

Early, effective response to COVID-19 will reduce large resource needs

Projected healthcare resource needs for an effective response to COVID-19 in low-income and middle-income countries are significant, but an early response to limit the spread of the virus will reduce resources needed and costs.

These are the main findings of a study that used an epidemiological model to project the health-sector costs to counter the COVID-19 outbreak, as outlined in WHO's strategic preparedness and response plan (SPRP), for 4-week and 12-week timeframes (starting 26 June 2020) at current transmission levels (status quo) in 73 low- and middle-income countries. Scenarios with a 50% increase or a 50% decrease in transmission levels were also modelled.

The total cost for the COVID-19 response in the status-quo scenario was estimated at \$US52.45 billion over 4 weeks with a per-capita cost of \$8.60. For the scenarios with increased or decreased transmissions, total costs were estimated at \$61.92 billion (\$10.15 per capita) and \$33.08 billion (\$5.42 per capita), respectively. For the 12-week timeframe, costs were projected to more than triple under status quo and in the scenario with increased transmission. In the scenario with decreased transmission, 12-week cost was equivalent to 4-week cost in the status-quo scenario. The main cost drivers under the status quo scenario were case management (54%), maintaining essential services (21%), and investigation, surveillance and rapid response (14%). The impact of an "early and comprehensive response in limiting the spread of the virus will markedly reduce the resources needed to respond to a more widespread pandemic just a few weeks later," conclude the researchers.

Tan-Torres Edejer T, et al. Projected health-care resource needs for an effective response to COVID-19 in 73 low-income and middle-income countries: a modelling study. *The Lancet Global Health* : 9 Sep 2020. Available from: URL: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(20\)30383-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30383-1)

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