

Introduction to the Course

David:

I'm David Watkins.

Sarah:

I'm Sarah Masuko, and we want to welcome you to *Noncommunicable Diseases in Global Health: From Burden to Action*.

David:

I'm a physician and implementation scientist. Before joining the University of Washington faculty, I led the National HIV Testing and PrEP program at Kenya's Ministry of Health. And much of my current work looks at how health systems built around infectious disease can be strengthened to meet the rising burden of NCD prevention and care.

Sarah:

And I'm a physician and health policy researcher in the Department of Medicine and Department of Global Health at UW. Most of my work focuses on priority setting, health financing, and strengthening health systems to respond to the rising burden of NCDs in low- and middle-income countries, including through my work with the Disease Control Priorities Project.

David:

This course exists because of a gap. NCDs, conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory disease, are now the leading cause of death and disability worldwide. And that burden falls heaviest on low- and middle-income countries.

Yet many countries and health systems have not adequately prioritized NCDs, leaving health systems under-resourced and health professionals, program staff, and policymakers ill-equipped to address NCDs at population and systems level. This course was created to help close that gap.

Sarah:

Over the next ten weeks, we will be joined by guest experts from around the world who bring additional depth and different regional and professional perspectives to the material.

The course starts by defining NCDs and their global burden, then moves into the forces that drive them: economic development, commercial determinants of health, tobacco and alcohol, air pollution and climate change, diets, and physical activity.

From there, we turn to how NCDs play out across the life course and how health systems, from primary care to specialized and referral care, can be organized to respond. We close by looking

at the policy landscape, how NCDs get into national and global agendas, and how they get financed.

David:

Throughout the course, we draw from real-world case studies and proven approaches from around the world. The course will equip you with tools to develop and advocate for realistic, evidence-based NCD strategy that is tailored to your country's context and achievable with the resources available.

Sarah:

We want to be clear about what this course is and is not. We are not preparing you to diagnose or treat NCDs, and we expect that whatever clinical scope you already practice within will continue to guide your clinical decisions.

What we are offering instead is something we think is just as important: a working knowledge of the NCD burden, the policies and interventions that address it, and the arguments that make the case for action.

David:

Our goal is for you to leave this course able to advocate for NCDs in your institution, your health system, your government, wherever you have influence, and to do so with evidence behind you. We're glad that you're here, and we're looking forward to these ten weeks together. Welcome to *Noncommunicable Diseases and Global Health: From Burden to Action*.