



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



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REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH RESEARCH

1. At the request of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB), the Secretariat of the Advisory Committee on Health Research (ACHR) convened the following meetings held since the last report made to the Governing Bodies at the Pan American Health Organization.

- 41st Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Health Research (ACHR), Washington DC, 29-30 November 2007
- 42nd Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Health Research (ACHR), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 13-16 April 2008, as a follow-up to the deliberations of the 41st Meeting.

2. In addition, ACHR members participated in the First Latin American Conference on Research and Innovation for Health held on 16-18 April 2008 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

3. This document summarizes the objectives and recommendations made during the two meetings of the ACHR and summarizes the developments of the First Latin American Conference on Research and Innovation for Health.

41st Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Health Research (Washington, D.C., November 2007)¹

4. The objectives of this meeting were to:

¹ The Report to the Director and other meeting documents are available at:
ACHR 41/2007.0 Report to the Director, XLI Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Health Research (ACHR). Washington, DC. 29 and 30 November, 2007: <http://www.paho.org/English/hdp/hdr/result.htm?cat=cais&year=2007-Nov>.
CAIS-41/2007. 04 Informe a la Directora, XLI Reunión del Comité Asesor de Investigaciones en Salud (CAIS). Washington, DC, 29 y 30 de noviembre de 2007: <http://www.paho.org/Spanish/hdp/hdr/result.htm?cat=cais&year=2007-Nov>.

- (a) Update ACHR members on the progress made in PAHO's technical cooperation projects involving health research since the 40th Meeting in Montego Bay;
- (b) Update ACHR members and consult them on PAHO's proposed policy on health research in order to develop an outline of the document for presentation and extensive discussion at the ACHR meeting in April 2008 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and at the meetings of PAHO's Governing Bodies to be held during 2008;
- (c) Provide an opportunity for dialogue between ACHR members and the PASB's technical areas;
- (d) Review progress in connection with the ACHR work agenda, including the possibility of developing guidelines for evaluating PAHO and WHO recommendations and guidelines, and follow up on the commitments made;
- (e) Inform ACHR members about developments in the planning of the First Pan American Conference on Health Research and Innovation, scheduled for 16-18 April 2008 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

5. The Committee recommended that PAHO accelerate the development of a draft PAHO research policy to 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 Region of the Americas.

6. The Committee urged the Research Promotion and Development Unit (HSS/RC) to conduct a needs assessment and, based on the findings, to design and support the implementation of a training strategy targeted at the Evidence Informed Policy Network (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.

7. The Committee encouraged 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 encouraged PAHO to continue its high-level advocacy for the registry, include trial registration as a requirement for ethics review by the 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.

8. The Committee congratulated 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 encouraged 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.

9. The Committee urged 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.

42nd Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Health Research (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, April 2008)²

10. At the request of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, the Secretariat of the ACHR convened the Committee's 42nd Meeting as a follow-up to its 41st Meeting. It was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 13-15 April 2008.

11. Attendees were members of the ACHR, the Director of the PASB, and staff of the ACHR Secretariat at PAHO Headquarters and the Country Office in Brazil; representatives of the Brazilian Ministry of Health; and special guests from international organizations worldwide including the Director of WHO's Regional Office for Africa. During the meeting, discussions focused largely on the current vision surrounding PAHO's research policy and the ACHR's role in its development, and specifically on a background document describing the potential form that PAHO's research policy could take. The background document was drafted to inform the preparation of a policy document to be presented to PAHO's Governing Bodies in 2009. In addition, there were several presentations, one on the subject of research policy in Brazil and the others on recent progress in PAHO's technical cooperation projects and activities in health research and their alignment with the research policy of the World Health Organization.

² The Report to the Director and other meeting documents are available at:
ACHR 42/2008. Report to the Director, XLII Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Health Research (ACHR). Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. 13-15 April 2008: <http://www.paho.org/English/hdp/hdr/result.htm?cat=cais&year=2008>.
CAIS-42/2008. Informe a la Directora, XLII Reunión del Comité Asesor de Investigaciones en Salud (CAIS). Rio de Janeiro, Brasil 13-15 abril de 2008: <http://www.paho.org/Spanish/hdp/hdr/result.htm?cat=cais&year=2008>.

12. Because the focus of the meeting was crafting the form that PAHO's research policy could take and its alignment with WHO's research strategy, the recommendations made by the ACHR pertained to the structure and content of PAHO's research policy draft documents. These are listed in the Report to the Director.

First Latin American Conference on Research and Innovation for Health, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 15-18 April 2008³

13. The First Latin American Conference on Research and Innovation for Health brought together over 120 representatives from organizations and networks geared towards strengthening national health research systems and research that contributes to health, including officials from the sectors of health, and science and technology. Most participants came from Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries in Latin America and from organizations working in or with these countries.

14. The focus of the Conference was on finding pragmatic solutions to what is perceived as a shared challenge across the Region: how to address national health research priorities and contribute through research towards better health, equity and development in Latin America.

15. Five topics drove the debates during the Conference: the strengthening of national health research systems; financing for research for health; innovation, product development and access; the development of human resources for health research; and regional collaboration as a cross-cutting topic.

16. The objectives of the Conference were to bring together countries in Latin America to:

- discuss successes and challenges in research for health and the development of their national health research systems;
- strengthen the links between the health research and the science, technology and innovation sectors;
- define strategies and actions for future cooperation within Latin America and stimulate the formation of partnerships that will facilitate addressing health equity and development through research;
- increase the interest in external research sponsors in supporting this process.

³ The relevant documentation is available at:

English: <http://www.cohred.org/main/healthresearchlatinamerica.php#format>.

Spanish: http://www.cohred.org/main/healthresearchlatinamerica_spanish.php.

17. The main outputs of the Conference were: 14 reports on national health research systems in different countries that contribute to an assessment of the regional situation; multiple contacts and networking opportunities for countries, networks, international agencies, and funding agencies; a preliminary subregional agreement for cooperation in Central America; commitment to assess progress and a proposal to hold a follow-up meeting; inputs for the development and implementation of national health research policies and the strengthening of national health research systems; contributions relevant to the 2008 Global Ministerial Forum that will be held in Bamako, Mali, in November 2008; inputs to be considered in the crafting of PAHO's Research Policy; and subsequent publications and reports. The Conference Report is being prepared for publication.

18. The organization of the event was the result of cooperation between the Ministry of Health of Brazil (Department of Science and Technology), the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED), the Global Forum for Health Research, INSalud Mexico, the NicaSalud Network Federation, and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/World Health Organization (WHO). The meeting was sponsored by PAHO, the Ministry of Health of Brazil, the Wellcome Trust, COHRED, the Global Forum for Health Research, and the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR).

Developments⁴

19. The Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health will be held in Bamako, Mali, 17-19 November 2008. It will bring together up to 600 policymakers and researchers to focus on the key linkages between the health sector and research, science and technology, higher education, and the global innovation system. PAHO has been asked to prepare and collate the regional contributions to the Global Ministerial Forum.

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⁴ The relevant documentation is available at:
English: <http://new.paho.org/bamako2008eng>.
Spanish: <http://new.paho.org/bamako2008esp>.
Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health Website: <http://www.bamako2008.org/>.