



## PAHO's Advisory Committee on Health Research

Recommendations from meetings

2007 – 2009 from

Reports to the Director

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ACHR members also identified a number of high-priority next steps in relation to the five goals:

- 1) use explicit criteria to assess collated lists of research priorities and use the findings to re-orient priority-setting processes to ensure a greater focus on research users (particularly those brought into focus using an equity lens), among other ‘best practices’ (Priorities goal);
- 2) begin working with partners to prepare for the flagship report on research priorities (Priorities goal);
- 3) define a workable approach to capacity-building across partners that builds on lessons learned (perhaps through a cross-ACHRs sub-committee) and that achieves measurable impacts (Capacity goal);
- 4) develop and apply explicit criteria to set priorities for standard setting at WHO, both at Headquarters and in the regions (Standards goal);
- 5) support context-sensitive approaches to standards development that engage a broad range of social actors in social processes that support research use that are informed by jurisdiction-specific stakeholder-mapping and efforts to build on existing country, sub-
- 6) support research governance within the organization by having ACHRs focus on overseeing (and providing to the Director General/Regional Director an annual report card on) the implementation of the strategy/policy, informed by a monitoring and evaluation plan (Organization goal); and
- 7) improve internal research management/coordination within the organization by having RPC and its regional counterparts assume a horizontal (not a vertical) orientation, build its capacity and support the building of capacity among WHO and PAHO/AMRO staff, and be supported in its work by creating incentives for regions and key partners to work closely with it (Organization goal).

42 ACHR, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 2008. To discuss the first draft of PAHO's Policy on Research for Health (meeting followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Latin-American Conference on Research & Innovation for Health)  
Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Health Research to the  
Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau

The recommendations made by the ACHR pertained to the background document describing the potential form that PAHO's research policy could take. These were:

- a) to craft a title for the policy that conveys a message;
- b) to add a clearer statement of the problem to which the research policy is a solution and more generally to revise the justification and background section based on the feedback provided;
- c) to add a section about guiding principles for the research policy based on the input provided;
- d) to change the title for the section about goals/objectives and develop both an overall goal statement and a list of objectives/strategies based on the feedback provided;
- e) to draft a statement about PAHO's commitment to implementation based on the feedback provided; and
- f) to modify the list of definitions to ensure that all key concepts are defined and that any definitions in the current draft that do not match with a concept in the research policy are dropped from the list.

**41<sup>st</sup> ACHR, PAHO, Washington DC 2008 November.**

The Committee recommends that PAHO accelerate its development of a draft PAHO research policy that will form the basis for consultations in the Region (which should include circulating a draft outline of the research policy by the end of December and a complete draft of the research policy sometime between late January and late February) and that PAHO continue collaborating with WHO to ensure that its research policy intersects with and amplifies elements of WHO's emerging research strategy in ways that contribute to the global agenda while addressing the unique issues faced in the American region.

The Committee urges HSS/RC to conduct a needs assessment and (based on the findings) to design and support the implementation of a training strategy targeted at EVIPNet team members; to continue its efforts (in conjunction with BIREME/PAHO and HSS/HR) to support countries as they move through the planning phase for EVIPNet, and to continue in its efforts to mobilize resources to support EVIPNet.

The Committee encourages BIREME/PAHO and HSS/RC to proceed with the technical work required to establish a regional registry in close cooperation with country representatives and to prepare for the types of technical cooperation that will be required to implement the registry, promote adherence, and (eventually) include trial results reporting, and the Committee encourages PAHO to continue its high-level advocacy for the registry, include trial registration as a requirement for ethics review by PAHO's Ethics Review Committee, and work in close cooperation with WHO in its work on clinical trial results and on the impact of intellectual property rights and trade secret laws on the promotion of transparent research.

The Committee congratulates PAHO for being the first region to undertake a critical self-reflection focused on its use of research evidence in developing recommendations for use at the country level and encourages PAHO to write an article and/or position paper about PAHO's leadership in this field and the steps that PAHO is taking to respond to this evaluation.

The committee urges PAHO to continue to: (1) nurture a climate that supports the use of research evidence within units/areas in ways that are open, mutually supportive, and focused on continuous improvement; and (2) support units/areas in their efforts to produce guidelines and recommendations more generally in ways that follow now well accepted approaches, which may include identifying success stories and providing access to information specialists.

This report, produced by the ACHR Secretariat rapporteurs, reflects the discussions that took place in the PASB on 29 and 30 November 2007.

Secretary ACHR: Dr. Luis Gabriel Cuervo  
President ACHR: Dr. John Lavis

**40<sup>th</sup> ACHR, Montego Bay, Jamaica 2007 (Revamped ACHR, John Lavis appointed Chairperson)**

**6. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Health Research to the Director of the Pan American Health Organization**

- a) Congratulate PAHO on its efforts to develop a research policy for the Organization and support the continuation of preparatory work on such a policy. The ACHR commits to supporting this work in order to ensure that a carefully considered draft of a research policy can be discussed by the Member States, interested parties in the countries, and international agencies as part of a broad consultative exercise that will take place in April 2008.
- b) Provide through PAHO the leadership to promote regional initiatives that support the development and implementation of a PAHO research policy, including, for example, preparation of the regional meeting to discuss strengthening national health research systems. The meeting will be co-sponsored by the Council on Health for Development, the Ministry of Health of Brazil, and the Global Forum for Health Research, among others, and will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in April 2008.
- c) Support the continuation of preparatory work to establish a PAHO health research inventory that identifies and describes the research in which the Organization.
- d) Continue work that enables the Member States to participate in the World Health
- e) Organization's International Clinical Trials Registry Platform (ICTRP). This includes evaluating the development of tools and strategies that facilitate the adoption and use of registries in the Region.
- f) The Committee supports the reestablishment of research grants, taking into consideration the following points:
  - development of the PAHO research policy (from which the objectives will arise);
  - documentation of the priorities of the countries, the existence of the financial and human resource capacity to conduct research that responds to these priorities, and the persistence of gaps that only PAHO could fill; ....
  - an evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of requiring a steering role of health ministries in countries where research will be carried out; and
  - a study of the determinants of outcomes of grant applications.
- g) The Committee supports the continuation of preparatory work to launch the Evidence-Informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) initiative in the Region as a promising mechanism to strengthen research and its use in health systems and health research. The Committee emphasizes the need for an ongoing commitment by the ministries of health of each country to provide the resources necessary to develop the EVIPNet as a component of health systems and health research, as well as the need to involve existing organizations, networks, and initiatives at the regional, subregional, and national levels.