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Geneva, April 20 (RHC)-- A consistent global approach to the COVID-19 pandemic could bring it under control before the end of the year, the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO) has said, despite a record week for COVID-19 infections.

“We have the tools to bring this pandemic under control in a matter of months, if we apply them consistently and equitably,” Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a news briefing on Monday. The WHO chief also said the total number of new COVID-19 cases in the past seven days had increased for the eighth consecutive week, with a record 5.2 million infections reported.

“Big numbers can make us numb,” Dr. Tedros said, as he urged people not to forget that each death from the virus is a “tragedy” for families and communities. He also highlighted the “alarming” increase in infections and hospitalizations among those aged 25 to 59, “possibly” due to highly transmissible newer variants and the increased social mixing of younger generations.

On Monday, the WHO’s emergency committee gave Ghebreyesus its advice on vaccines, variants, and international travel, among other coronavirus issues. The panel pushed back against COVID vaccine passport schemes, citing a lack of evidence that the jabs prevent transmission as well as ongoing global inequalities when it comes to getting hold of vaccine doses.

More than 140 million cases of COVID-19 and more than three million deaths from the virus have now been reported worldwide, according to WHO data.

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