

The Critical Role of Emergency Medicine in Public Health"

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The specialty of Emergency Medicine has a critical role in the realm of Public Health applicable to all countries. Emergency Medicine is directly capable of dealing with the epidemiologic transition occurring in countries throughout the world involving a shift in the population from predominance of infectious diseases to a predominance of noncommunicable diseases. Emergency Medicine addresses the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by providing treatment for acute manifestations of chronic illnesses, treating obstetric emergencies, treating exacerbations of chronic illnesses, treating injuries, and responding to disasters, conflicts, and epidemics. Special areas of interest within Emergency Medicine which directly impact Public Health include Injury Prevention, Disaster Medicine, Complex Humanitarian Emergencies and Refugee Health, Toxicology, and Pediatric Emergency Medicine. International Emergency Physician priorities include: prehospital care, Emergency Department systems, education, specialty development, developing subspecialties, determining scope of practice within legal constraints, and developing unique system funding mechanisms. Specific Public Health measures directly delivered by Emergency Medicine include: vaccinations, recognition and treatment of contagious diseases, public education including injury and illness prevention, health screening, and management of mass casualty events.

