

Research and Development in Zimbabwe's Healthcare Sector Focusing on the Paradigm Shift

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Layout of presentation

1. Introduction
2. Health Research in Zimbabwe
3. Proposed strategies and Innovations

Introduction (1)

Health:

- Product of a complex social and environmental system
- Not just the product of presence or absence of disease or the medical ability to treat and prevent it.

Introduction (2)

- Research a core element to economic and social development
- R&D contributes to innovation, competitiveness and economic growth through the creation and dispersal of new knowledge.
- Countries that appreciate the importance of R&D acknowledge increased investments in R&D

Introduction (3)

- Health requires Research & Development across many fields
- Right kind of research needed now more than ever

Health Research in Zimbabwe (1)

Conducted by:

- MoHCC departments (including National Institute of Health Research)
- Universities mainly UZ, College of Health Sciences, NGOs and private sector

Health Research in Zimbabwe (2)

Main types of Research being conducted:

- Clinical
- Epidemiological
- Basic

Health Research in Zimbabwe (3)

Health Research Skills:

- Shortage of health research skills
- Most health researchers trained abroad
- Not generating enough numbers of health researchers at PhD level in local learning Institutions.
- Challenge of health skills flight (constantly training)

Health Research in Zimbabwe (4)

Health Research infrastructure:

- Handful of Institutions have state of the art equipment and laboratories to conduct high tech research.
- Most are not up to scratch and a turn off for researchers trained abroad

Health Research in Zimbabwe (5)

Regulation:

- Research Council of Zimbabwe
- Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe
- Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe
- National Bio Authority of Zimbabwe
- Health Professions Council
- Various Acts and Statutory Instruments

Health Research in Zimbabwe (6)

Funding:

- Meaningful health research and innovation dependent on availability of adequate funds.
- Currently, no dedicated funding mechanism for supporting health research that addresses needs of the country.
- Most health research is funded by external donors who have may have own agendas.

Health Research in Zimbabwe (7)

Health Research Priorities:

- 1995 Health research priorities – set in Nyanga
- Broad Health Research Priorities from the National Consultative meeting on Health Research and Development - September 2012.
- Broad Health Research Agenda/3DE Programme – April 2016
- Programme specific health research priorities e.g. HIV/AIDS.

Proposed strategies and Innovations (1)

Need:

- Research to guide health system reforms.
- Operational research to help give existing interventions a greater impact.
- Research to persuade the funders that investments in health must continue as one of best proven routes to a stable and prosperous global society.

Proposed strategies and Innovations (2)

Holistic approach is critical:

- The Private sector - mainly driven on profit making, which is the reason for their existence.
- Advocate for the Private sector participation in research efforts and make them aware of the benefits of research.

Proposed strategies and Innovations (3)

Holistic approach is critical (*cont'd*):

- Collaboration between public and private sectors should facilitate and promote research that focuses on local themes.
- Government should offer Private Sector different types of incentives e.g. tax incentives or proceeds from commercialization of research.

Proposed strategies and Innovations (4)

Increased Research Funding:

- Health research should not be considered a drain on resources but rather a producer of economic gains.
- Research funding often driven by vertical lines and getting funding to collaborate across sectors and disciplines is a major challenge.
- Funding for research and control of particular diseases is available and often fairly accessible but funding to develop health systems is less easy to come by.

Proposed strategies and Innovations (5)

Increased Research Funding (*cont'*):

- Need to convince government to allocate at least 2% of the annual MoHCC budget to research.
- Funders of research and innovation and international development agencies should be convinced to invest at least 5% of development budgets in health research.

Proposed strategies and Innovations (6)

Country-led research strategies:

- Research priorities have often been defined by donors.
- The national health research agenda must be determined by national and regional agendas and priorities. (*Work in progress*).
- Research agenda that focuses on the needs of the local population (context specific research)

Proposed strategies and Innovations (7)

Country-led research strategies (*cont'd*):

- Develop a national health research strategy
- Government should support local research institutions and develop their personnel's capacity to to undertake, understand, translate and interpret research.
- Research Institute should set the national health research agenda and coordinate research efforts

Proposed strategies and Innovations (8)

Moving intersectorality:

- Improve dialogue between different government agencies (e.g. health, finance and agriculture) on common concerns, as well as between policy-makers, research leaders and civil society organizations.
- Empower of civil society and community to participate in the research process, and in making key decisions to do with research and investment.

Proposed strategies and Innovations (9)

Strengthened Systems:

- Strengthened innovation for health – not only in the product R&D chain but also in:
 - developing systems
 - strategies and solutions to address issues
e.g. gender equality, patient safety and health communications/education.

Proposed strategies and Innovations (10)

Strengthened Systems *(cont'd)*:

- New ideas in convergence centres linking research institutions, universities, start-up companies and venture capital, and the strengthening of e-health initiatives.

Proposed strategies and Innovations (11)

Translation of research findings:

- Researchers to improve their translation of research results into understood language for policy-makers to use effectively for decisions on health policy.

We all should have the mind set that research is an investment and not a drain on resources.

Thank you