

The Wellcome Trust
Social, Ethics and Public Policy Research on Biomedical Science

Research Summary

- Title:** Collaborative Partnership and Social Value – Exploring the practical aspects of ethical principles in Kenya
- Investigator/s:** Dr. M English, 1,2
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- Type of grant:** Project Grant
- Time period (in months):** 15 months
- Start date:** November 1st 2004

Background (*100-150 words*)

The ethics of research undertaken in low income countries, especially when funded and executed in part or whole by partners from high income countries, have attracted considerable attention in recent years. The consequences of the research findings for the host society and in particular the health system, are now actively considered within the ethical framework of benefits. When judging benefits two principles, collaborative partnership and social value, are proposed as yardsticks. In Kenya we have observed gaps between research (and researchers) and health policy, wider gaps between policy and practice and considerable variation in the impact that research has on health policy makers. The limited ability to translate research into practice threatens the social value of research and may suggest failings in the collaborative partnership.

Aims (*50-80 words*)

Research is expected to benefit the wider population by influencing health policy and health care practice. Understanding how research affects policy and practice may help to address barriers that prevent this process of translation and so improve the benefits of research. We aim to describe the research-to-policy-to-practice pathway in health in Kenya and explore the reasons for successes and failures in this process

Methodology (*150-200 words*)

1) Mapping the research policy interface.

A detailed review of the structure and organisation of the Kenyan Ministry of Health, the presence and focus of non-governmental actors in research and health policy development will be undertaken. Key-informant interviews will be used as the main source of data collection with additional examination of documented terms of reference and administrative structures where available. This study will try to describe the official and informal linkages that exist as well as the mechanisms present for dissemination of research results and policy down to the district level.

2) Research, policy and practice interactions.

A number of strategies will be used to describe the opportunities for research to affect policy and practice:

- a) Staff identified for and agreeing to inclusion will be invited to take part in diary studies aiming to document the number of occasions in which they are exposed to research findings, the duration of this exposure, the topic of research and the nature of the group / source providing information (including indirect sources such as news media).
- b) Staff involved in a) above and additional colleagues will be asked to complete a questionnaire during an interview seeking their views on and experiences of the interactions between the spheres of research, policy and practice

3) The research-policy-practice pathway.

Three strategies will be used to explore this process. First a review of the policy output related to child health of the Ministry of Health during the period 2001 – 2004 will be undertaken. Second, a detailed description of the history of tracer interventions will be specifically described to provide insight into the timescale and complexity of this process and the degree to which policy penetrates into health care practice.

Main research questions (80-120 words)

- i. What is the environment in which health policy decisions are made, what are the linkages and information flow between research institutions, the Ministry of Health, international partners (e.g. WHO and bilateral agencies) and advocacy groups (including NGO implementation partners and national commercial interests).
- ii. What is the perceived value, the perceived credibility and the actual exposure to research observed among policy makers, those charged with implementing policy at different levels of the health system, and those charged with funding health policy change.
- iii. What influences the translation of research findings into policy and practice in Kenya.

Applications of research results (30-50 words)

We hope the results will provide the basis for a framework of understanding of how research results are taken up into policy and practice. Such a framework would allow specific targeting or interventions to improve this process potentially resulting in added social value for Kenya's people from research conducted in Kenya.

Further information

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