

RESEARCH COLLABORATION: A PANACEA FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GLOBAL HEALTH

*Dabota Y.B¹, (MBBS).

ABSTRACT

Background: Research involves the investigation of either pre-existing or new concepts to provide answers to questions or modify existing concepts. Results of researches lead to innovation. There is constant research in global health as medicine is not static. Research collaboration is necessary for global health as it helps to eradicate bias.

Method: This is a review article on research collaboration as a tool for the advancement of global health. A literature search was done using Google Scholar, Medline and PubMed.

Conclusion: Research collaboration should be encouraged especially as it promotes the acquisition of funding and obtaining of research grants. It enables the tackling of Research questions in global health that are enigmatic and it also facilitates the building of capacity.

Key Words: Global Health, Research Collaboration, Research Grant, Research Questions

Cite this article as: Dabota Y.B. Research Collaboration: A Panacea For The Advancement Of Global Health. Afrimed Journal 2021; 7(1): 1-4.

INTRODUCTION

“Together Everyone Achieves Much”

In global health, there is an increase in the number of research collaborations due to their benefits and many of such collaborations are successful (1,2). In some literature, research collaboration is also known as research partnership. It is used to describe any partnership that occurs when two or more people including individual persons, groups and academic institutions come together to conduct research (1,3). Research collaboration is a venture that involves more than one person being involved in research. Life is not static; hence, there is a need for continuous research for discoveries to be made in order not to run world affairs (including healthcare, policy, and security) with obsolete knowledge. Synergy may affect the overall outcomes in collaborative problem-solving. Research is an activity that results in the creation of knowledge that is involved through undertaking systematic scientific methods to discover new facts or acquire new information required to solve a specific problem [4,5].

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH COLLABORATION

Katz and Martin defined collaborative research as to when more than one researcher work together for the aim of achieving a common goal of the production of new scientific knowledge [6]. Collaborative research, more especially an international one, is necessary for global health as a collaborative effort is required for

achieving the advancement of global health. In international collaborative research, there are collective social relations and potential roles for the collaborators [7]. Generally, there are two forms of international collaborative research: formal and informal research collaboration. Informal research collaboration involves a situation when two or more people from two or more countries decide to conduct research. In formal research collaboration, it is done in a formal setting, involving institutions from two or more countries, and the research group is given a name. International research collaboration can be multidisciplinary, covering different academic fields, or in a single discipline. In the medical discipline, there are research collaborations on cancer, heart failure, cardiac arrest, etc. involving trainees and/or professionals, separately or combined. Research collaborations in global health can be between local institutions or individuals, inter-institutional and also intra-institutional (3). Such collaborations are formed around a particular idea or an area of interest that is shared amongst the collaborators or as a response to a proposal [8]; this is because every member of the collaboration has their expertise. Some of the essential factors for successful research collaboration in global health are trust, focus, clear values, equity, benefits, good communication, leadership, timely resolution of conflicts when they arise, clearly defined roles of the collaborators, expectations and putting the key factors to work (1-3). Though

the attributes may be different in such collaborations, the concepts remain constant (3). The aim of every research is for the expansion of knowledge and to add to existing knowledge; therefore, in global health, such collaboration is a good endeavor that should be encouraged always.

ROLE OF COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH IN GLOBAL HEALTH

Over the years, to address complex research questions, researchers have been working in collaboration [5]. Even in global health, some of the tips involved in international research collaboration, as it also applies locally, are choosing a research topic that can be achievable, having collaborators that are enthusiastic and are ready to work on the chosen topic, having trustworthy collaborators, having roles, expectations, deadlines and timelines for the achievement and completion of any task or role, having a set of criteria for authorship which should be developed early in the collaboration [7]. In global health, there is an increase in scientific research between researchers in high-income countries and low and middle-income countries (1).

The roles of conducting collaborative research in global health:

- Easy analysis and tackling of big and ambiguous global research questions (1)
- Research collaboration provides a platform for funding as most agencies that fund research will prefer to fund research that is being

conducted by a group than an individual.

- Increased productivity as very collaborator brings their expertise to the collaboration.
- It facilitates capacity building Like with any group involving human beings of diverse views and behaviour, research collaboration is not without some problems (9). Some of these are group dynamics, some of the collaborators may have access to medical literature than others and funding, cultural, societal and personality differences (9). It is necessary that a research partnership in global health to be successful, the individual partners and collaborators have to be focused to realize the objectives of the project (4).

CONCLUSION

Collaboration is necessary for the advancement of global health. It is recommended that all researchers, especially those in the field of global health, should drive their research focus towards future engagements in international collaborative research projects. An advantage of research collaboration is that it provides a platform for funding as most agencies that fund research will prefer to fund research that is being conducted by a group than an individual.

REFERENCES

1. Kerasidou A. The role of trust in global health research collaborations. *Bioethics*. 2018, 33: 495-501. Doi.10.1111/bioe.12536
2. John CC, Aodo G, Musoke P. Successful global health research partnerships: what makes them work? *Am J Trop Med Hyg*. 2016, 94(1): 5-7. Doi.10.4269/ajtmh.15.0611
3. Larkan F, Uduma O, Lawal SA, Bavel BV. Developing a framework for successful research partnerships in global health. *Globalization and Health*. 2016, 12:17. Doi.10.1186/s12992-016-0152-1
4. Rahman GA. Scientific medical research and publication in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Surgical Research*. 2005, 3-4: 244-250
5. Huang JS. Building research collaboration networks: an interpersonal perspective for research capacity building. *The Journal of Research Administration*. 2014, 45 (2): 89-112
6. Katz JS, Martin BR. What is research collaboration? *Research Policy*. 1997, 26: 1-8
7. Nystom ME, Karlton J, Gare BA. Collaborative and partnership research for the improvement of health and social services: researchers' experiences from 20 projects. *Health Research Policy and System*. 2018, 16:46. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-018-0322-0>
8. Haggett HN, Cusic ME, Greenberg R, Ketterer JM. Twelve tips for conducting collaborative research in medical education. *Medical Teacher*. 2011, 33, 713-718.

9. Murray M, Mubiligi J. An approach to building equitable global health research collaborations. *Annals of Global Health*. 2020. 86(1), 126:1-3. <https://doi.org/10.5334/aogh.3039>