

THE MEXICO AGENDA ON HEALTH RESEARCH

FROM THE MINISTERIAL SUMMIT ON HEALTH RESEARCH MEXICO CITY, NOVEMBER, 2004

RECOGNIZING THAT

1. Robust national health systems are needed to effectively deliver health care interventions to achieve the health-related MDGs and deal with the burden of noncommunicable diseases, and for improving health and health equity globally.
2. Research has a crucial role to play in strengthening health systems and there is an urgent need to turn knowledge into action to improve people's health-to bridge the gap between scientific potential and health realization, between what we know and what is actually being done.
3. High quality research is facilitated if each country has a strong and sustainable national health research system, defined as the people, institutions and activities whose primary purpose is to generate and act on high-quality knowledge that can be used to improve the health status of populations. It includes mechanisms and the leadership necessary to encourage both innovation and utilization of research by health systems.
4. Health care should be based on reliable evidence derived from high quality research. Research evidence comes from a variety of sources including those that illuminate personal and cultural values and differences, draw upon the needs of patients and providers, and measure both the benefits and potential harms of health care interventions. Ignoring research evidence is harmful to patients and wastes resources.
5. The findings of high quality research should be accessible to decision makers, incorporated into decision making about health care, documented in internationally accessible registers, and synthesized through systematic reviews. These actions can help inform decisions about support for new research, and also help to build public confidence in science.
6. Biomedical research has contributed greatly to our understanding about the treatment, prevention, and diagnosis of a wide range of diseases. But crucial research aimed at strengthening health systems has been relatively neglected and under-funded.
7. Health systems would be better able to deal with current global health challenges if more effective and efficient interventions could be developed. Encouraging and supporting regional and global product development and public-private partnerships, including partnership initiatives with developing countries, could contribute to fulfilling this need. .

8. There is a need to promote research for strengthening health systems and to facilitate evidence-informed decision making. Acting on this need, WHO developed a World Report on Knowledge for Better Health and convened a Ministerial Summit on Health Research in Mexico in November, 2004 to prepare recommendations contained in the Mexico Agenda on Health Research for consideration by the organization's governing bodies and other organizations which support health research.

CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO

1. Re-affirm the culture and practice of high quality research, knowledge generation and its application as critical to (1) the attainment of health goals; (2) the performance of health systems; (3) the vitality of a country's socio-economic development.
2. Strengthen national health research systems by providing essential monitoring tools and improving capacity for ethical review of research,
3. Ensure that everyone making a decision about health care (be it their own, or someone else's) will be able to obtain up-to-date, reliable evidence of the effects of interventions they might choose, based on all relevant research from anywhere in the world, and that they will be able to do so within a reasonable amount of time.
4. Identify relatively under-funded areas of research, such as health systems research, where increased resources and leadership would accelerate achievement of critical health goals through stronger health systems.
5. Emphasize that research is a global endeavour based on the sharing of knowledge and information derived from the process.
6. Build and strengthen public trust and confidence in science

CALLS FOR ACTION BY

1. *National governments* to allocate at least 2% of national health budgets to health research.
2. *National governments* to promote activities to strengthen national health research systems, including developing better capacities to monitor its performance.
3. *National governments and regional forums* to promote development of capacity for ethical review of health research in Member States.
4. *International supporters and funders of health research* to establish a substantive and sustainable programme to support health systems research.

5. *A global collaboration*, led by WHO, to establish a platform for an international clinical trials register.
6. *All major stakeholders* to further strengthen and establish activities to promote access to, and improve the quality of health information.
7. *The international health research community* to enhance regional and global cooperation in health research, with a view to evaluating current governance structures and improving efficiency and coordination.
8. *The international health research community* to ensure broad support for regional and global public-private partnerships to accelerate development of essential drugs, vaccines and diagnostics.
9. *WHO*, in close collaboration with its Member states, to establish a programme to support evidence-based national decision making in health in Member States.
10. *WHO* to convene a major conference on health systems linked to the development of an organization-wide health systems strategy