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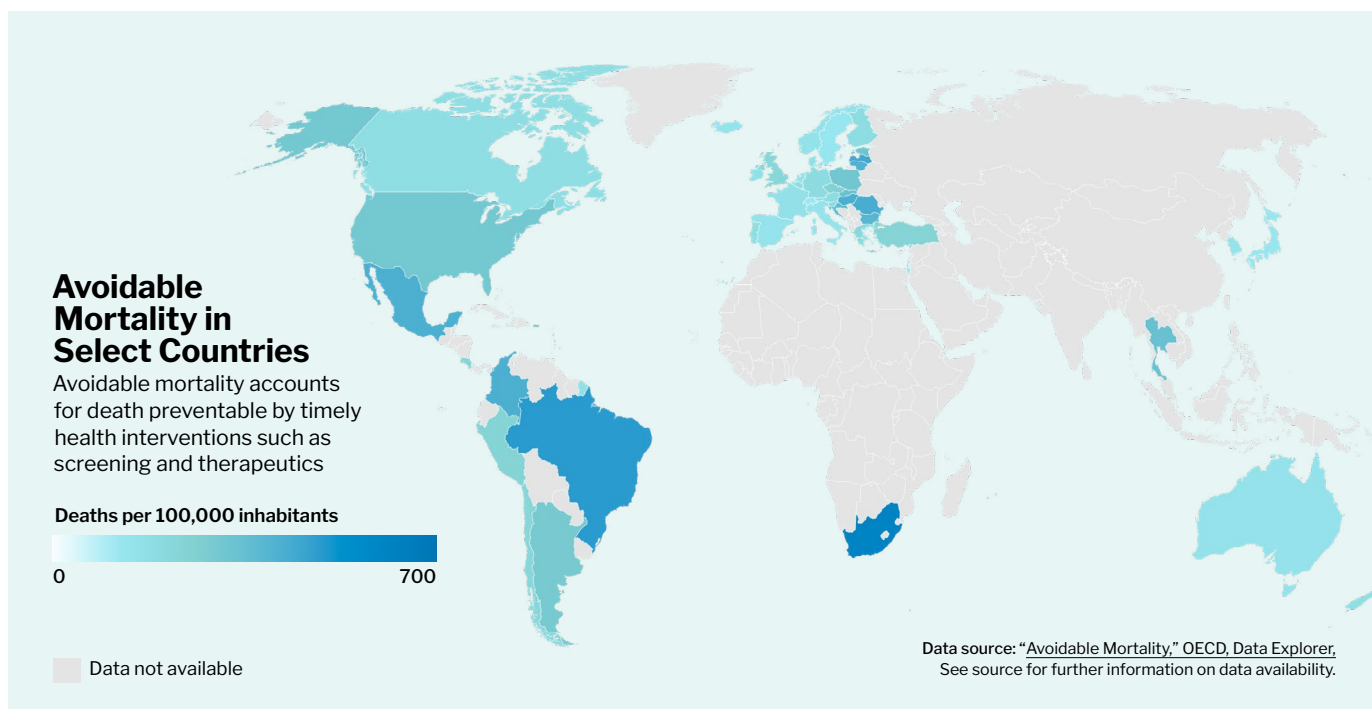
The Case For Investment In Health Innovation

Technological advancement in health can yield immense social and economic benefits for patients and societies

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, represent the defining health challenge facing health systems globally, leading to as many as three in four deaths annually. While wealthy countries bear the brunt of this burden today, demographic trends are making NCDs a rising challenge in the developing world as well, threatening future growth and stability. Beyond the immense human toll, estimated at more than 40 million lives lost per year, NCDs also levy immense economic burdens totaling USD 2 trillion annually, driven by health care costs and lost productivity. Critically, however, health care innovation can help undercut these trends, forming the basis for significant improvements in life expectancy and well-being and driving productivity and growth.

Amid the heavy costs of NCDs, access to known treatments is uneven, new health challenges continue to materialize,

and health care innovation remains underprioritized. For every disease where innovation has created a clear path forward—like cervical or breast cancer, where prevention, early detection, and treatment with innovative medicines have transformed outcomes—there are conditions like cardiovascular disease and mental illness that remain perniciously complex. Critically, many advancements are undermined by the persistent challenge of uneven access, which prevents life-saving solutions from reaching their full potential. Rising life expectancy and changing patterns of consumption globally portend a wave of NCD burden that will continue to rise at least through mid-century. Health care innovation holds great promise to head off these trends, both through the creation of novel drugs and diagnostics and through the improvement of health care delivery and access systems, particularly on the back of technological advancements in digital systems, data, and AI.



Health care innovation delivers widespread social and economic benefits

Health care innovation plays a critical role in equipping health systems with new tools, therapeutics, and models for prevention, early detection, and effective treatment of NCDs. Such innovation underpins huge development gains: Global life expectancy has more than doubled since 1900 in large part due to improved health care. Innovation in therapeutics and treatment strategies has helped prevent premature death, lessen disability, and in some cases eradicate diseases entirely. At the same time, health innovation can deliver known remedies to patients more effectively, such as the 1.8 million people who die annually from avoidable illnesses in Europe alone.

Beyond saving lives, health care innovation yields society-wide dividends through restored healthy years of life and productivity, averted medical costs, and reduced burden on caregivers and health systems. These benefits accrue on a massive scale: as much as one-third of economic growth in advanced economies over the last century can be attributed to improvements in health. Innovation and delivery of effective care is fundamental to global economic productivity. In Europe, where NCDs kill one in five men and one in ten women before the age of 70, lost productivity due to NCDs is estimated to cost more than a half-trillion dollars annually. These costs are unconscionable and can be mitigated if not avoided, particularly when effective interventions are known and new innovations could yield further breakthroughs.

But effective health care is more than just saving lives and keeping economies moving—it is fundamental to

strong, prosperous communities that embody inclusivity, resiliency, and stability. Innovation that yields effective new medicines or therapies has vast, multifaceted impacts: It can prevent stigma and isolation, preserve households and families, lessen burden on informal caregivers, avert mental illness, and reduce educational and social support system strain. This intricate web of relationships makes investing in health not just prudent, but indispensable.

Looking Ahead

Greater focus on evidence-based, targeted investments can accelerate the development of novel, transformative ways to identify, prevent, and treat illness, as well as to improve how health care providers deliver existing solutions more effectively and equitably around the world.

Key Recommendations

- Expand innovation-focused funding and investment vehicles that materially support research and development of life-changing medicines while also ensuring that all forms of care, both new and established, are accessible to patients who need them.
- Enhance data collection to fully capture the true cost of NCDs and inform investment decisions for maximally effective health care strategies and interventions.
- Harness emerging technology—particularly in digital health, data collection, and AI—to unlock efficiencies and provide new models for responsive care.
- Identify cross-sectoral partnerships that can accelerate NCD-related innovation and access to care across high-income as well as low-resourced settings.