

Health in Globalization Era

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Globalization has been fueled by important changes in technology generation, adoption, and diffusion, including major advances in communications and transportation. It has been further promoted and accelerated by the end of the Cold War, which eliminated some of the geopolitical barriers to world integration, and by the process of economic deregulation and liberalization in many countries. Another important—and sometimes less appreciated—driver of globalization, is the dramatic increase in world population, which by itself, and separate from technology and policies, is also causing the “densification” of world economic, social, and environmental interactions.

There are at least three general notions of globalization. First, globalization refers to the multiplication and intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural linkages among people, organizations, and countries at the world level. This notion encompasses economic and non-economic components, including larger trade and financial flows; expanding cross-border communications, international contacts among political groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other members of the civil society; and increased levels of tourism, among other examples. A second dimension is the tendency toward universal application of economic, institutional, legal, political, and cultural practices. The codification of trade rules under the WTO and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), is one of many possible economic examples. Non-economic aspects include the spread of democracy, the increase in the number and coverage of environmental treaties, and even the controversial possibility of cultural homogenization in entertainment, food, and health habits. A third meaning of globalization is the emergence of significant spillovers to the rest of the world coming from the behavior of individuals and societies. Examples include environmental issues such as cross-border pollution and global warming, financial crises and contagion, the global spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and international crime.

These three notions are termed, in this paper, as “interactions”, “homogenization”, and “spillovers”. They combine in different degrees the main ideas that merge into the common notion of globalization as deeper world integration, but it is useful to

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