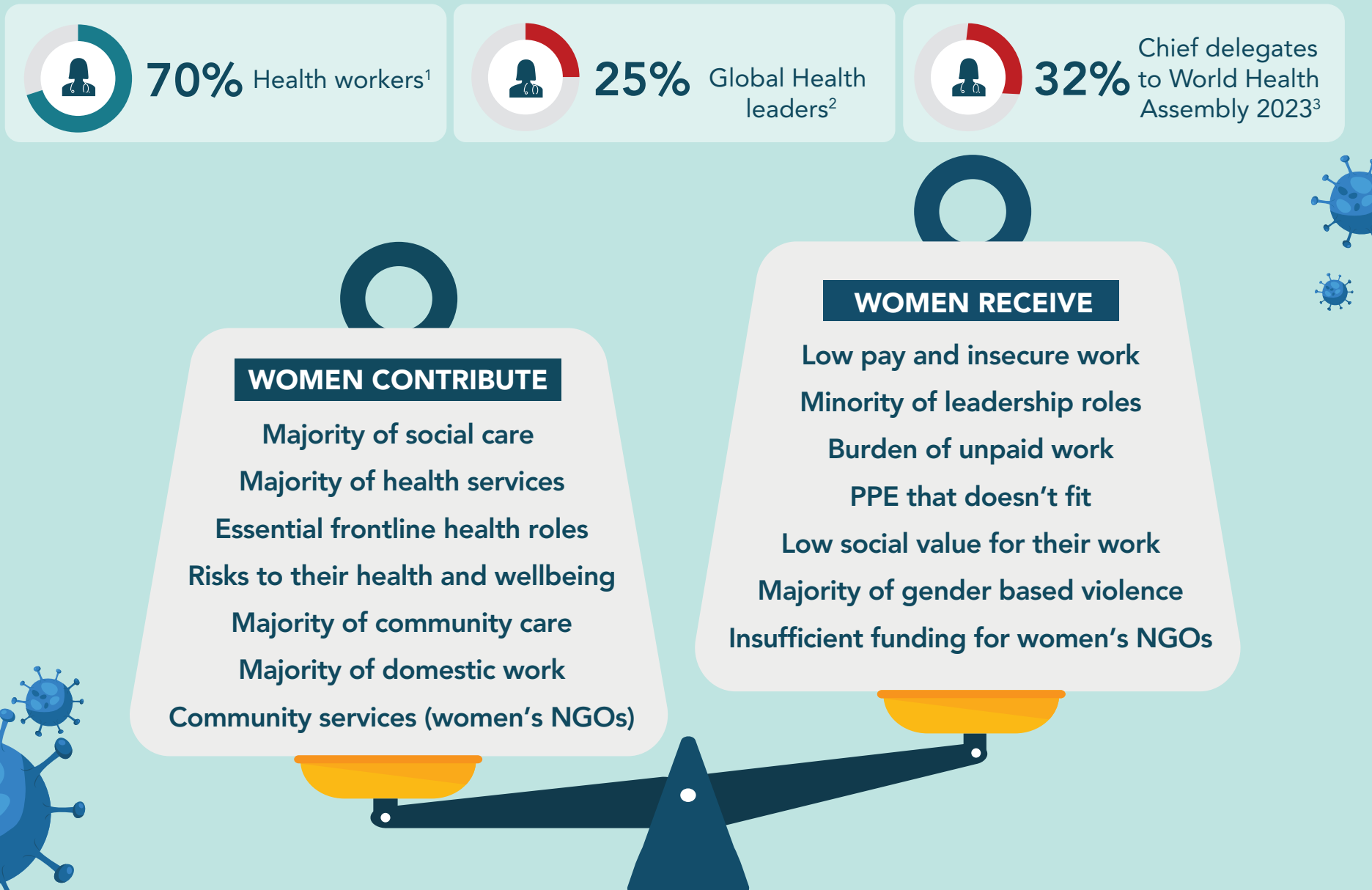
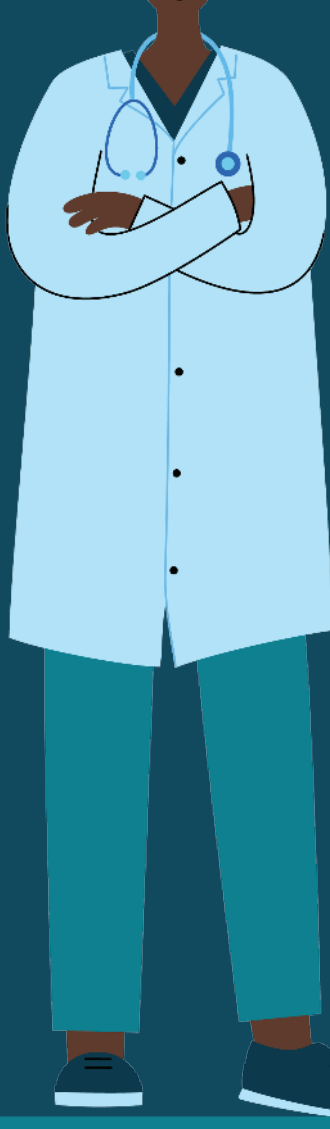


GENDER-RESPONSIVE PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS, PREVENTION, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY

Women deliver health, men lead it



Women are the social shock absorbers in emergencies and crises. During the pandemic women faced:



Multiple stressors on top of pre-existing gender inequities has caused widespread burnout among women health workers.

Marginalization in Decision-Making

Women were not represented in leadership: in 2020 **85% of 115** task forces had majority male membership.⁴

High Risk of Infection

PPE is designed for men: ill-fitting PPE led to **7,000** women health worker deaths March - September 2020.⁵

Unsafe Working Environments

The pandemic increased attacks on frontline health workers. **Four in ten women** felt more unsafe in public spaces than before.⁶

Double Burden of Care

On top of long shifts and increased patient loads, at home women contributed **5+ hours** more to childcare tasks.⁷

Gender-Based Violence

45% of women reported that they or a woman they knew had experienced a form of GBV during the pandemic.⁸

Financial Hardship

Women health workers on average earn **24%** less than male counterparts.⁹ Over **6 million** women are unpaid or grossly underpaid.¹⁰

Disruption of Essential Health Services

Sexual and reproductive health services were often deprioritized: contraception use was impacted for **12 million** women leading to **2.7 million** unintended pregnancies.¹¹


Mental stress

Increased PTSD, risk of depression and suicide: **78%** nurses in West African countries reported moderate stress and **10%** reported severe stress.¹²

This is leading to a **Great Resignation** of women health workers, particularly in high-income countries: in the UK 1 in 9 nurses¹³ left in 2022.

This exodus of health workers is driving a **Great Migration** of women health workers from countries with vulnerable health systems.¹⁴

Women in Global Health gathered perspectives on the gendered impacts of COVID-19 and policy recommendations based on feedback from Chapter representatives from 31 countries, who answered the following question:



"Taking into account your own and your colleagues' experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic, what concrete national-level policies/ actions/ activities/ programs - related to women health workers - would you like to see your government design/ implement in order to better prepare for and respond to future pandemics?"

“

Nurses work several weeks without going home, with no adequate remuneration, poor supply of PPE, zero mental health support and services but their resilience, spirit and compassionate care saves more lives in the midst of the pandemic.

Pediatric Nurse, Nigeria

“

Governments should invest in generating evidence to explore the gendered impacts of pandemics on women health and care workers. These should guide development of appropriate policy and program interventions to promote their physical and mental health wellbeing.

Health Development Professional, Pakistan


“


Governments should develop and implement policies and procedures to prevent workplace violence. This could include measures such as increasing security, limiting access to certain areas, and establishing a zero tolerance policy for workplace violence.


GBV Case Manager, Egypt

Key recommendations from the Women in Global Health movement.


To prepare for future pandemics governments must:


 Prioritize women health workers and their safety


 Invest in capacity building of women health workers to respond in pandemics

 Ensure health systems become more gender-responsive

 Conduct regular risk assessments of health systems infrastructure and the workforce

 Ensure better working conditions, benefits, and incentives for women health workers



 Invest in innovative, collaborative, and gender-responsive research

 Improve the coordination and dissemination of information

We call on governments to prioritize women health workers in all their future pandemic preparedness efforts. They need a new social contract based on:

Safe and Decent work

With fair pay, fit for purpose PPE, and harassment free workplaces.



Equality in decision-making

Based on gender-transformative leadership

