



Mains Practice Question

Q. One Health concept is ever more relevant as the world is facing a second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. Comment.

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Approach

- Start the answer by defining the One health approach
- Mention the need and steps to implement the One Health approach.
- Conclude Suitably.

Introduction

One Health approach, focuses on acknowledging the interconnectedness of animals, humans, and the environment. It involves a multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approach to address potential or existing risks that originate at the animal-human-ecosystems interface.

Body

Need for One Health Concept

- Scientists have observed that there are more than 1.7 million viruses circulating in wildlife, and many of them are likely to be zoonotic.
 - This implies that unless there is timely detection, India risks facing many more pandemics in times to come.
- The transboundary impact of viral outbreaks in recent years such as the Nipah virus, Ebola, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Avian Influenza has further reinforced the need for One Health approach.

Steps to Implement One Health Approach

- **Consolidating Disease Surveillance:** There is a need for consolidating existing animal health and disease surveillance systems — e.g., the Information Network for Animal Productivity and Health, and the National Animal Disease Reporting System.
- **Developing Guidelines:** Developing best-practice guidelines for informal market and slaughterhouse operation and creating mechanisms to operationalise 'One Health' at every stage down to the village level.
- **Holistic Collaboration:** One Health initiatives, by their multidisciplinary nature, entail working across ministries and navigating tacit institutional hierarchies and allocating leadership roles.
- **Establishing Institutional Mechanism:** There is no single agency or framework that embraces all interdisciplinary sectorial players under a single umbrella to carry forward the 'One Health' agenda.
 - Thus, a proper institutional mechanism must be set up to implement One Health concept.

Conclusion

The father of modern pathology, Rudolf Virchow, emphasised in 1856 that there are essentially no dividing lines between animal and human medicine. This concept is ever more relevant as the world is facing a second wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

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