

PhD Thesis Abstract: John Michael Quinn V

In the 21st century, the prevention of illness, disease and risks to health ushered in public health and medical practice with mixed results. War, hybrid warfare, conflict, complex emergencies and disasters remain significant public health risks and areas of strategic concern; focused epidemiological study in health policy remains elusive. The paradigm shift from major world powers leading global affairs and affecting global health to multiple state and non-state actors vying for power and influence regionally has possibly led to an increase in small scale and low intensity conflict with high morbidity and mortality, including both noncommunicable (NCD) and communicable diseases.

The basic research carried out for this PhD project includes: 1) mental health surveys and trauma associated with war; 2) the migration of, and the need for, advanced medical personnel and their services in war and hybrid warfare, including how the negative movement or adverse flow through 'brain drain' of doctors affects disaster; 3) a quantitative study of infectious diseases, health and human security associated with state stability and the mitigation of state failure; 4) a qualitative food security review, the origins of food security and its impact; and 5) the general concepts of health security and the need for institutions that promote the prevention of disease. Methodologies for each research and publication are discussed separately.

Based on the outcomes of this thesis, mitigating state failure and reviving fragile states must become key policy objectives for development and public health programming for states in crisis. Fragile states are not preordained to state failure or absolute collapse, and preventable morbidity and mortality of both NCDs and communicable diseases may affect the stability of the state. Country-specific approaches that encourage the rule of law and transparent, accountable, sustainable and representative institutions, as well as limit state-controlled violence and foster environmental integrity through evidence-based policy, can encourage states towards further stability and improved health security.

This thesis has included multiple research methodologies that address and attempt to unpack these many connected areas of state stability and their relationship to health. These fragile states are placed on a spectrum of fragility, where some could be marked as failed. One research instrument used, the Fragile States Index (FSI), measures the quality of national-level institutions; however, this may not capture all variables related to state fragility and health alone. The incidence of preventable infectious diseases has a new context in terms of the issues faced by states in providing an environment for health security.

To summarize, the qualitative and quantitative data suggests that, to improve health security in fragile and failed states, policy focus should seek to resuscitate fragile states and mitigate the loss of failed states. This may include preventing disease, preventing environmental degradation, encouraging economic and job security, and improving environmental conditions that affect health. It also suggests that empowering the population in terms of personal freedom and wealth greatly increases its resilience to counter the impacts of poor environmental conditions.