

World Health Organization

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Topics

Topic A: Increase in the rates of eating disorders (ED) promoted by digital platforms.

Topic B: Uses of genetic splicing to combat superbugs and develop vaccines against pandemics.

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Introduction to the chairs

Hello, and welcome delegates, my name is Luciana Appendini and I will be your president of the UN World Health Organization committee. This year, the WHO committee will focus on improving global health by addressing challenges related to mental well-being and the use of biotechnology to prevent future health crisis. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by email; luciana.appendini@bab.edu.mx

Hello delegates, my name is Ana Lucía Salmón Meehan and I will be your Moderator for the World Health Organization Model UN debate. If you have any doubts at all, please contact me via email, and I will help you sort things out; ana.salmon@bab.edu.mx

My name is Renata Ruelas Musi and I will have the honor of serving as your Conference Officer in the World Health Organization (WHO) committee. I am truly excited to collaborate with all of you throughout the sessions. I hope this experience allows us to exchange ideas, learn from one another, and work together toward meaningful solutions. If you have any questions do not doubt on sending me an email; renata.ruelas@bab.edu.mx

Introduction to the committee

The World Health Organization committee was created on April 7, 1948, after being approved by the United Nations General Assembly in July 1946. The WHO was created to work as the main international agency responsible for public health and well-being. It works hand-to-hand with the United Nations and its member states to promote health, prevent diseases, and respond to health emergencies all around the world. The creation of WHO marked one of the most important steps toward global cooperation regarding health after World War II. It is important to mention that the World Health Organization has some main functions, such as setting international health standards, preparing responses to health crises, supporting research, and providing technical assistance to countries who need it. (WHO, 2025).

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health.

Its main faculties include:

1. **Coordination:** Acts as the directing and coordinating authority on global health issues among UN agencies and Member States.
2. **Technical Assistance:** Provides expert advice, training, and support to strengthen national health systems.
3. **Emergency Response:** Coordinates international actions during health emergencies such as disease outbreaks.
4. **Norms and Standards:** Develops international health regulations, sets medical and scientific standards, and issues recommendations to governments.
5. **Research and Data:** Collects global health data, conducts research, and promotes the exchange of information.

6. Collaboration: Works closely with governments, NGOs, and scientific institutions to improve health worldwide.

However, WHO has no power to enforce laws or sanction countries, its authority depends on the cooperation of its Member States. (Constitution of the World Health Organization. n.d.)

Topic Overview

Topic A: Increase in the rates of eating disorders (ED) promoted by digital platforms.

- Eating disorders are several different mental illnesses that have great physical, psychological, and mental effects on those who have them. They are considered to be the third most common chronic illness that has significant impacts on society, especially teenagers. (Herpertz Dahlmann, 2015) Social media has contributed a lot to the increase of this issue, because adolescents are exposed to unrealistic beauty standards and fitness “inspiration” content that lead to the development of eating disorders. (Wilksch et al., 2020) Content creators and celebrities normalize harmful and unhealthy behaviors, and lead to the objectification of bodies getting inside of teenagers’ heads. (Chung et al., 2021)
- Over the past few decades, social media has really changed the way we see ourselves and each other. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook have become places where people share their photos, videos, and thoughts every single day. While this has brought people closer and helped them learn new things, it’s also brought some serious challenges, especially around how people feel about their bodies and their self-worth.
- A lot of users, particularly teenagers, began comparing themselves to the “perfect” images they saw online. This pressure to look a certain way sometimes led to serious consequences like eating disorders, including anorexia and bulimia. Health experts noticed these disorders becoming more common and saw how social media, through filters, edited photos, and beauty trends, made people feel like their natural bodies weren’t good enough. Unfortunately, this affects both young women and men, creating a harmful cycle of feeling unhappy with their bodies, anxiety, and unhealthy eating habits.
- Because of this growing issue, groups like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations (UN) stepped in. They started working together to reduce harmful content online and

encourage healthier, more realistic ideas of beauty. Their goal isn't just to help those already struggling with eating disorders but also to stop new cases by changing how beauty is portrayed in the media.

- As social media expanded rapidly during the 2010s, the problem grew worse. That's when governments and health organizations launched campaigns to promote positive body image and mental health awareness. The WHO, for example, encouraged countries to team up with social media companies to take down harmful content and spread messages about healthy living and self-acceptance. Today, the fight against eating disorders is a worldwide effort. Many countries, along with the WHO and other health groups, keep raising awareness about the impact of online content. They offer education, therapy, and support to those who need it. These efforts highlight that mental health and feeling good about our bodies are crucial parts of public health, and that social media, when used thoughtfully, can be a force for healing and inspiration, not just harm.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) is a UN specialized agency responsible for guiding and co-ordinating international health within the UN system. It has, over the past few years, recognized rising incidence of eating disorders especially among adolescents, and the contribution played by exposure to and use of social media content in triggering or aggravating eating disorders. (World Health Organization, 2025a)
- The WHO published its fact sheet on Adolescent mental health in 2025, which states that "Eating disorders usually first occur during late adolescence and early adulthood. Digital media, like all other media, can contribute an important role to supporting or eroding the mental health of this group. (World Health Organization, 2025)
- Since then, WHO has promoted global action in elimination or reduction of social media-related eating disorders by: Promoting inclusion of digital media literacy, body image resilience, and safe online environments in adolescent health programs like Member States to enact policies limiting harmful body image content on the Internet and promoting positive body diversity representations supporting research on the role social media content and its algorithms have in contributing to eating

disorder risk and how it can be reduced by interventions. (World Health Organization, 2025c; PLOS Global Public Health, 2023).

- Eating disorders are very serious mental health challenges that have a great impact on millions of teenagers all around the world. In the last decade, social media has contributed majorly to the rise of body insecurities, in-satisfaction, and unhealthy or even risky eating behaviors. The exposure that adolescents have to unreal beauty standards and altered images and videos on social media, including, Instagram and TikTok, has may make them have lower self-esteem, anxiety disorders, and eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia (Herpertz-Dahlmann, 2015; Wilksch et al., 2020).
- The World Health Organization states that eating disorders develops mainly in adolescents (World Health Organization, 2025) and the rise in this problem can be attributed almost completely to the highly damaging content found online. The WHO is looking for promotion of body positivity, and is attempting to encourage countries to implement policies that limit this exposure to unrealistic bodies on social media (World Health Organization; 2025). Eating disorders are a very important topic that has to be addressed and talked about in order to reduce their rise and also avoid their promotion that has been created by social media. Often, teenagers feel very self aware and insecure in their own bodies, and this is mostly caused by the unrealistic beauty standards that we see online. Social media highly affects mental health and leads adolescents to eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. Organizations like the WHO and the UN are asking for action and they are promoting body positivity, and making young people feel better and reducing this huge problem.

Topic B: Uses of genetic splicing to combat superbugs and develop vaccines against pandemics.

- In the last few years, science has found new ways to eradicate diseases that were seen as impossible to stop. One of the most powerful tools is genetic splicing, a technique that lets scientists modify DNA to create new solutions and inventions for health problems. This method is being used to combat superbugs, which are bacteria that no longer respond to normal antibiotics, and to develop vaccines that can protect us from

dangerous pandemics. The understanding and changing of genes has allowed doctors and researchers to design stronger treatments and prevent future crises all around the world. Even though this technology generates ethical questions, it also shows how human creativity and knowledge can help protect and evolve life on Earth. (World Health Organization, 2023).

- In the past years, there have been many scientific advancements that combat diseases that were thought to be invincible. One of these discoveries is genetic splicing, it is a technique that scientists use to modify DNA, in order to reach solutions for different health challenges (World Health Organization, 2023). This method is today crucial for the creation of new vaccines, and the elimination of superbugs resistant to antibiotics (Micoli et al., 2021).
- Antibiotic-resistant bacteria has emerged and become a huge challenge to global health. These microorganisms have evolved and become “immune” to conventional antibiotics (Davies, 2010; Uddin, 2021). To challenge them, and solve this issue, scientists have developed genetic splicing to fight these bacteria by manipulating genetic material and creating antimicrobial agents that target them (Li, 2020). This approach to medicine can now treat infections that were untreatable before (Santos-Beneit, 2024). During the COVID-19 pandemic, this method allowed vaccines to be developed rapidly thanks to genetic splicing technology. mRNA vaccines, which use genetic instructions to make cells create an immune response (Beyer, 2021), giving end to the pandemic much faster.
- Although genetic splicing has offered effective solutions for big problematics, it has also raised many ethical questions amongst society. Altering genetic material needs to have careful attention and consideration, since it has long-term or permanent consequences (World Health Organization, 2023). In 2021 it was stated that this needs ethical regulations to ensure that the genetic intervention is conducted in a responsible way (Micoli et al., 2021). The use of genetic splicing gave a huge leap forward to medicine, and addresses the most harmful health challenges of our time. With this scientific advancements, the fight against pandemics has been reduced. (Uddin, 2021; Beyrer, 2021). However, it is very important to use and approach genetic splicing with a lot of caution. (World Health Organization, 2023)
- In April 2024, the World Health Organization (WHO) published a report called *“Estimating the impact of vaccines in reducing antimicrobial resistance and antibiotic use.”* This report explains how scientific advances like genetic modification and genetic engineering are being used to fight superbugs, which are bacteria that can not be treated with natural antibiotics.

- The WHO also highlights that the development of genetically engineered vaccines help prevent diseases caused by viruses and resistant bacteria. This helps to reduce the use and need for antibiotics and to slow down antibacterial resistance (AMR) around the world. Another WHO report called “*Vaccines for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)*” says how vaccines play a role in reducing infections before they happen, supporting the use of biotechnology to improve global health systems and be prepared for future pandemics. Finally, scientific sources like *Scientific American* explain that the use of genetic splicing allowed scientists to develop COVID-19 vaccines in record time, showing how this technology can be used to create fast and effective results against global pandemics. Genetic splicing has become one of the most powerful tools for protecting human health. It gives scientists the chance to fight superbugs and create vaccines that can stop deadly pandemics before they spread. Even though it raises questions about safety and ethics, this technology shows how people can use knowledge to care for others and improve life on our planet. The future of medicine depends on using these discoveries wisely and responsibly to build a healthier world for everyone. (World Health Organization, 2023).

Suggested Tools for Further Research, Documents of Significance, and Guiding Questions

WHO Projects and Programs

1. *Global Strategy on Digital Health* – Helps countries make the internet safer and protect teens from harmful online content. (*World Health Organization, 2021*)
2. *Addressing the Digital Determinants of Youth Mental Health* – It studies and analyses how social media affects teens, and ways in which this can be prevented. (*World Health Organization, 2023*),
3. *Teens, Screens and Mental Health* – It raises awareness of the risks of excessive social media and digital use. (*World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, 2024*)
4. *Child & Adolescent Mental Health Program* – Gives out mental health and eating disorders help for young people. (*World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, n.d.*)
5. *mhGAP Program* – Training for doctors around the world to be able to detect different problems like eating disorders. (*World Health Organization, n.d.*)
6. *Human Genome Editing Committee* – Rules to make sure the use and editing of the human genome is ethical and safe. (*World Health Organization, n.d.*)
7. *R&D Blueprint for Epidemics* – It speeds up vaccine research in times of pandemic. (*World Health Organization, n.d.*)
8. *Vaccines to Fight Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)* – It has a goal to prevent superbugs by promoting vaccines and the reduction of the use of antibiotics. (*World Health*

Organization, n.d.)

9. Global Action Plan on AMR – It searches for a way to get rid of drug-resistant bacteria.

(World Health Organization, 2023)

10. Biotechnology and Vaccine Guidance – It promotes an ethical and correct development of innovative genetic and vaccine technologies. (Moore et al., 2023)

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