

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



ORGANISATION MONDIALE
DE LA SANTÉ

EM ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MEDICAL
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Agenda item 10.

DISCUSSION ON THE NEW INITIATIVES FOR PROMOTION AND
DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES
IN THE EM REGION

The Regional Programme for Research Promotion and Development (RPD) has now been in existence for the last six years and during this period modest funds from the Regular Budget have been allocated to support activities pertaining to this Programme. Before discussing possible new initiatives for development of research in the Region, the Committee may wish to review the impact to-date of the Research Programme sponsored by EMRO, as a whole, and specifically at the country level, even though only a short span of time has elapsed since the Research Programme was initiated

Briefly summarizing, the following are the major activities that have taken place during the last six years

- regular annual meetings of the EM/ACMR
- training courses on Health Services Research (HSR)
- Three-country Coverage Study
- Workshop on Research Management
- institution of a grant system for research and research training

In addition to the research activities supported through WHO/EMRO, support for research and research training has also been provided through the three WHO Special Programmes, i.e. Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP), Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) and Diarrhoeal Disease Control (DDC). The Committee will recall being briefed at its previous meetings on the activities supported by these Special Programmes in the Member Countries of the Region

It would appear that most of the research activities have, so far, been EMRO-initiated and little interaction has taken place with national bodies for research and with the concerned sections in the Ministries of Health, leading to a relatively small number of requests from the countries for direct collaboration

The above situation reflects to a large extent the low priority accorded to medical research in the health development of the majority of developing countries (a situation which we know is not confined to EMR only), with the

result that effective national steering and management mechanisms are not established.

The following are some initiatives which may be taken by WHO to further promote and develop medical research in the Region

- In selected countries with a well-established health system, but with no research programme Promotional visits could be carried out to assess potential for research and suggest guidelines for establishing national research management mechanisms, and to identify areas for WHO collaboration,
- In countries where organizational infrastructure for research exist WHO collaboration could be extended with a view to improving the planning and evaluation of research and directing it towards the solution of specific local health problems and away from the clinically-oriented and hospital-based approach,
- In view of the wide-spread difficulty in formulating scientifically valid research proposals, the following mutually complementary activities are proposed
 - a) organizing workshops in general research methodology or in research methods relevant to a specific programme area,
 - b) consultant assistance in formulating research proposals,
 - c) preparation of project protocol(s) within EMRO and subsequently their implementation as an intercountry research project(s).

The Committee may wish to discuss and recommend specific initiatives or modes of collaboration with Member States for promoting research aimed at facilitating the achievement of the global aim of HFA/2000 mechanisms, and to identify areas for WHO collaboration.