

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTE

MEETING OF NATIONAL OFFICERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

EM/MTG.NAT.OFF.RESP.MED.RES/5

Limassol, 13-15 April 1983

15 April 1983

PROVISIONAL REPORT

A Meeting of National Officers Responsible for Medical Research in selected countries of the EM Region was held in Limassol, 13-15 April 1983. The List of Participants is attached as Annex I.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The participants were welcomed on behalf of the Regional Director by Dr Farouk Partow, Director of Programme Management, WHO, who also delivered a message of Dr Hussein A. Gezairy, Regional Director. Dr Gezairy, in his message, anticipated that this and similar subsequent meetings would lead to increase collaboration between national research organizations and scientists and WHO, and would serve to orient national research efforts in order to make them more relevant to the global objective of Health For All by the Year 2000. The full text of Dr Gezairy's message is given as Annex II.

Professor M. Abdussalam, Chairman of the EM/ACMR, served as moderator for this meeting.

The Provisional Agenda and Programme of Work were adopted. The Agenda is given in Annex III.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the meeting were as follows:

- to review and exchange information on mechanisms employed for the promotion, development and coordination of medical research in the countries of the participants;
- to suggest ways and means of strengthening the above mechanisms;
- to outline WHO's role in the development of medical research activities in the Member Countries, with special reference to research in support of national strategies for the goal Health For All by the Year 2000;
- to discuss areas for WHO collaboration in the coming years.

REVIEW OF EXISTING MECHANISMS FOR MANAGING MEDICAL RESEARCH
IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The participants were requested beforehand to prepare a concise statement on the mechanisms existing in their respective countries for managing medical research with special reference to mechanisms for coordination of research and for promoting and developing targeted research. A summary is given below of these country reports, the full texts of which were distributed to the participants during the meeting.

EGYPT

Medical research in Egypt is carried out in several institutes including the Medical Faculties, institutes attached to the Ministry of Health and those affiliated to the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology. Recently the Academy has developed an ambitious plan for developing research capabilities in different fields, including ^{substantial} health, and funds have been made available to the Academy for financing this research programme. At the moment, at the national level, the Academy is considered to be the body responsible for the organization and integration of research activities. Through its various committees it is linked with the relevant Ministries. In the Ministry of Health a Department of Medical Research has recently been established with the objective of coordinating health services research activities and for supporting and directing research towards the solution of national health problems and for developing the requisite research manpower. It will also attempt to maintain links with medical and research institutes and attempt to coordinate medical research activities. In addition it would provide the technical secretariat for the Permanent Committee of Research in the Ministry of Health.

During the discussion it was brought out that the emphasis in support of research will henceforth shift from the individual scientists based to multidisciplinary teams.

IRAN

Soon after the establishment of the Government of the Islamic Republic, a Central Committee for University Reform (University Djehad) with various sub-committees for educational curricula, student selection, University rules and regulations, and another Committee for Scientific Publications, were established. Similar committees were formed at each University, as well as in various scientific institutions. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education and of Culture and Arts were joined together to form the new Ministry of Culture and Higher Education. A new organization for Scientific and Technological Research was established. Of the 83 scientific institutions in the country there are 9 that deal with medical and allied sciences. After the Revolution, the allocation for research as a whole has been increased fivefold. Close cooperation exist between the Ministry of Health and Faculties of Medicine and other health institutions. As a matter of policy, applied and problem-solving research are receiving the highest priority.

The Cultural Revolution Council and the Sub-committee of Djehad are bodies which fulfill the various functions of a medical research council in Iran. These organization receive medical research projects which are evaluated first for the usefullness and the possibility for direct application, and only then the related budget will be approved.

Another body established after the Revolution is the Organizatio for Scientific and Technological Research which functions under the Office of President of Islamic Republic of Iron. This Organization helps to promote basic and applied research at national level and coordinates research activities in various fields.

All the above mentioned bodies give top priority to the targeted research projects related to the primary health care and expanded programme on immunization for application in remote areas of the country.

A major constraint in the development of medical research was the lack of adequate manpower and access to health literature.

Bilateral cooperation with other countries is being encouraged, recent example of which is an agreement for scientific cooperation with Libya.

PAKISTAN

As the two participants from Pakistan were unable to attend, Professor Abdussalam briefed the group about management of medical research in that country.

The Pakistan Medical Research Council is the leading agency in the country charged with the organization and coordination of research. Though administratively located in the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Council maintain effective links with the Ministry of Health and the Provincial Health Departments. The Council is headed by an honorary chairman and has 18 members drawn from various medical institutes in the country. A number of expert groups exist to facilitate the Council's work in promoting and supervising research in selected priority areas. Following the convening of a large national meeting 2 years ago, in which a very large number of scientists have participated, the Council has developed a comprehensive list of researchable topics relevant to the health problems/ of the country. The Council has established research centres in the medical schools and also awards research grants to scientists who apply for funds. The scientific work sponsored by the Council is disseminated through the publication of its annual report and a quarterly medical journal, and holds periodically conferences/seminars on selected topics.

Medical research is also being carried out by students in the postgraduate institutes in Lahore and Karachi. Research in communicable diseases and allied disciplines is mostly carried out at the National Institute of Health, Islamabad. In addition to the Pakistan Medical Research Council, the Pakistan Science Foundation and the University Grant Commission also award research grants to scientists applying for support.

KUWAIT

A Health Research Department was established in the Ministry of Health in 1976, to develop applied and basic research activities in order to up-grade the quality of health care being provided in the country. In 1982 the scope and functions of this Department were revised and now include:

- design and execution of short and long-term plans of research according to the requirements of the Ministry of Public Health and its policy of continuous improvements of health services
- creation of highly motivated competent Kuwaiti researchers
- scientific, ethical, administrative and financial evaluation of research protocols submitted by the Ministry's staff and, if feasible, approval for support.

The activities of this Department are supervised by the Health Research Council which consists of 8 senior officials drawn from the University and the Ministry of Public Health. This Council is chaired by the Minister of Public Health and it recommends the overall strategy for health research, allocates budget and periodical evaluates the whole programme.

To facilitate the work of this Department there is a Steering Committee with members drawn from the Department itself and from the Ministry of Public Health. This Committee helps in providing research workers with all the necessary facilities within the shortest time possible and a minimum of red tape. There is also a Scientific Committee composed of 8 outstanding scientists drawn from the University and other health institutions. This Committee identifies scientists to carry out research projects, assesses referees' reports on project proposals and recommends final decisions.

The Health Research Department has 4 Divisions:
research and technical studies, administration and finance, informati

and research laboratories. In the last named it is intended to develop facilities for research which do not exist in the Ministry of Health's establishments.

It was emphasized that every effort is made to coordinate research activities with the University and avoid duplication. In fact, a harmonious cooperation exist between the Ministry and the University in the field of health research.

The National Centre for Science and Technology (NCST) was established by a Royal Decree in December 30, 1977. It is an independent centre, administratively attached to the prime minister, with a special budget. Its main function is to promote and encourage applied scientific research and to coordinate the activities of scientific research organizations and centres in accordance with the kingdom's development requirements. Among other things, this centre conducts applied scientific research programmes, establishes and manages an information centre which collects data on scientific and technological subjects, manpower resources.

In 1982, 20 medical researches were presented to this centre with a total budget of \$5.4 million plus a national project for leishmania control with 3.7 million \$ budget. Today, there are 40 medical researches under review with a total budget of \$17.2 million.

Proposals for medical research are subjected to the following review procedures:

- Staff review: A committee of experts scrutinizes the report to see whether it is conforming with the accepted standardized research form, and that all necessary data are fulfilled.
- Peer Review: A panel of experts in the field of the research (usually university professors), evaluate the research according to design, format, content, quality, data and references etc.
- Panel review: This is carried out to assess the:
 - potential contribution of the project to Saudi Arabia development plan in long and short terms.
 - potential contribution to training and development of Saudi experts (doctors, technicians, students).
 - Potential contribution to Saudi Arabia medical facilities i.e. hospitals, laboratories, etc.
 - relative success of the objectives and implementation
- Executive decision: involves the negotiation of the budget and signing of the contract, as well as asking for a biannual progress report if not presented within 30 days or else the project is suspended i.e. financial aid withheld.

It also involves field trips to the site of the project by experts from the national centre for science technology.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

There are several specialized departments in the Ministry of Health to deal with some prevalent diseases and conduct researches in their respective fields e.g. Department of Schistosomiasis, Malaria, Leishmania, Tuberculosis, Rehabilitation, Cancer, Nutrition. Data is collected from various regions. Research is conducted in areas of epidemiological importance in collaboration with medical colleges.

In the new organization chart of the Ministry of Health a special Department of medical research will be created shortly. There is a shortage of research workers in the Ministry of Health establishments as most of those who had the necessary qualifications and bend of mind would rather go and work in the universities.

SUDAN

The National Council for Research (NCR) is the official government body responsible for organization, management, supervision and funding of all research in the Sudan. It has several specialized councils of which the Medical Research Council is one.

The Medical Research Council (MRC) consists of a board and an executive body. Members of the board, whose number does not exceed 30, are appointed by the President of NRC on the basis of their personal merits with regard to research, academic abilities and professional contributions. The MRC has several committees that are formed to give advice on matters related to research projects obligations and relevant academic, ethical and professional affairs. The MRC also formulates research projects according to national requirements and recommendations raised by the Health Research Sector Annual Congress which involves all medical and paramedical people together and representations of the public.

The MRC has several institutions and units under its administrative charge, i.e. the Tropical Disease Institute, Medicinal Plants Unit and Traditional Medicine Institute. An Immunology Training and Research Centre is under formulation.

All the activities of the MRC are directed towards the fulfilment of the national programme for the building of a science based state. All existing research institutions in the Universities and Ministry of Health are the executing bodies of research. Therefore, research workers in these institutions can apply to the council for research grants, either through their respective research committees or directly. Organizations can also request support to improve facilities for research and training.

Coordination of research within the country is ensured through involvement of scientists from the universities and the ministries in the planning and execution of research. Coordination is also

ensured through legislation. Any research project whether financed by the MRC or otherwise is first to be submitted to and approved by the MRC board before it can be initiated. The MRC may also stop research projects which have not fulfilled the above conditions or are found to be diverting from the national priorities.

A number of constraints have hampered the advance of medical research in the Sudan. These include absence of research manpower due to brain drain, shortage of hard currency for training and purchase of equipment, and space.

SYRIA

The Supreme Council of Sciences, which was established in 1958, is responsible for encouraging and supervising scientific research in all disciplines of sciences including medical research. This is an independent body and is usually headed by the Minister of Higher Education. Due to the scarcity of financial resources, the main activity supported by the Council is the organization of the annual "science week" being held regularly since 1960. During this week, scientists from different disciplines present the results of their studies. In 1982 a Round Table Conference was organized during the week on the subject of "man and his environment". Within the Medical Faculties of the Universities the Department of Social Medicine organizes field studies carried out by the medical students during their last 2 years of study. During these field studies the students and their supervisors spend about a month surveying the health status of people of selected communities for surveying a specific health problem. The results of these studies are also communicated to the relevant health departments. Some research is also carried out by postgraduate students in the Medical Faculties.

The Directorate of Research and Planning in the Ministry of Health is responsible for collecting and distributing information on the prevalence of infectious diseases in the country. From time to time various disease control programmes carry out surveys, as part of the programme operations.

There is a considerable shortage of well qualified research workers for undertaking research on relevant health problems in the country. In order to promote and develop research, there is need to establish a Council for Medical Research under the aegis of the Supreme Council of Sciences, which should be able to maintain effective links with the Ministry of Health.

TUNISIA

Until the late '70s, medical research was carried out in a disorganized manner, with improvised means, the initiative being left to Medical Faculty members. The awareness that research, particularly in the social and health fields, is an integral part of the development process, is recent. Hence the need to define research objectives and strategies in agreement with development plan

During the last 4 years, several institutions connected with medical research have been established in the country, among them being the Ministry of Postgraduate Education and Scientific Research (MESRS) in 1979. Its Directorate for scientific and technical research is responsible for the identification of research objectives, the preparation of regulatory texts and the coordination of research programmes.

A Council for Scientific and Technical Research was established in 1982. Its main tasks are to define the broad lines of the research policy, to prepare the general research budget and to coordinate activities at national and international level. It comprises 14 committees, including one for Medical Science and another for Social Science. In 1980, the internal structure of Medical Faculties was reorganized, and a Standing Scientific Committee was established to discuss educational and scientific matters and to ensure the smooth operation of research projects.

Within the Ministry of Health - Faculties of Medicine being responsible both to the Ministry of Health and to the Ministry of Postgraduate Education - a Technical Committee for the Examination of Research Projects was set up in 1982. Its functions are to organize and plan research and select among proposed projects those which could be financed with national funds. Finally, the Hospital Rules for Procedure (decree of 1981) established, within hospitals,

institutes and specialized centres, a Scientific Committee which defines research project objectives, ensure the quality of care and of medical and health-related training.

As a result of these developments, a scientific mind is emerging.

During the "Sixth National Plan 1982-86", objectives for medical research include further definition of priorities for medical research, training and deployment of multidisciplinary teams and the development of a suitable infrastructure for research.

YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

A need to develop research capabilities in the country has been recently recognized on account of some of the following factors:

- the great pressure on the existing health services and the need to expand
- the new concept of primary health care being the backbone of future health services
- the large number of schools from where health workers are trained; this has created a diversity in approach dealing with the individual and community health problems
- the newly established Faculty of Health Sciences will need to develop curricula based on local material and to develop staff versed in research
- a large sector of the population is still using the system of traditional medicine; this needs to be scientifically evaluated
- a large number of Yemeni medical and paramedical workers are working abroad; research activities in the country could induce them to return.

Faced with the above, the Ministry of Health together with the University of Sana'a decided to establish a Medical Research Unit, the main objectives of which are:

- link research to the overall developmental aspects in the field of health and health related subjects
- make use of the experience of other countries
- health manpower development.

So far the Unit has compiled an inventory of previous research work carried out in YAR. In addition, potential research workers and institutions are being identified. Some of the areas which have been chosen for in-depth study include: khat, diarrhoeal diseases and perinatal and maternal mortality.

Team leaders to study these problems have been appointed and proposals for research are being prepared.

These initial activities which started in July 1982, have been supported by the Swedish Organization, Radd Barnen (RB), and include the provision of a part-time consultant's services.

At this stage of development, the Ministry and the University need more active contribution from WHO in the fields of improving the functions of the Unit, training of researchers, as well as strengthening the links between the Unit and other research organizations.

From the review of country reports it appears that the organization of medical research is at various stages of development in the different countries of the Region. The need to link medical research with national health development is widely appreciated.

Different mechanisms for managing medical research are evolving in the countries. All of them are aiming at improving the coordination of research, in order to optimize available resources and to avoid duplication. Special efforts are being made in most of the countries represented in the meeting to forge close relationships between the Medical Faculties and health services. The Medical Faculties have an important role in training medical students in research methods, assessing community health needs and problem solving.

Nearly all the countries are experiencing a shortage of research manpower (both professional and supporting staff), specially in the field of Health Services Research.

The involvement of behavioural scientists in medical research is generally marginal or completely lacking. Also research continues to be an individual effort and only few attempts have been made to develop and maintain multidisciplinary teams. It appears that only limited efforts have been made to solve community health problems, and to meet the research needs of health managers.

It was brought out on several occasions that in order to obtain the required resources for medical research, it was necessary to involve and obtain the commitment of decision makers at the highest level. However, a well formulated national research plan linked to health development efforts and focussing at solving community health problems, was a prerequisite for obtaining this political commitment and the resources.

During the discussion following the country reports, 3 deficient areas related to medical research were defined:

- development of scientifically sound and socially relevant research proposals, which could be considered for funding by national as well as international research organizations

- lack or inappropriate evaluation of research results

- lack of utilization of research findings.

Possible approaches to overcome these deficiencies are discussed in a subsequent section of this report.

Agenda item 4. - WHO/EM INTER-COUNTRY MEDICAL RESEARCH PROGRAMME

A summary of the EM Inter-Country Research Programme was given. Mention was made of the terms of reference and the functioning of the EM Advisory Committee on Medical Research (EM/ACMR) and of the various inter-country and national research and training activities sponsored so far. The participants were also informed about the Medium-Term Programme for Research Promotion and Development, formulated for the period covered by the Organization's Seventh General Programme of Work (1984-1989). The various activities proposed to be implemented during this period were specially brought to the attention of the group.

Information was also provided in brief about the working of the Global ACMR and its relationship to the Policy Organs of WHO and to the Regional ACMRs, as well as about the two WHO Special Programmes for Research and Training in Human Reproduction and Tropical Diseases.

Agenda item 5.

a.) **GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING AND STRENGTHENING MECHANISMS
FOR PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING TARGETED RESEARCH**

Targeted research was considered important, not only for solving national health problems, but also for developing the "scientific mind". Targeted research should aim at solving specific problems in a given time. The mechanisms developed for planning, implementing and evaluating such research should be within the framework of National Health Development Plans.

The group proposed the following model for planning, implementing and evaluating targeted health research. This can be modified and adapted to suit local conditions.

I. A Department within the Ministry of Health may be designated to shoulder the responsibility of managing targeted research.

In the Ministries of Health of most of the countries represented at this meeting, such department already exists under different names. These departments should be given the mandate to strengthen their coordinating role for research related to health. They should have strong links with the Departments of Planning, Information, Statistics and the Minister's Office, within the Ministry of Health.

II. Mechanisms for planning

A panel of research planners should be formed. Such panels exist in most of the countries under the name of: Committee for Research, Council, etc. This panel may be called "The National Committee for Health Research".

The members of this Committee should include representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Universities (Ministry of Higher Education), the body responsible for overall research at the national level (e.g. the ASRT in Egypt, or the National Council of Research in the Sudan, etc.), and from other related ministries or institutions

according to the existing regime in each country. The Committee should be chaired by the Minister of Health. The Committee should be charged with developing the national strategy for health research

The Department of Research (within the Ministry of Health), acting as the Technical Secretariat of the Committee should:

- collect relevant information needed by the Committee, e.g. statistics, needs' assessment, standards, etc.

- present the information to the Committee

- receive and screen the different proposals coming from the different centres and units, and present them to the Committee

- prepare and keep inventories of the research centres, their activities, and their potentials, and also the inventories of the available laboratories, equipment, personnel, etc.

- provide support and technical advice to potential principal investigators.

The Committee studies the different proposals, and decides upon the priorities using criteria such as:

- the relevance of the proposal to the objectives of the national health research plan

- the applicability of the proposal (time, facilities, available budget, etc.)

- the number of population that would benefit from the results.

The Committee should also identify areas for targeted research within the National Plan. These areas can be divided into sub-areas. The needed research in each area can be assigned by the Committee to certain centres or can be advertized for different applicants.

The Committee should also examine the "ethical" implications of research proposals, and if required, the proposals should be forwarded to a special ethical committee for review.

III. Mechanisms for implementation

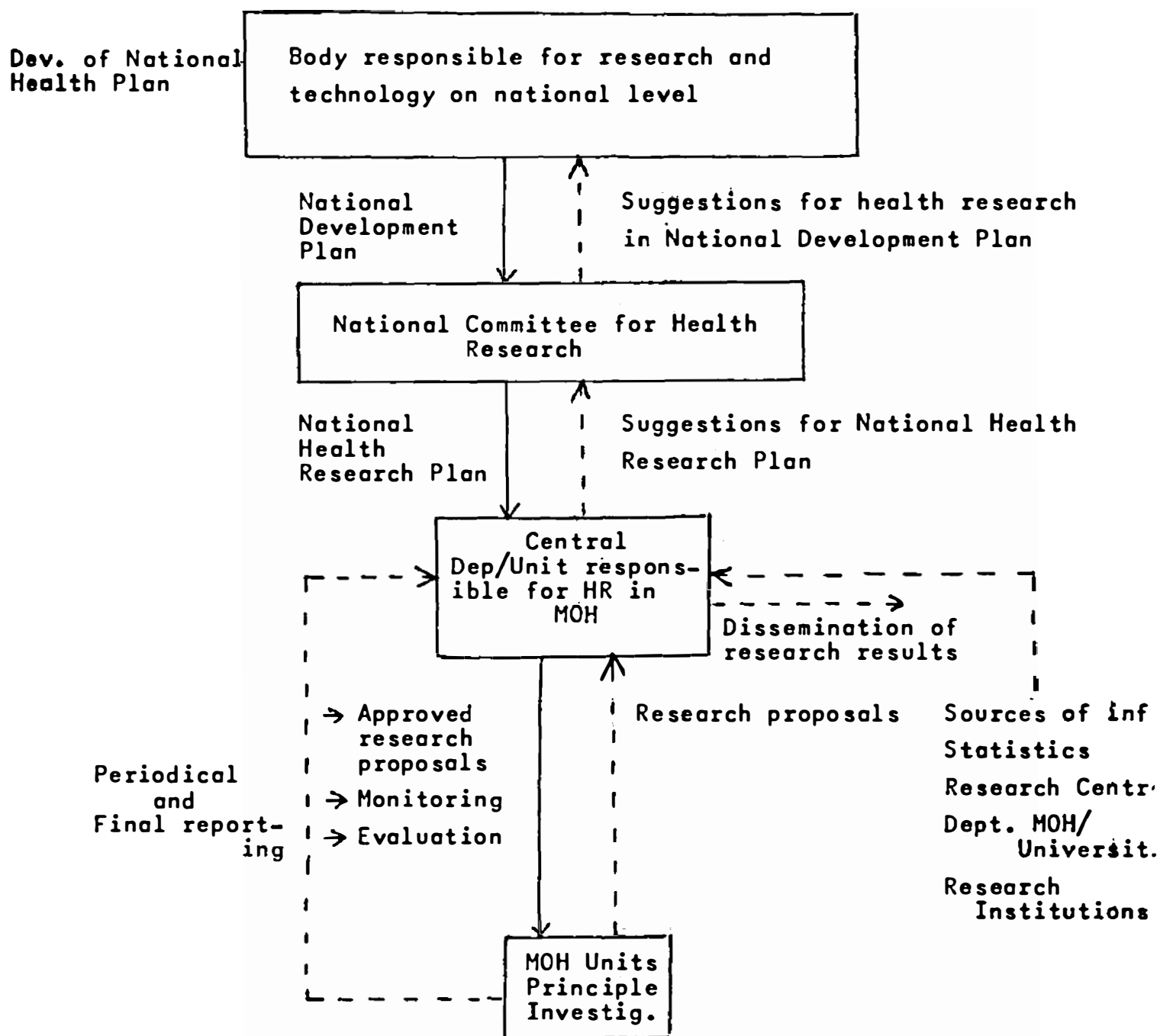
1. The Committee is supposed to approve the valid proposals, and select the centre or unit or research team who would carry on the research.
2. The Department of Research would carry on the formalities for contracting, allocating the funds, securing communications with the researchers, etc.
3. The Department of Research should encourage the development of multidisciplinary "research teams" including personnel from the various technical categories.
4. A system of monitoring the implementation of research should be developed within the Department of Research. Evaluators and/or auditors should periodically visit the site of research to assess the achievements and suggest re-phasing or re-planning if needed.

IV. Mechanisms for evaluation

1. Final reports are submitted to the Department of Research who would present them to the Committee.
2. The Committee would designate the evaluator(s). An external evaluator is theoretically preferred, yet an evaluation team composed of an external evaluator, a representative of the Department officially responsible for the area of research, the director of the Department of Research, and a representative from the centre (or unit or group) who implemented the proposal can do this job better.
3. In certain cases an expert may be needed to participate in the evaluation.
4. The approved final report would be received by the Department of Research who should disseminate the results to all interested people. The importance of the final report is that how much of it would be utilized, and not how much of it would be published. Since there is a difficulty to rapidly publish the results in international journals, a periodical (a quarterly for instance) can be prepared and

and published by the Department of Research.

An organogram depicting the above model is given below.



Dotted lines represent flow of information.

b.) DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH MANPOWER

Lack of research manpower is common in most countries of the EM Region. It is specially marked in the area of public health. It was felt that there are 3 possible approaches to overcome this shortage of research workers:

- potential research workers employed in the Ministry of Health and academic institutions should be encouraged to undertake research on a part-time basis

- an acceptable career structure and a system of suitable incentives should be established for medical research workers

- scientists from other disciplines, especially social and behavioural sciences, should be encouraged to be involved in health research.

Regarding the training of research workers, it was suggested that Medical Schools be encouraged to organize short courses in research principles and methods, for medical students and young doctors, willing to engage in research.

Senior and well established research workers should take an active part in training younger scientists. As far as possible, individual scientists, whether working on their own or as members of team, should have the opportunity to initiate and pursue research on their own selected topics. In order to keep the research workers abreast of the recent advances, opportunities be provided for their continuing education, including attendances at international conferences and seminars. Research workers holding senior and/or administrative positions should be exposed to training in management and applications of principles of management should be applied in research institutions and Medical Faculties.

Some possible areas for cooperation with WHO and other international agencies in this connection are:

- assessment of respective research manpower needs and collaboration in overcoming various difficulties encountered by these countries

- individual countries are requested to make a better use of fellowships in health research matters, and other facilities offered by the international agencies, collaborating and training centres

- short-term training courses and workshops are considered extremely useful and should be planned frequently by WHO

- WHO should collaborate in training technicians in the maintenance and on-site repair of equipments used in health research.

Agenda item 6. - DELINEATION OF AREAS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION WITH WHO IN THE FIELD OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

The possible modes of WHO collaboration with Member States in the field of medical research were briefly presented to the participants. These include:

- Promotional meetings involving national scientists. It was felt that such meetings could be convened in countries of the Region and would be able to play an effective role in bringing the staff of the Ministries of Health and Universities together and can be used as an occasion to convey to the decision makers the need and importance of medical research, especially that in support of strategies for HFA/2000. When sufficient number of national meetings were held and should need be felt, a regional meeting could be convened.

- It was mentioned that when the Regional Research Programme was initiated, missions have been sent to selected countries to assess their research potential. These missions have provided some very useful information which have assisted the Regional ACMR to decide on regional priorities for research and to recommend activities which could be sponsored by WHO. In view of the development that had taken place since then, the group felt that such missions should now be sent to countries for specific purposes, e.g. formulating research programmes in priority areas, developing plans for institutional strengthening.

In this connection, it was felt that WHO should collaborate in improving the flow of information on matters pertaining to medical research.

- As was discussed under Agenda item 4., the group was informed about the material support available from the Organization in the form of research grants and research training awards and the possibility for supporting national meetings and workshops, specially those involving development of research projects.

- The group was informed about the steps being taken by the Organization to develop and strengthen Health Literature Services in the Region. In this connection the need for training research workers in the use of libraries, was stressed.

- The Organization is making special efforts to promote and develop research in selected regional priorities, i.e. primary health care and health manpower development.

- The group was briefed on the role of Collaborating Centres in the field of medical research and of the new regulations governing their designation. Efforts are being made to identify and strengthen more institutions with a view to their designation as Collaborating Centres in the Region, and to ensure a more equitable distribution of the Centres in the countries and in accordance with programme needs therein. Participants were also informed that the services of Collaborating Centres in other Regions were available to scientists in this Region.

- Collaboration in the field of medical research is also available through the Special Programmes for Research, i.e. Diarrhoeal Diseases, TDR and HRP. The participants expressed interest in receiving scientific publications from these Programmes.

In addition to the above, it was mentioned that should the Governments wish, technical advisory services can be provided for assessing, planning and evaluating national research programmes.

Though a formal evaluation of the meeting was not carried out, the participants felt that the objectives of the meeting have been achieved and recommended that the Organization should continue to convene such meetings at 1-2 years' interval, depending upon the progress made in the countries during the intervening period. It was hoped that more countries will be represented in the next meeting.

MEETING OF NATIONAL OFFICERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

EM/MTG.NAT.OFF.RESP.MED.RES/3

Limassol, 13-15 April 1983

15 April 1983

PROVISIONAL LIST OF THOSE PARTICIPATING

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PAKISTAN	*Major-General M.A.Z. Mohyidin Chairman of the Pakistan Medical Research Council Director of Medicine Military Hospital <u>Rawalpindi</u> *Major-General M.I. Burney Director National Institute of Health <u>Islamabad</u>

* did not attend

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ADDRESS OF DR HUSSEIN A. GEZAIRY
DIRECTOR
WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

to the

MEETING OF NATIONAL OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE
FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Limassol, Cyprus, 13-15 April 1983

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this Meeting of Chief Executives of Medical Research Councils and National Officers Responsible for Medical Research in the Ministries of Health in some countries of our Region. We have intended to have this Meeting for some time, and I am glad that it is now finally being held.

As you are already aware, the main objectives of this Meeting are to review and exchange information on mechanisms for managing medical research existing in the countries represented in this Meeting, and to suggest how WHO can collaborate in the strengthening of these mechanisms. The Meeting will also address itself to the issue of developing and directing national research efforts in support of the global objective of "Health For All by the Year 2000".

The plan of action for implementing the global strategy for "Health For All by the Year 2000", recently adopted by the World Health Assembly, includes a major reorientation of research to make it more relevant to the needs of the countries in building up health systems based on Primary Health Care.

Following the decision taken by the governing bodies of WHO, calling for a greater involvement of the Regions in the Organization's research activities, an Advisory Committee on Medical Research was established in 1976. Some of you are already familiar with the working of this Committee and the central role it has played in the development of the Inter-country Medical Research Programme,

since its inception. A major constraint in the implementation of this Programme, at the country level, has been the lack of national mechanisms for managing medical research in many countries of this Region. It is hoped, that following meetings such as this, suitable mechanisms will be developed which will lead to increasing participation by the Member States and their scientists, in the inter-country research activities.

I am anticipating that this and subsequent such meetings would lead to a closer approximation of national and regional priorities and a more effective coordination of medical research between WHO and countries, and amongst countries themselves.

I am keen to promote the increased involvement of scientists of our Member States in the planning and implementation of our research programme. To some extent, this is of course, being done at the policy level by the Advisory Committee on Medical Research, but I am keen to see more scientists involved in the operational aspects. I hope that during this Meeting, you will also have the opportunity to provide my staff members present here, with a list of research workers and institutions, who/which could be involved in inter-country research activities.

I feel that all countries have a potential for carrying out research. If resources available for research in different institutes of the country are effectively coordinated, much progress can be made. I realize that each country has its specific individual characteristics, not necessarily shared by others, however, I hope that by sharing your experiences during this Meeting, you may be able to evolve guidelines or approaches for overcoming some of the constraints in effective coordination of medical research in your respective countries.

You will, during this Meeting, also be discussing the rather complex issue of development of research manpower. In view of the prevailing situation, this calls for some innovative approaches. We have taken some steps in training

nationals in Health Services Research Methodology and Research Management, - but this is by no means enough to meet the existing and future needs for training research workers.

I look forward to receiving your suggestions about how WHO could collaborate with Member States in research manpower development.

I am glad that Professor Abdussalam, Chairman of our Advisory Committee on Medical Research, is with us to attend this Meeting, and I wish you all a pleasant stay and successful deliberations.