

Priorities for Research into Human Resources for Health in Low- And Middle-Income Countries

Ranson et al. (2010)

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For which topic were research priorities identified?

human resources for health

In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

international

Why was it conducted at all?

Since human resources account for approximately 70% of recurrent expenditure in most health systems, inadequate human resource training, regulation, distribution and management can have enormous implications. Many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, suffer from both a shortage of healthcare providers and poor distribution of providers within the country. These problems are exacerbated by deficiencies in skill mixes and poor physical and managerial infrastructure. Moreover, the failure of health system reforms has been linked to the failure to strengthen policy, planning and management of human resources for health (HRH) early in the process. In a recent overview of systematic reviews, significant gaps were found in knowledge about the way training, regulatory, financial and organizational mechanisms affect the supply, distribution and performance of healthcare workers. Furthermore, the data available tend to come from high-income settings and may not apply to LMICs.

What was the objective?

to identify the human resources for health policy concerns and research priorities of key stakeholders in low- and middle-income countries, to assess the extent to which existing HRH research addresses these concerns and priorities, and to develop a prioritized list of core research questions requiring immediate attention to facilitate policy development and implementation

What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 22 research questions

How long did the research prioritization take?

May 2007 - April 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 research priorities. Step 2: systematic literature review. Step 3: workshop: before workshop participants were given unranked list of emerging priority research questions and overview of literature review, at workshop participants discussed list of research questions, decided on nature and relative weighting of criteria for ranking research questions and ranked the research questions using three criteria

Which stakeholders took part?

Policymakers, researchers, community and civil society representatives, representatives of international organizations. Interviews: across 24 low- and middle-income countries in 4 regions. Workshop: 15 participants: 10 researchers, 1 health policymaker, 4 others.

How were stakeholders recruited?

No information provided.

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.