



Important definitions to know

By: Hana Taha

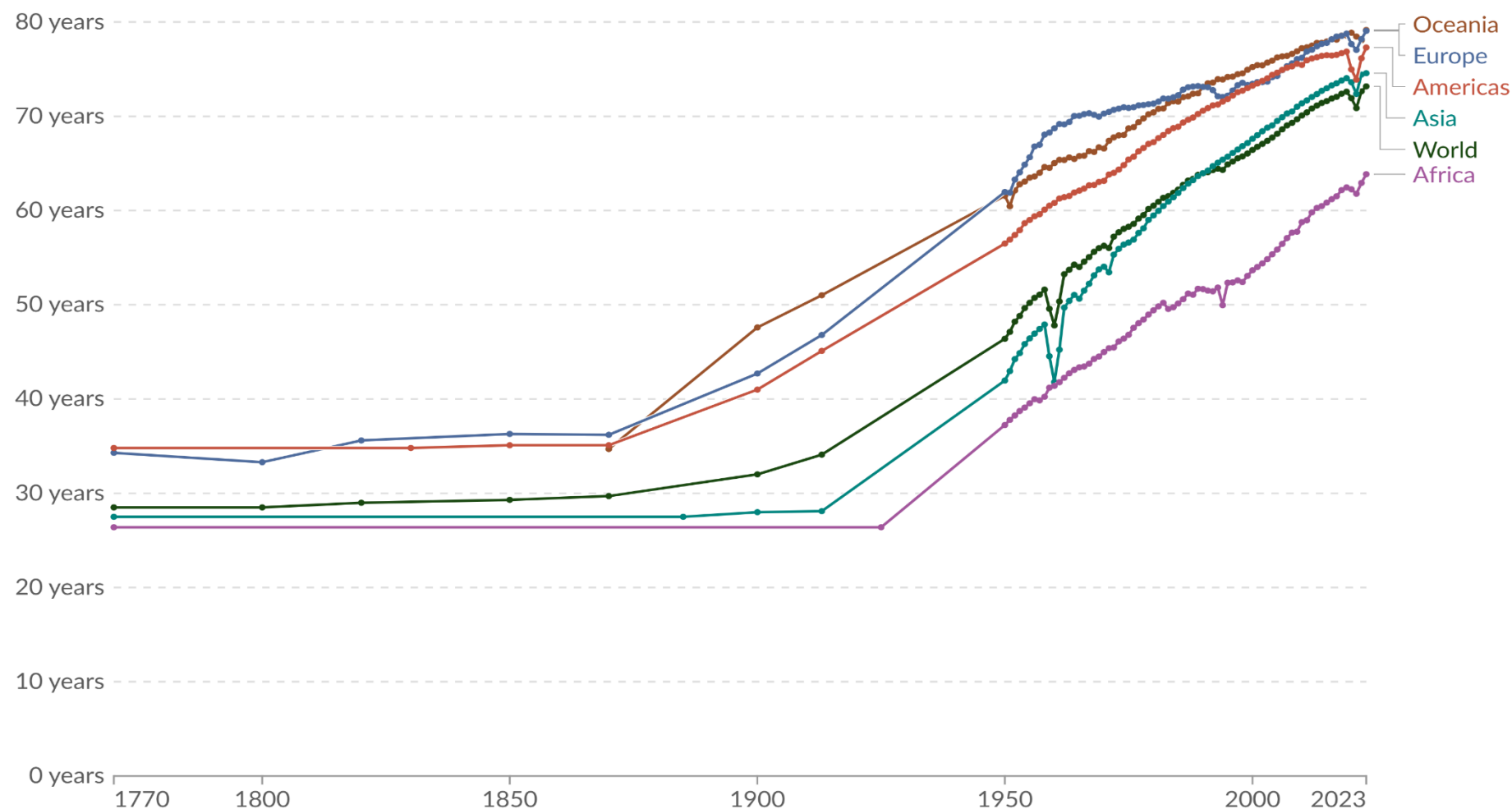


What is “Health”?

“Is the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1948) and the “extent to which an individual or group is able to realize aspirations and satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living; it is a positive concept, emphasizing social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities” (WHO, 1984).

Life expectancy

The period life expectancy¹ at birth, in a given year.



Data source: UN WPP (2024); HMD (2024); Zijdeman et al. (2015); Riley (2005)

OurWorldinData.org/life-expectancy | CC BY

1. Period life expectancy: Period life expectancy is a metric that summarizes death rates across all age groups in one particular year. For a given year, it represents the average lifespan for a hypothetical group of people, if they experienced the same age-specific death rates throughout their whole lives as the age-specific death rates seen in that particular year. Learn more in our articles: “Life expectancy” – What does this actually mean? and Period versus cohort measures: what’s the difference?

Public Health vs. Medicine

	Public Health	Medicine
Patient	Entire Populations	Individuals
Intervention	Assess, Policy Development & Assurance	Medical Treatment
Process	System Management	Patient Management
Outcome	Healthy Community	Healing



Public health versus Global health

Public health and global health are two distinct but interconnected fields that aim to improve the health and well-being of populations. While both fields share a common goal of promoting and protecting public health, they differ in their scope and approach.

Public Health Definition



- Refers to "all organized measures (whether public or private or community initiated) to prevent disease, promote health, and prolong life among the population as a whole. Its activities aim to provide conditions in which people can be healthy and focus on entire populations, not on individual patients or diseases".

Thus, public health is concerned with the total system and not only the eradication of a particular disease.

Public health is interdisciplinary

- Public Health is interdisciplinary, encompassing and relying on the knowledge, skills and approaches from a range of disciplines and professions.
- Public health researchers, practitioners and educators work with communities and populations. They identify the causes of disease and disability and implement programs or solutions referred to as interventions.

Public health Systems

- Public health systems include “all public, private, and voluntary entities that contribute to the delivery of essential public health services within a jurisdiction
- The ‘actors’ in Public Health systems can be diverse and will vary from context to context.
- This diversity illustrates the interdisciplinary nature of the field of Public Health itself.
- From research to policy making, from community health education to epidemics, it takes many different people and organizations to make Public Health work.

Example : Epidemiologists

- Epidemiologists use data – both quantitative (statistics) and qualitative (interviews and focus groups) data – to study and identify patterns and causes of diseases. These analyses are used in the formation of public health policy and programming at all levels of public health systems.

Public health functions are:



- The assessment and monitoring of the health of communities and populations at risk to identify health problems and priorities.
- The formulation of public policies designed to solve identified local and national health problems and priorities.
- To assure that all populations have access to appropriate and cost-effective care, including health promotion and disease prevention services.





What is global health?

- Is an interdisciplinary field that seeks to improve the health and well-being of people worldwide, with a particular focus on developing countries and marginalized populations.

What is global health?

- It encompasses a broad range of issues related to health and development, including infectious diseases, noncommunicable diseases, maternal and child health, mental health, and access to healthcare.

What is Global Health



- Global health takes a holistic approach to addressing health issues, recognizing that health is shaped by social, economic, and political factors as well as biological ones.

What is Global Health

- Global Health acknowledges that health problems in one part of the world can have far-reaching effects on other parts of the world, and that addressing global health challenges requires collaboration and cooperation across national borders.

Global Health Definitions



- Global Health is health issues that transcend national boundaries and governments and call for actions on the global forces that determine the health of people.
- Global health is worldwide improvement of health, reduction of disparities, and protection against global threats that disregard national borders.
- Global Health is “An area of study, research, and practice that places priority on improving health and achieving equity in health for all people worldwide”

Key differences between public health and global health



- **Scope:** Public health focuses on the health of populations within a specific geographic area, while global health is concerned with health issues that transcend national boundaries and affect people worldwide.

Key differences between public health and global health

- **Approach:** Public health interventions are typically designed to address specific health problems within a community or population, while global health interventions aim to address broader health and development issues that affect multiple populations.

Key differences between public health and global health



- **Priorities:** Public health priorities are often driven by local or national health needs, while global health priorities are shaped by the needs of developing countries and marginalized populations.

Key differences between public health and global health

- **Partnerships:** Public health partnerships often involve collaboration between local health authorities and community organizations, while global health partnerships may involve international organizations, governments, and NGOs.

Key differences between public health and global health

- **Funding:** Public health interventions are often funded through local or national health budgets, while global health interventions may rely on international aid and development assistance.

Selection of pressing Global Health issues

- Emerging infectious diseases (ie COVID-19)
- Re-emerging infectious diseases (ie Ebola)
- Tuberculosis
- Malaria
- HIV
- Malnutrition globally, including under- and overnutrition
- Increase in diabetes and heart disease globally

Global Health Solutions



- Polio eradication
- Containment of avian influenza
- Approaches to tobacco control
- Preventing antibiotics resistance
- Expanding access to vaccine and essential medicines



Thank you