

Knowledge is the enemy of unsafe care.

WHO World Alliance for Patient Safety

Research Advisory Council Annual Meeting

1 May 2007

Agency for health Care Research and Quality, Rockville, MD, USA

Co-Chairs: Dr Carolyn Clancy, Director, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; and Sir Liam Donaldson, Chair, World Alliance for Patient Safety and Chief Medical Officer, United Kingdom

Participants: 14 Council Members, Eight WHO Ex-Officio and four observers (see attached)

Summary of the Meeting

Dr Clancy, Chair of the Advisory Council, welcomed the participants to the meeting. She was followed by Sir Liam Donaldson who provided an update on the progress of the WHO World Alliance for Patient Safety (the Alliance). Although significant progress has been made, he encouraged renovated impulse to improving patient safety worldwide.

The meeting focused subsequently in describing the achievements and progress of the Alliance in the Research Action Area.

The members of the Secretariat, Dr David Bates, Research Programme External Lead, and Dr Larizgoitia, Lead Research Secretariat, summarized the achievements. Key initiatives implemented in the first year included setting research priority areas, analyzing effective and appropriate methods and measures, setting directions to building capacity for patient safety research and fostering and facilitating research networks and collaboration. Essential to the success of these initiatives is the active involvement of key experts and partner institutions as project leaders to bring in expertise and ensure political support. In addition, the collaboration with WHO Regional offices was instrumental to engage regional expertise and strengthen regional initiatives.

Key Achievements

Setting Research Priority Areas

The Priority Setting Working Group of 22 members was led by Dr David Bates. The Group employed a modified Delphi approach with 3 rounds of voting each with discussions, to identify patient safety priority areas. The aim was to define an ordered menu of opportunities for research targeting audience groups at both national and international levels. Additional goal was to produce a report on the state of patient safety research.

Dr Bates presented the top selected priorities according to the level of country development. For developed countries the areas that seemed to concentrate more interest focused on latent and organizational factors, whereas for transitional and developing countries the emphasis was more acute on developing locally effective and affordable solutions. The expectations are that the Global Priorities will provide guidance to international and national research commissioning.

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The Priority Setting Working Group also produced a report entitled "*Current Issues in Patient Safety and Implications for Research*". Dr Ashish Jha presented the report to the Research Council. The report described the epidemiology, severity, potential for intervention and knowledge gaps for 23 major topics in patient safety. It was noted the scarcity of relevant data from transitional and developing countries.

An important suggestion from the Council was to initiate a Delphi process with patient safety champions to ensure the full incorporation of patients' perspectives into the priority areas.

Analyzing Methods and Measures for Patient Safety Research

Prof. Ross Baker and Prof. Bill Runciman led a Working Group of 13 research and patient safety experts with the aim to analyze and recommend to the Alliance specific directions for the advancement of research methods and measures. The group focused on methods and measures that are applicable in higher income countries and those useful in lower income countries. The primary focus of the group is outcome measures and also measures of errors and near misses, as well as components of the work environment and culture that may reflect underlying conditions that facilitate safer care. Prof. Ross Baker presented the progress of the working-group. Important highlights are the drafting of a Conceptual Framework of the areas relevant to patient safety research, and also the drafting of two systematic reviews on methods and measures in acute care and primary care respectively. The group is also working in drafting a review on the assessment of the effectiveness of interventions and a guide on the best methods and tools for research on patient safety according to specific data environments.

The Council encouraged to coordinate the working group deliberations with the progress on the new classification for patient safety and with efforts in monitoring and reporting. It also supported the notion of incorporating researchers from sectors other than health and patients.

Building Capacity for Patient Safety Research

Prof. Sally Davies and Dr Somsak Chunharas presented the outcomes of the expert meeting which gathered a number of international and national experts in research policy, education and research commissioning, which took place in Bangkok last December 2006. The meeting aimed at identifying major strategic directions to build capacity in developing countries.

Among the key strategies identified by the expert working group stood out the need for strengthening national leadership through increasing educational opportunities and fostering of local champions; the importance of supporting research networks at national, regional and international levels, and moreover the importance of integrating patient safety research within health systems structures and programs. The expert group highlighted as well the importance of ensuring adequate funding.

The expert group also recommended setting up of an observatory for research on patient safety and advancing the development of patient safety indicators, including indicators of economic impact, and developing a global standardized curriculum for Patient Safety.

Research Studies in Developing Countries

Dr Larizgoitia described the two multi-country projects that have been initiated in the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) and African (AFRO) region and in Latin America. The research projects aim to estimate the size and nature of patient harm in a number of countries in the participating regions, while building local awareness and capacity for research.

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Each project has been designed and tailored according to regional interests, needs and resources. In this respect, the projects are managed and coordinated by the WHO Regional and country offices. A team of internationally recognized researchers provide the scientific direction to each project and supervise the operations from a technical point of view. Profs. Ross Wilson and Jesús Aranáz are the respective project leaders. The project in EMRO and AFRO was initiated a year ago, and it has practically finalized data collection. It is expected that the project present preliminary results by later 2007. The project in Latin America is done in collaboration with the MOH Spain. It was launched only a few weeks before the meeting and it is in the early stages. The Alliance plans to initiate new projects in other world regions during 2007.

Research Networks and Collaboration

The Research Programme works in partnership with organizations and research institutions to enhance research networks and collaboration. With this purpose it is co-hosting an international scientific conference on patient safety research in collaboration with the Faculty of Public Health UK, and the University College London. The conference was initiated by the European Commission and it is funded by the EC VI Research Framework. It will be held in Porto, Portugal between 24th and 26th September 2007. The Research Secretariat also participated in the 10th Global Forum for Health Research with Special Session, the 2006 Conference of the European Public Health Association, EUPHA, and the 2007 European International Forum on Quality and Safety Health Care. A plan of collaboration with the International Society for Quality Health Care, ISQuA, has been agreed for the next 3 years, including advocacy on ISQuA media, profiling at ISQuA conferences, facilitation of attendance to developing country delegates.

Future Directions

Dr Bates presented the proposed directions on research on patient safety for the next year. Key elements included the development of a training program on patient safety research principles and methodology, the setting up of an observatory for research on patient safety and of a small-grant research program focusing on the priority areas already identified, and the developing of initiatives leading to increasing networking and building leadership capacity. In addition, the program plans to advance the projects already initiated, and intends to start up new research studies particularly in the area of impact evaluation, indicators and tool development, and solutions for maternal and neonatal care. The estimated budget of the program for the next 12 months is of approximately 1.5 million USD.

Final Suggestions

The Research Council congratulated the work realized by the Alliance and endorsed the suggested plan of activities for the upcoming year. It encouraged an active policy of dissemination involving professional and non-professional media, such as radio broadcasts, consumer groups, and political bodies supporting research at global and regional levels. The Council endorsed the collaborative approach currently being employed and further suggested to expand collaboration involving country and regional institutions. In particular, the Council discussed the importance of facilitating the adaptation of the priority setting process at country level and the adoption of the priority areas by commissioners at country level. The notion of performing impact analysis, including assessments of the burden of unsafe care and of its economic impact, was very well valued. It was suggested to look at the possibilities of using the DALY approach and of including assessments of the emotional and personal suffering brought by unsafe care. In a similar manner the Council supported the plans for advancing new methodologies and indicators aiming at obtaining a basket of indicators for

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monitoring. The need to invest in developing the data infrastructure of developing countries was also recognized.

The meeting was adjourned with the Council recognition of the work delivered and the endorsement of the new upcoming agenda.

Annexes: List of Participants, 2007-2008 Work-plan

Minutes: Babak Mohit and Alexo Esperanto (Summarized by Nittita Prasopa-Plaizier, and Itziar Larizgoitia)