Tackling the Commercial Determinants of Climate Change and NCDS

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Public health apocalypses of the 21st century

COVID-19 pandemic
Climate emergency
Rising burden of non-communicable diseases and mental health disorders
Environmental pollution
Deaths of despair
Growing toll from precarious and unsafe work
Current global economic and political system is fundamental cause of recent health crises

Drivers of transformation of 20th century capitalism

Corporate managed globalization

Financialization

Stratification by race, class and more

Deregulation and privatization

Monopoly concentration

Rising income and wealth inequality

Corporate control of science and technology

Ideological dominance

Inequitable distribution of necessities of life

Public Health Apocalypses

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Rising burden of non-communicable diseases and mental health disorders
Growing toll from precarious work
Pathways to ill health and health inequities

- Promotes hyperconsumption of unhealthy commodities and reduces access to healthier choices
- Precipitates pollution and climate change
- Limits lifestyle –and policy– choices to options that support profitability and continued corporate control
- Exacerbates inequality and stratification by race, class, gender etc.
- Destabilizes democracy
What are commercial determinants of health?

“Factors that influence health which stem from the *profit motive*.”

“Social, political and economic *structures, norms, rules, and practices* by which business activities designed to generate profits and increase market share influence patterns of health, disease, injury, disability, and death within and across populations.”

“Private sector activities that affect people’s health, directly or indirectly, *positively or negatively*.”
World Health Organization

“Systems, practices and pathways through which *commercial actors* drive health and equity.”
Lancet Commission on CDOH  Global Launch March 28, 2023
Changing harmful corporate practices

**Agents of Change**
- Investors
- Consumers/civil society groups
- Government
- Business leaders
- Media
- Health and public health professionals

**Tactics for Change**
- Regulation
- Litigation
- Voluntary business commitments
- Public education & mobilization
- Citizen campaigns

**Pathways to Change**
Changes in:
- Demand for product
- Consumer behavior
- Law
- Norms & values
- Corporate beliefs
- Investment practices

**Changes in industry practices**
- Business practices (marketing, product design, retail, pricing)
- Political practices (lobbying, campaign contributions, public relations)

**Targets of change**
- Products (soda, fast food, ultraprocessed food, fossil fuels)
- Companies (McDonalds, Coca cola, Nestle, Exxon)
- Sectors (retail, fast food, manufacturing, energy)
Public Health Ideas
Beyond Business as Usual

New ideas can change norms, laws, practices, and behavior:

Predatory marketing of unhealthy products should be illegal
Reversing climate change will protect health and create jobs
Fair taxes better enable communities to deliver essential services and protect public health
Labor unions ensure decent living standards and health for workers
Food security should not depend on charity
Why does 21st Century Capitalism Loves Ultra-processed Food?

- Products easy to ship and store around the world
- Conducive to global marketing
- Depends on a few core products which can be used to capture concentrated market share
- Produced by low wage workers
- Use reinforces and is facilitated by global industrial food system
- Can be associated with modernity and Westernization
- Products hyperpalatable, sometimes habituating
- Easy to develop new variants to capture new markets or reinterest flagging customers
But what makes UPF attractive to food producers are the same characteristics that make it so damaging to human and planetary health.
Linking Campaigns to Change Food and Fossil Fuel Industries

• Global diet of ultra-processed food worsens both human and planetary health
• Helping small and mid sized farmers to substitute agroecological practices for industrial practices protects health and the environment
• Reducing food waste can help to reduce food insecurity and also protects the climate
• Together the fossil fuel and food industries sicken people and poison the planet, then transfer the health and environmental costs to consumers, tax payers and governments.
For more information.....

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Lancet Commission Report on Commercial Determinants of Health (out March 28)
