

Noma: A Challenge to Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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INTRODUCTION

The elimination of noma should be considered a vital indicator for attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the commitment to leave no one behind. Noma thrives in conditions of poverty, hunger and increased inequalities. By scaling up efforts to achieve SDGs; the risks of noma can be reduced or eliminated especially among vulnerable populations. The aim of the study is to identify the direct and indirect links of noma to attainment of SDGs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A review of articles was conducted on PubMed, Web of Science, AJOL, and Google Scholar. Inclusion criteria were English-language studies highlighting risk factors for noma, summarized to develop a conceptual framework of direct and indirect noma risk factors. Two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involved with 16 students Noma advocates randomly selected after the 2022 Noma boot camp. FGDs generated data on direct and indirect associations of Noma with the SDGs

RESULTS

No prior study has linked Noma and SDGs. Findings from the review of 12 primary noma articles and FGDs revealed direct associations with SDGs: extreme poverty (SDG 1), malnutrition and lack of exclusive breastfeeding (SDG 2), poor oral health, limited access to healthcare and immunization (SDG 3). Indirect associations included parents' low educational status (SDG 4), maternal malnutrition, close birth spacing leading to reduced likelihood of exclusive breastfeeding and women empowerment as potential protective factors includes the mother being the primary caretaker (OR 0.08; CI 0.01, 0.5) (SDG 5), water and sanitation access (SDG 6), socio-economic inequalities (SDGs 8, 10 and 16), inadequate funding for research and monitoring, inadequate synergy across the various SDGs for the elimination of noma (SDG 17). Noma impacts vulnerable populations due to multiple determinants, necessitating cross-sectoral action beyond health.



NOMA AND SDGs



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CONCLUSION

Noma, affecting vulnerable population of children aged 2-6 predominantly can be linked to insufficiency in attainment of SDGs. Exploring other determinants of health (noma in this case) and improving concerted efforts across various SDGs by global and local action can significantly contribute to the elimination of noma to ensure the well-being and health of all communities.

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