

Establishing Health Systems Financing Research Priorities in Developing Countries using a Participatory Methodology

Ranson et al. (2010)

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For which topic were research priorities identified?

health system financing

In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

international

Why was it conducted at all?

While it is clear that there is an urgent need for a more focused research agenda to address the specific questions facing policy makers in developing countries, donor funding for health systems financing (HSF) research has been often poorly aligned with national priorities. Some previous global priority setting exercises have identified health-financing issues. For example, The Ad Hoc Committee on Health Research Relating to Future Intervention Options included among its list of priorities for research on health policies and health systems setting priorities for the allocation of health resources and the mix of public and private health service provision and financing (Ad Hoc Committee on Health Research Relating to Future Intervention Options, 1996, p. 88). One of the twelve research priorities identified by the Task Force on Health Systems Research as important for achieving the Millennium Development Goals was community-based financing and national health insurance (Task Force on Health Systems Research, 2004, p. 998). However, these exercises have generally been top-down, involving a limited number of technical experts, and have failed to consider the full range HSF issues.

What was the objective?

to generate consensus about a core set of research issues that urgently require attention in order to facilitate policy development

What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 10 research questions

How long did the research prioritization take?

May 2007 - May 2008

Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

interview; workshop

How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: key informant interviews: participants were asked for their thoughts on policy concerns and research priorities in three thematic areas, resulting in 19 priority research questions. Step 2: overview of relevant systematic reviews. Step 3: workshop: in advance participants were provided with draft paper based on key-informant interviews and overview of reviews and presented with (unranked) list of emerging priority research questions, at workshop participants discussed and refined list of priority research questions, decided on criteria to be used in ranking research questions, ranked research questions and discussed in some detail the kinds of research that could best address the four questions that ranked highest

Which stakeholders took part?

Policymakers, researchers, community and civil society representatives. Interviews: across 24 low- and middle-income countries in 4 regions. Workshop: 12 participants: 6 from institutions, 4 from universities, 4 from international organizations (the world bank and who) and 1 from government and 3 from private or non-profit research institutions.

How were stakeholders recruited?

The experts for the workshop were purposively selected to represent a diverse group of countries/regions and research interests.

Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders were mere participants of the research prioritization process; they were not actively involved in the process.