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GSCF Self-Care Index Update Reveals 'Widespread Lack Of Understanding'

by David Ridley

Adding another 10 countries to its analysis of how self-care policies are being implemented across the world, the Global Self-Care Federation's Self-Care Readiness Index 2.0 demonstrates “very clearly that there is a widespread lack of a coherent view of self-care and its benefit,” according to the association, which is holding its World Congress from 19-20 October.

The Global Self-Care Federation has launched the second edition of its wide-ranging Self-Care Readiness Index examining how self-care policies are being implemented across the world.

Published as the GSCF opens its 2022 World Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, the second edition of the Index – [available to read here](#) – covers Australia, Canada, Colombia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates. (Also see "[Over The Counter 13 Oct 2022: What To Expect From GSCF's World Congress, With Judy Stenmark and Nicola Brink](#)" - HBW Insight, 13 Oct, 2022.)

The first and second editions when considered together demonstrate “very clearly that there is a widespread lack of a coherent view of self-care and its benefit,” the GSCF concludes.

Self-care is a “simple concept,” but one that is not easy to implement, commented GSCF chair-elect Manoj Raghunandanan.

“It takes a concerted effort by governments, healthcare professionals, academia, industry, and ultimately, the population at large,” continued Raghunandanan, who is also president of global self-care and consumer experience organization at Johnson & Johnson Consumer Health.

“But the potential rewards are high: better patient outcomes, more efficient healthcare systems and improved access to care.”

Work To Be Done

The first edition of the Index covered Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Nigeria, Poland, South Africa, Thailand, the UK and the US.

The GSCF's conclusions that self-care is not being exploited to its full potential in many countries was already suggested in the first round of analysis.

In France, for example, a skeptical and over-cautious government and a stifling regulatory system have held back the development of the country's self-care market. (Also see "[Government Skepticism And Over Regulation Holding Back Self-Care In France – GSCF Analysis](#)" - HBW Insight, 13 Jan, 2022.)

Elsewhere, in China, where much progress has been made in widening access to OTC medicines, dietary supplements and self-care medical devices, more work is needed, the first report suggested.

A key mechanism like Rx-to-OTC switch, for example, is being held back by a lack of exclusivity for companies that do manage to negotiate the country's complex reclassification process. (Also see "['With Chinese Characteristics' – TCM Driving Rx-To-OTC Switch In China](#)" - HBW Insight, 23 Nov, 2021.)

Large Benefits

Supplementing its findings in the Index, GSCF has also published previously an Economic & Social Value of Self-Care report, which attempts to quantify just how much self-care could benefit national healthcare systems if implemented systematically.

Self-care is saving healthcare systems globally about \$120bn a year, the report finds. However, this figure could rise to roughly \$180bn if self-care's significant further potential is realized, the association insists. (Also see "[Self-Care Saving Taxpayers \\$120bn Per Year, Could Increase To \\$180bn By 2030](#)" - HBW Insight, 14 Jul, 2022.)

"This research is clear," Raghunandanan noted. "Self-care is highly effective and efficient."

"In developed countries, empowering people to care for their own health reduces pressure on healthcare systems," he continued. "And it is critical for low- and middle-income countries, where self-care can be an incredibly important tool for delivering the goal of universal health coverage, and may actually be the only healthcare option available."

WHO Backing

As part of the Index' launch, GSCF is also reiterating its call for a “global compact” that would pave the way for a future World Health Organization resolution on self-care.

“Self-care has to be a political priority for every single government across the world,” insisted GSCF director general Judy Stenmark. “We are calling on WHO to urgently adopt a resolution to support the synchronization of self-care policies to create the momentum for this much-needed change.”

Speaking exclusively to HBW Insight last year, self-care expert and academic Dr Austen El-Osta said that such a resolution would be “very likely” within the next three to five years. (Also see "[WHO Support A Game-Changer For Emerging Global Self-Care Movement, Resolution 'Likely'](#)" - HBW Insight, 29 Nov, 2021.)

The work that the GSCF is doing, alongside that of the International Self-Care Federation, Imperial College London's SCARU research center – which El-Osta directs – and other stakeholders is laying the groundwork for such a resolution, he argued.

Look out for coverage in HBW Insight over the coming days of GSCF's World Congress, which is currently taking place in Cape Town, South Africa.