

Research for Health and Sustainable Development

Twenty years after the original summit, the world reconvened in Brazil for the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Health and research are the basis for development, however these issues did not figure prominently in the agenda for Rio. The M8 Alliance recognizes that research for health must play an essential part in the development agenda.

The World Health Summit 2012 – under the theme “Research for Health and Sustainable Development” – will focus on issues and possible solutions for non-communicable diseases and conditions of global concern. The modern unhealthy lifestyle is a main cause of the new epidemics, like obesity, diabetes and mental illness. Sustainable solutions for healthcare systems to meet these challenges as well as a greater awareness of the global economic risks and human suffering related to the epidemiologic transition are urgently required.

Diseases of Modern Environments

- The Obesity Challenge
- Governance for a Healthy Planet
- Vaccines for Neglected Diseases

In the past years, life expectancy has continued to rise steadily. Longer life expectancy as well as the unhealthy lifestyles resulted in the transition of global predominance of non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, obesity and mental illness, as both the leading cause of death and disease burden with serious socio-economic consequences.

How do we combat NCDs and their risk factors to enhance sustainable development? What is the way forward in terms of a multisectoral approach to take effective action and how can they be integrated with existing mechanisms?

There has been significant progress in putting those new issues on the global health agenda, but governance for a healthy planet can only be sustainable if neglected diseases as well as future pandemics are also given attention.

Translating Research into Policy

- Research Capacity Building
- Public Health: Global Challenges and Local Solutions
- Health 2020

Research and health are the basis for all development. Millions of dollars are spent on health innovations that fail to live up to their promise. Public health interventions are often implemented without consideration of the issues of delivery and access. Research capacities for the burning medical questions and health issues of our time must be built without delay. What policy and infrastructure is required to support research and development, innovation and partnerships for the current global health-care needs?

How can we reorganize and better support the system to increase translational efficiency between public and private sections at a nation-state, regional and global level? How can in return research and evidence better inform policies, strategies and interventions for global health, including health systems development and the MDGs? How can Health Impact Assessment help us to make health a routine part in all plans, policies and programs?

Health and Economy

- Behavioural Economics
- Where Will the New Drugs Come from?
- Bringing Medicines to Low-Income Markets

The vital interlinking relationship between health and economy and its interactions must not be underestimated. This has been especially apparent in the global financial crisis during the past few years leading to ripple effects on health and social spending. Evidence confirmed that falling economy predicted worse health. Sustaining investment and financing in health and social structures is therefore an essential priority to maintain stability and security as well as improve their performance. What mechanisms do we need that identify early warning signs and help mitigate the negative impact of economic downturns?

Research and development has seen a shift from the private sector to the academic community. How can we reorganize the academic system to increase translational efficiency between academic medicine, industry and operational actors of the health care system? Effective incentives and regulatory procedures are needed for medical innovations for diseases of global importance. How can we support a shift in focus from “sick care” to healthcare that truly prevents illness and promotes health care?

Educating Health Professionals

- Health Workforce Crisis
- Transformative Education of Health Professionals in the 21st Century
- Global Health Education

Health Workers in well-performing health systems are crucial for global health. However, the health workforce crisis due to an insufficient number of trained health professionals and brain drain as well as a misdistribution continues to pose a challenge worldwide. Although much attention must be devoted to workforce shortages, the quality of the workforce is equally important.

Profound changes are needed to maintain efficient health systems. Changing patterns of health threats in the 21st century, population movements and financial flows require a transformative educational approach of health professionals that are better attuned to the pressing needs for both global awareness and local sensitivity. What is the future of Nursing? What are the future challenges? How can we best align research and education with the community's need?

Information Technology for Health

- Big Data: Data – Information – Decision
- IT for Health-Research
- IT for Health-Care

Information technology is an essential part of health today. The vast amount of data which is produced in health every day creates huge challenges. Data are produced, which are transformed into information which again is translated into decisions.

What are the specifics of this sequence in health-research and in health care? Which role does IT play at the patient bed? How can IT be used at the bench in the laboratory? But IT for health looks different whatever perspective is taken into account: the view from the decision maker in politics is different than the view from the CEO's office in the industry. What is the perspective of the scientist and the one of the civil society? Only by taking all of them into account will the picture of IT for health which we have today be complete.