



## Press Kits & Background

Welcome to the Press Kit and Background section. In this section, you will find summaries to some issues in health research and links to bigger documents. **BACKGROUND**

### National health research systems...

**Optimising health system performance ... what role for information and research?** Health information systems or 'health management information systems' are recognised as essential components of a health system, needed for measuring its effectiveness. National health research systems should have the same level of recognition. They produce the evidence needed to guide health sector policies, strategies and decisions. **Health research policy keystone for effective NHRS**

Every country needs a strong health research policy. A well-designed health policy framework enables and drives the national health research effort to impact positively on national development in general. A health research policy framework provides a formal platform from which to define the goals of the national research effort and identify the structures and means of achieving such goals. [5-Essayes-web.pdf](#) **Good research requires high-quality research systems** The National Health Research System (NHRS) is a comprehensive framework that aims at understanding how research is coordinated, produced, translated and put into practice. Governance and management processes should be more reliant on good information, transparent and inclusive evidence-based decision making.

[Essay1.pdf](#) **Managing processes for priority setting for health research** Many research managers are increasingly realising that efforts beyond meetings are needed to get research priorities into policy and impact. All players in the research system should not only own but value the priority setting process. A country's health research system should define and set priorities to support a national health research system. [Essay2.pdf](#) **Managing research for health** Despite the creation of several global health initiatives and partnerships, major inequities in health still exist worldwide. Success of these global activities depends significantly on the strength, flexibility and overall capacity of national systems. In the health research arena the problem is how to work with several of these initiatives, donors and other sponsors to build and not fragment the system. [Essay3.pdf](#) **Matching funding with research and system's needs** Health research in poor countries depends on financial and technical support from the North. This support however, should align with national health research priorities to enable poor countries to optimise use of research. [5-Essayes-web.pdf](#)

### Research in countries...

**Research for health in Latin America** Health research has not been considered a priority in the health reform plans of most Latin American countries. There is low investment in this sector. Can the sector optimise the recent political developments in the region? [5-Essayes-web.pdf](#)

**National Health Research Systems development in Latin America** Latin America has a long-standing research tradition in many fields, including health. Development of institutions in Latin America has been a long process with significant differences between countries in the region. A number of Latin American institutions today follow the path of the National Health Research System (NHRS). The new trend in health research discussions is the importance of the system that coordinates, supports and finances the related health research activities. Some,



if not all, of these components are present in many countries. What is missing is the coordinating entity responsible for stewardship and governance. In some cases these components are missing. In others they exist but are not operating. National Health Research Systems in Latin American are diverse and at various stages of maturity. **Strengthening capacity for health research in Tunisia: The case for investing in research and development** A strategy for building human capacity for research is a long-term investment that a country makes in creating its scientific base. This is also a direct investment in building nation's wealth, which Tunisia has been pursuing since 1999. For example, training of researchers in research methodology is an efficient way to guarantee the country's capacity to produce high quality health research system that is able to overcome and solve the health problems of its communities. National health research system mapping – a strategic approach for managers A number of papers by COHRED give a broad overview of COHRED's approach to collecting this evidence. This process is called NHRS Assessment. The underlying principles of this approach are that it should be incremental, action-oriented and process driven. There is a risk that NHRS Assessment can become an academic exercise, which never actually progresses from research to implementation. With an action-oriented approach to NHRS improvement, where evidence is collected to inform development decisions, implementation starts at an early stage. Four levels NHRS Assessment: 1. NHRS Mapping – describing the research system 2. NHRS Profiling – measuring the capabilities of the research system 3. NHRS Analysis – analysing the performance of the research system 4. Intervention evaluation – evaluating interventions to improve the research system **Improving alignment and harmonization of health research funding** An estimated \$4 billion is spent annually on health research in developing countries; but very little of this investment is guided by the health and development priorities of these countries. To better understand this situation and what can be done to improve it, COHRED studied the alignment and harmonization of donor funding of health research in a number of low and middle income countries. This is the first step in creating an evidence base on funding practices and trends in health research. It highlights areas where both donors and partners in countries can work more effectively – for the overall benefit of population health. **Research ethics: priorities and best practices for low and middle income countries** Whereas it is accepted that ethical review of health research is needed to protect the rights and well-being of human participants in research trials, there remains concern about the effectiveness of ethical oversight, especially in developing countries. This was one of the themes of the 8th Global Forum on Bioethics in Research. The meeting brought together experts from around the world in Lithuania<sup>1</sup> to examine the current state of ethics in health research, with a special focus on the needs of transition and developing countries. **Using a 'learning spiral' for global learning in priority setting** Few success stories have been documented about setting clear research priorities that support national public health goals. COHRED's attempts focus on mobilising access to experience and knowledge between countries by testing a learning spiral approach for priority setting. [5-Essay-web.pdf](#)

## **Communication...**

**Effective health research communication is a dialogue between all actors** To improve science communication, there is much talk about building the skills of researchers to be better communicators and communicating to policy makers. This is one part of the picture. Real gains in effectiveness of health research communication can be achieved by encouraging dialogue



between all players in the research process, and identifying where capacity can be built to make these interactions more effective. **Changing views on health research**

**communication** Recognition of peers through journals and conferences as a channel for communicating research is no longer enough for researchers and programme managers. More gains can be ripped from investing in communication of research findings to different audiences, and forging partnerships, engagement and mutual learning – between researcher and ultimate research beneficiary. [5-Essays-web.pdf](#) **Using communication to improve health research**

**effectiveness** Translating technical or scientific information into more user friendly formats will increase the value and usefulness of health research by policy makers or local communities. Communication in research also involves engaging directly with potential users of the research in order to understand their needs and bring their perspectives into the research cycle.

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## **A Health Research Web..**

The Health Research Web is a knowledge platform that provides essential information on health research systems at country level. COHRED intends to see it evolve into an authoritative resource on health research for low and middle income countries which users will own and build systematically. Development agencies can use it as a tool to engage more responsibly and effectively with health research in low- and middle-income countries. Health researchers too can utilise it to increase their accountability and relevance to health priorities. [5-Essays-web.pdf](#)