

19 Oct 2022 | News

# 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 Raghunandan.

“It takes a concerted effort by governments, healthcare professionals, academia, industry, and ultimately, the population at large,” continued Raghunandan, 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.*