



Global Movements for National Health Research Systems

WHO-Thailand Office
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Health Systems Research Institute
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Outline of Presentation

- WHO's mandates in health research
- Major movements
 - Commission on Health Research and Development Report in 1990
 - International Conference on Health Research and Development, Bangkok, Thailand, October 2000
 - International Workshop on National Health Research Systems, Cha-am, Thailand 12-15 March 2001
 - Health Research Systems Analysis Initiative
 - Ministerial Summit on Health Research, Mexico City, Mexico, 16-20 November 2004



WHO's Mandates in Health Research

- “... to promote and conduct research in health, as well as to promote cooperation among scientific and professional groups which contribute to the achievement of health”



Health Systems Research *versus* Health Research Systems

- Health Systems Research: Research to improve performance of health systems, e.g. financing, quality of services, coverage, efficiency, etc.
- Health Research Systems: Systems of research activities to improve health of the people, e.g. biomedical, clinical, epidemiological, policy, operational, etc.




Commission on Health Research and Development

- In 1990, proposed strategies to address global health inequities, using health research
- Countries should undertake “*essential health research*” and invest at least 2% of national health expenditure on research
- Development agencies earmark 5% for research
- An international mechanism should be established to monitor progress on the supports for health research in developing countries




International Conference on Health Research and Development, Bangkok, Thailand, October 2000

- Outcome = a plan that proposed a set of goals, visions, values and principles of health research
- Five areas to focus strategies:
 - Knowledge production
 - Use and management
 - Capacity development and retention
 - Governance
 - Financing and national focus



International Workshop on National Health Research Systems, Cha-am, Thailand 12-15 March 2001

- Supported by
 - World Health Organization
 - Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED)
 - Global Forum for Health Research (GFHR)
 - Rockefeller Foundation (RF)
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Cha-am Workshop (1)

- Overall objectives:
 - To examine “national health research system” as a concept
 - To explore ways in which such systems could be strengthened to better address national priorities



Cha-am Workshop (2)

- Specific objectives:
 - To discuss recommendations from the ICHRD
 - To better define health research and health research systems
 - To better define a conceptual map of health research systems
 - To better define the strategies to strengthen health research systems
 - To discuss whether and how to evaluate health research system performance



Cha-am Workshop (3)

■ Conclusions:

- Health research is essential for developing an equitable health system
- “Health research system” = objectives, structures, stakeholders, processes, cultures and outcomes of health research geared towards equity in health
- A conceptual map is useful for understanding health research and increasing impacts of research on health development
- Evaluation of performance can be used as a strategy to improve national health research systems



Health Research Systems Analysis (HRSA) Initiative

- Initiated by the Department of Research Policy & Cooperation (RPC) of WHO/HQ
- Short-term goals:
 - To strengthen countries' capacity to monitor and evaluate health research system activities
 - To strengthen capacity to produce and use health research
- Medium and long-term goals:
 - To strengthen other functions of health research systems
 - To better share research results across countries
 - To contribute to enhancing health research system's goals within national settings



HRSA Initiative (1)

■ Rationale:

- Developing methodology to describe and analyze health research systems
- Understanding contribution of health research systems to health and equity improvement
- Enabling evidence-based advocacy
- Providing input to decision making on health research systems
- Engaging policy dialogue and use of evidence to inform health policy and practices



HRSA Initiative (2)

■ Partners:

- National governments
- WHO research programmes, ROs, COs
- Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (AHPSR)
- Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED)
- Global Forum for Health Research (GFHR)
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH)
- Rockefeller Foundation (RF)
- Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA/Sarec)
- Wellcome Trust (WT)



HRSA Initiative (3)

- How HRSA is being carried out:
 - Formation of national task forces
 - National and cross-national inventory of data, tools, methods, policies, and potential best practices
 - Development and testing of concepts, new methods, and indicators
 - Extensive consultative processes at all stages



HRSA Initiative (4)

- Achievements to date:
 - A conceptual framework
 - Synthesis of existing literature, case studies, and reports
 - Identifying 14 core indicators + 42 additional indicators
 - Identifying case themes for high-income country studies
 - Pilot phase to understand barriers and facilitators in the use of existing research findings
 - Critical review of existing approaches to quantify research outputs



Analytical Works in HRSA (1)

- Stewardship
- Financing
- Creating & Sustaining Resources
- Producing & Using Research





Analytical Works in HRSA (2)

■ Stewardship

- Health policies & health research
- Benchmarking / case studies
- Ethical standards for health research and research partnerships

■ Financing

- Resource flows for health research



Analytical Works in HRSA (3)

■ Creating & Sustaining Resources

- Database of institutions doing health research and health researchers' database
- Cross-national movements of health researchers: brain drain / science gain



Analytical Works in HRSA (4)

- Producing & Using Research
 - Estimating research outputs through reference databases
 - Research synthesis & utilization: uptake of research results, interaction with policies and impact on practices within health sectors
 - Linking to Millennium research and development priorities: estimating current technology gaps & priorities for investment given projected burden of diseases



Ministerial Summit on Health Research, Mexico City, Mexico, 16-20 November 2004

■ Aims:

- To promote generation, dissemination and use of knowledge for attainment of MDGs and to strengthen performance of health systems
- To strengthen national health research systems through cooperation
- To identify health policy and health systems research priorities to mobilize resources to achieve the MDGs
- To make recommendations to the 58th WHA on institutionalization of health research policy and practices