INVOLVED IN ZIMBABWE'S HEALTH SITUATION

IN 2008, CHOLERA HAD REACHED THE ZIMBABWE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. AT THIS TIME, ZIMBABWE NEED ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND EXTERNAL AGENCIES SUCH AS RED CROSS, OXFAM, PLAN INTERNATIONAL GROUP, THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC), THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF), MEDICINES SANS FRONTIERS (MSF) AND WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) (FISHER, 2009). These organizations have allied with other organizations such as communication and transport experts, public health professionals and infectious control specialist.

3 PROS AND CONS FOR INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN STATE

AFFAIRS

The primary advantage of International involvement in state affairs in Zimbabwe has been controlling widespread cholera. ² **THE COOPERATION BETWEEN ZIMBABWE AND THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES HAS ASSISTED THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN OVERCOMING THE EPIDEMIC AND THE CRISIS OF CHOLERA IN ZIMBABWE.** When cholera spread to other neighboring regions the case of cholera became an emergency where the response from experts was needed and cooperation with other health professionals to come with effective plans including from all other international agencies on the prevention and control of cholera outbreak. There have been major positive changes made by international agencies. ² **CHOLERA AWARENESS WAS DEEMED NECESSARY AND EDUCATION THAT LED PEOPLE TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTIONS AND SPEAK UP ABOUT IT.** Additionally, it has helped in supporting the human right of access to health services, right of justice and peace and the right to be safe.

However, the international involvement in the issue of health and financial support to Zimbabwe has suffered some disadvantages too. They have suffered from mistrust from the public. The Zimbabwe people do not trust their health care system and any agency that is involved with it. This is due to the fact that they waited for a long time to finally receive their basic rights and get support from these international organizations that came to offer financial assistance. This tarnished the image of the Zimbabwe health care (Said et al, 2011).

¹ **CHOLERA OUTBREAK LAW**

An effective Cholera outbreak law should cover issues to do with social services, government services, health, and financial services. ² **HEALTH SERVICES OUGHT TO BE SUPPORTED BY VERY HEALTH POLICIES FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.** An effective Cholera law should effectively prevent and

control the cholera outbreak (CDC, 2008). Also, it is able to make a measurement of the damage caused and provide effective treatment to the victims. Additionally, since cholera is caused by poor living conditions and environment, an effective policy should ensure there is safe water to drink and good sanitation to all citizens in a country. In the same line, the law should ensure there are enough funds to support health care system of a country and enough funds and rich network from international organizations that will assist in case of such an epidemic.

Recommendations

There should be clear and precise policies and guidelines that explain what needs to be done in case of such an outbreak or crisis in a country. There should be enough awareness by now both in the nearby regions and in the worldwide. Moreover, there should be a more medical school to encourage more health professionals who can be sent to help in countries such as Zimbabwe in case of such an outbreak.

It is also crucial to keep the right health ethics in check in these health care institutions and always ensure they are safe and clean for patients and the health practitioners. Additionally, being that Cholera is just but one example of an infectious disease, the government should take good precaution even to other infectious diseases such as Ebola and HIV.

Conclusion

The cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe from 1992 to 2008 was due to financial and health crisis in Zimbabwe. The irresponsible politics in Zimbabwe has largely attributed to the economic, financial and health crisis in Zimbabwe. There is the likelihood of mismanagement of resources by the politicians and other people in power who are responsible to bring safety to the citizens of Zimbabwe. The best way of controlling such an epidemic from happening would be setting up effective policies and laws that carefully gives concern to the health of the citizens.

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