Forecasting the next 90 years of global health

Does increased car ownership increase road deaths? Will climate change affect child survival? How can smokers improve the economy by quitting?

For the first time, the global health community may have a clearer picture of these future scenarios with a new health forecasting model, according to research published today in the Bulletin of the World Health Organization.

This unique forecasting model integrates health statistics with other markers of human development such as economic growth, fertility, education and agricultural production. Using vast and diverse global data, the model can generate different health scenarios as far in advance as the year 2100.

"The global health community needs long-term integrated forecasts to help set priorities and measure achievements," says co-author Randall Kuhn, from the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver, United States of America.

"Until now, no forecast has covered such a wide range of nations over a long time span. This model helps us to understand the complex effect of many factors
on population health. It also shows the profound effect that disease and population changes can have on other drivers of development such as economic growth.”

One projection created by this model forecasts a 70% reduction in global deaths from infectious diseases by the year 2060, in spite of a substantial growth in population.

This health forecasting model is made possible using data on death and diseases gathered by the World Health Organization (WHO) from 193 countries.

Read the paper here: http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/89/7/10-083766/en/index.html

Access WHO's Global Health Observatory at: http://www.who.int/gho

Access the International Futures project at Denver University: http://www.ifs.du.edu

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The *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* is one of the world's leading public health journals. It is the flagship periodical of WHO, with a special focus on developing countries. Articles are peer-reviewed and are independent of WHO guidelines. Abstracts are now available in the six official languages of the United Nations.

Further items in this month's issue include:
- Preparing for a new dengue vaccine
- Debate on the definition of pandemic influenza
- Brazil gets tough on drinking and driving
- Reducing childhood diarrhoea in Bangladesh
- Drugs for treating malaria in African children
- Overcoming barriers to immunization among migrants in Thailand

The July issue table of contents can be found at: http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/89/7/en/index.html


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