

WHO pushes innovative tech for COVID-19, other priority diseases

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Releases new compendium of health technologies



The World Health Organisation (WHO) has compiled a compendium of 24 new technologies that can be used in low-resource settings amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The compendium's main objective was to select and assess technologies that can have an immediate and future impact on COVID-19 preparedness and response, potentially improve health outcomes and quality of life, and/or offer a solution to an unmet medical need.

15 of these technologies are already commercially available in countries, while the rest are still at the prototype stage.

The compendium includes simple items ranging from a colourised bleach additive, which allows the naked eye to identify non-sterilized surfaces and objects, to more complex though easy-to-use equipment such as a portable respiratory monitoring system and ventilators with an extended battery that can be used where electricity is not available or unstable. The list also includes a deployable health facility for emergencies decked out in a shipping container.

Some of these technologies are already in use and have proven their value through pilot programmes. For example, the solar-powered oxygen concentrator has been highly effective in treating pneumonia, which kills 900,000 children a year, in a regional children's hospital in Somalia's Galmudug state.

The information is vital to help governments, non-governmental organisations and funders decide which products to procure.