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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

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EU EXTENDS TEMPORARY PROTECTION

FOR THOSE FLEEING RUSSIAN AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the European Commission activated the Temporary Protection Directive on March 4, 2022, which provided immediate protection to around 4 million Ukrainians in the EU. The EU has extended protection until March 2024 and can further extend it until 2025, although the Commission is prepared to take the necessary steps for further prolongation if needed.

The Protection Directive reduced formalities to the minimum and complemented protection with a comprehensive and harmonized set of rights, including access to registration, education, healthcare, and employment. The EU has also provided financial support of €13.6 billion to address the needs of displaced persons. In addition, the EU has set up various initiatives to address the risks of trafficking in human beings, support victims of war crimes, and provide access to housing and social benefits. The EU has also provided financial support of €13.6 billion to address the needs of displaced persons.

The Commission considers the Temporary Protection Directive an essential instrument that should remain part of the toolbox available to the European Union in the future. It will now continue working with the co-legislators to ensure the EU is equipped with the tools it needs in the future and ensure proper articulation with the Commission's proposal for a Crisis and force majeure Regulation.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1525

WHO ACCUSED OF NOT DELIVERING ON PROMISES OF SUPPORT TO VICTIMS OF THE EBOLA SEXUAL ABUSE SCANDAL

Women who suffered abuse during the 2018-2020 Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo claim the World Health Organization (WHO) has been slow to fulfil promises of support, and that when assistance has come it has been insufficient to rebuild their lives.

Nearly two dozen survivors of the UN's largest known sexual abuse scandal say they have received only minimal assistance from the WHO in the wake of the trauma they suffered. The women, who were promised support in 2021, received one-time payments of \$250 – equivalent to just two days' worth of per diems for UN staff. While some also received bundles of toiletries, buckets, and short courses in basket weaving or entrepreneurship, others are still waiting for help. Several are struggling to care for children on their own after being abandoned by the aid workers who fathered them.

The scandal was disclosed in 2020 and prompted WHO to appoint an independent commission, which confirmed that WHO workers had lured women into sex-for-work schemes. Following the scandal, survivors assistance fund was established. However, investigations into the abuse are still ongoing.

Last week, WHO announced a new policy aimed at addressing “gaps, loopholes, and lack of clarity” in its procedures for preventing and responding to sexual abuse and exploitation. However, the policy comes too late for some victims, who are still struggling to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of the abuse.

Source: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/investigations/2023/03/08/exclusive-who-sex-abuse-victims-say-help-too-little-too-late>

CHILDHOOD RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS INCREASE RISK OF PREMATURE DEATH FROM RESPIRATORY DISEASES AS ADULTS, SAYS STUDY

A new study published in The Lancet has found that people who contracted lower respiratory tract infections (LRTIs) like bronchitis or pneumonia before the age of two are 93% more likely to die prematurely from respiratory diseases as an adult.

The research followed a British cohort of over 3,500 people from their births in 1946 until the ages of 26 to 73. The increased risk of premature death due to respiratory diseases was found to be one in five premature respiratory disease deaths in England and Wales between 1972 and 2019, compared to three in five caused by smoking.

The study also challenged the conventional wisdom that adult mortality from respiratory diseases is exclusively linked to lifestyle choices. The increased risk identified in the study affected participants regardless of socioeconomic background or whether they were smokers. Globally, respiratory diseases accounted for an estimated 7% of worldwide deaths, killing 3.9 million people in 2017, with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) causing the majority of these deaths.

Researchers hope the findings will contribute to shaping global health response strategies to hit the Sustainable Development Goal of reducing non-communicable disease burden by a third by 2030. They suggest that addressing childhood exposure to respiratory disease could save hundreds of thousands of lives every year.

Source: <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/childhood-respiratory-infections-are-linked-to-premature-deaths-in-adults/>

Thank you for your attention!

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