Addressing the Health of the Vulnerable: The Case of Rheumatic Heart Disease

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Introduction
- Reach promotes the health of those susceptible to RHD (rheumatic heart disease) by offering technical support to local and regional networks.
- My job consisted of aiding them in this goal.

Objective of Internship
I wanted to extend my studies in global health by exploring how real organizations in the public health sector grapple with current global health challenges.

Reflection
- My biggest project involved creating a literature review exploring the particular burden of RHD on pregnant mothers.
- I explored both the literature illustrating this burden and how institutional bodies have tried to implement strategies to alleviate this burden.
- Although RHD is not a leading cause for maternal mortality, it is a significant one. More public health interventions should be targeted towards not only RHD, but maternal health in relation to the disease.
- I also worked on a project designed by Reach and neighboring organizations meant to explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the landscape of care for RHD.
- Additionally, I worked on various comms projects (writing articles for small grant initiatives, etc.)

Looking ahead
I plan to utilize the experiences I’ve gathered through this internship in my future career goals (where I plan to work in the public health sector in some capacity).

Questions
- How can we continue to support communities vulnerable to RHD when funding efforts and other initiatives are targeted at other public health challenges?

Conclusion
- Working in the sphere of global health comes with its own challenges, but the work being done is integral to improving the health of those most vulnerable.

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