

RESEARCH PRIORITIES IN HEALTH

A) Research in relation to Health Service Delivery

1. Standards, Access & Equity of Health Services Delivery

- a. The quality of reproductive health services in the country.
- b. Standards of competence shown in brief out-patient consultations in both government and private sector
- c. Essential and other common drugs
 - i. Their availability
 - ii. Prescribing patterns
 - iii. Cost effectiveness
- d. The effectiveness of interventions to minimize factors leading to inequities of access of services.
- e. Access to emergency obstetric care services in different geographic settings.
- f. Ways of improving the quality and timeliness of the Annual Health Bulletin (also means of including private sector data)

2. Empowerment of Allied Health Workers on Elderly Care

- a. Empowerment of existing health care workers in primary/ tertiary care to fill in the gap for elderly care.

3. Health System Research in relation to

- a. Pattern of treatment seeking behaviour and utilization of health care
- b. Factors contributing to seeking Ante-Natal Care services in the private sector
- c. Testing of interventions to improve treatment seeking behaviour
- d. Validity of indicators used in reproductive health

4. Long term treatment, patient care and referral records

- a. Effectiveness of introducing different medical record systems for use by health care providers in private and public sector.
- b. Cost effectiveness of different Non-Communicable Diseases prevention and treatment strategies.

5. Home Care

- a. Assessment of home care provider for disabled and elderly in reference to different caregivers.
- b. Burden of care of disabled; including children with special needs and attitudes towards such children and patients.

6. National disasters (such as war and Tsunami)

- a. Eliciting the experience learned through the disasters by different research groups to develop a data base for service group.

7. Screening of population

- a. Burden of disease in the community
- b. Health beliefs, perceived health needs in identified communities.

8. Risk factors

- a. Awareness of public regarding risks of diseases
- b. Behavioural risk factors for non-communicable diseases among children and pregnant women
- c. Development and evaluation of intervention packages for behavioural modification for risk factors identified above.

9. Laboratory services

- a. Standards, access, equity, quality
- b. Accreditation of laboratory services

10. Methodologies for routine data collection

- a. Methodologies for collection of routine data on NCDs including Mental Health Services (prevalence/ patterns / burden)
- b. Setting up a surveillance systems for such diseases

11. Health financing

- a. Expenditure on health in public and private sector
- b. Potential and feasibility of social insurance financing
- c. Disease specific health care costing

B) Research in relation to causes of mortality & morbidity and needs for improvement of wellbeing

1. Cardio Vascular Diseases (CVD)

e.g. Coronary Artery Disease (CAD), Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD)

- a. Causes of CAD in the young
- b. Prognosis of CAD in Sri Lanka and how to assess the improvement in the prognosis

2. Strokes

- a. Prevalence and extent of control of risk factors for stroke
- b. Extent of provision of facilities available for stroke rehabilitation

3. Suicide and poisoning

- a. Strategies to reduce the suicide rates

4. Substance dependence

- a. Interventions on how to improve service provision to the target groups

5. Malignancies

- a. Palliative care, drugs used for pain relief, support services and domiciliary terminal care
- b. Etiological factors in the Sri Lankan context

6. Reproductive Health

- a. Long term psychological impact of induced abortion
- b. Issues of the elderly gravida
- c. Epidemiological studies on
 - i. Obstetric and gynaecological morbidity among woman of reproductive age group
 - ii. Morbidity among women in the post menopausal period
 - iii. New-born and per-natal morbidity and mortality studies including post mortem studies
 - iv. Morbidity associated with contraceptive use
- d. Subfertility

7. Diabetes

- a. Developing behavioural packages for prevention
- b. Cost effectiveness in developing training packages for health care workers for care of diabetics

8. Epilepsy

- a. Study the prescription pattern of anticonvulsants

9. Injuries

- a. Burden of injuries (non-accidental or accidental)
- b. Identification of risk factors
- c. Testing interventions
- d. Estimating the social cost of the injuries
- e. Association with life skills

10. Chronic Liver Disease

- a. Fatty liver linked to metabolic syndrome management and prevention

11. Mental Health

- a. To develop and evaluate mechanisms to coordinate and integrate mental health work carried out by NGOs with MOH activities.
- b. The work being done by NGOs and how it can complement and supplement what the ministry is doing
- c. Determining environmental factors which influence mental health and programmes to optimize factors that promote mental health

12. Communicable Diseases

- a. Communicable diseases as a health issue among prisoners
- b. Study of ethical and social issues in getting consent from HIV/STD patients for investigation
- c. Alternative strategies for HIV prevention and control

13. Obstructive Airway diseases

- a. Quality of care
- b. Location of care
- c. Factors leading to increase in mortality and morbidity
- d. Etiology of childhood asthma

14. Renal Disorders

- a. North Central province specific disease (causes/ risk factors)
- b. Gaps to be identified

15. Healthy Life Styles

Aimed at

- a. Reduction of smoking and alcohol use
- b. Increasing physical activity among sedentary groups
- c. Change in dietary habits among relevant groups (individuals, family and community)
- d. Strategies to counter advertisement/ marketing approaches (direct or indirect) to prevent unhealthy lifestyle

16. Ayurvedic Medicine

- a. Research in relation to Phytotherapy, Phytomedicines and traditional Ayurvedic Therapies in:
 - i. Areas in which allopathic interventions are weakest
 - ii. Areas where there may be economic and social benefits
 - iii. Methodologies in relation to the introduction of Phytotherapy and the use of Phytomedicines in medical curricula (European model)
 - iv. Research in the quality assessment of factory produced herbal preparations in the country (local and imported)

17. Nutrition

- a. Adolescent, health and nutrition
- b. Micronutrients Bioavailability and interaction in local diets
 - i. Effects of regular or long term use of nutraceuticals on health of the children
 - ii. Control mechanism or guidelines
- c. Pesticides in food
- d. Effect of micronutrient deficiencies

- e. How the geochemical changes affect food composition (due to heavy use of agricultural chemicals and pesticides)
 - i. Etiology of low birth weight (e.g., service availability, nutrition status of pregnant women)
 - ii. Follow up study of cohort of children with different birth weights to determine association with the pattern of nutritional status
 - iii. Determinants of poor pregnancy outcome (abortion, LBW)
- f. Nutritional problems among children and adolescents and causative factors
- g. Effects of iodisation on thyroid disease

C) Research in relation to individual, family or community level determinants of disease/health

- 1. Changes in Immunization schedule in relation to risk vs Need**
- 2. Primary prevention of NCD**
 - a. Different levels of prevention (individual, family and community)
 - b. How to improve the generic ability of Family Health Workers (PHMM) to deliver family interventions to address many of the conditions, causes and determinants of the above (Several of the strategies required to modify the various risk factors can be delivered 'in combination' at the level of the family i.e. Family Assessment)
- 3. Testing community level measures to address primary determinants of health.**
- 4. Women's and children's health**
 - a. Social effects of domestic violence and poverty among special groups (migrant workers, urban poor, adolescent, school dropouts, mothers in postpartum period etc.) with respect to marginalization, discrimination, social integration.
- 5. Physical and mental child development and child rearing practices**

D) Research in relation to policy/ national level determinants

1. Determinants of putting research into practice
2. Incorporating a Health Impact Assessment to policy making and planning
3. Policy on genetically modified foods
4. Policy on nutraceuticals
5. Policy on NGOs in health

Research Priorities in Oral Health

1. Healthy System Research
2. Disease burdens
3. Treatment options and cost effectiveness

Oral Health Services

- Effectiveness of school dental health services
- Effectiveness – Community dental services
- New interventions to improve quality of dental services
- Development of an information system on oral health services
- KAP studies – on primary healthcare staff
- Cost effectiveness of oral health care delivery system
- Quality of oral healthcare
- Work studies for manpower planning
- Development of referral system

Early Childhood Caries

- Epidemiology
- Identification tools
- Dental fear and place of use of counselling
- Development and effectiveness of prevention/ treatment interventions

Craniofacial Anomalies

- Epidemiology
- Genetics in CF anomalies
- Impact
- Treatment modalities/ protocols

Dental and Maxillo Facial Trauma

- Epidemiology
- Treatment modalities

Oral Cancer and potentially malignant Disorders (PMDs)

- Epidemiology
- Genetics in oral cancer
- Development of diagnostic tools
- Management protocols
- GIS
- Quality of life

Dental Fluorosis

- Epidemiology
- Psychological impact
- Sustainability of the treatment modalities
- Cost effectiveness of the treatment modalities