



Developing an international multidisciplinary research collaboration: Lessons learned

Tuesday, October 30, 2012: 2:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Josephine Wilson, DDS, PhD, Substance Abuse Resources and Disability Issues Program, Boonshoft School of Medicine, Wright State University, Dayton, OH

Rosemary Eustace, PhD, CFLE, PHCNS-BC, RN, College of Nursing and Health, Wright State University, Dayton, OH

Khadija Yahya-Malima, PhD, BSN, RN, School of Nursing, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Jo Ann Ford, MA, CCDC III, Sardi, Wright State University, Dayton, OH

Tumaini Nyamhanga, PhD, BSN, School of Public Health, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Columba Mbekenga, PhD, BSN, RN, School of Nursing, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Abstract

Background. Improving global health through international research collaboration is increasingly becoming a common pathway of transferring knowledge across cultures. Developing such collaborations, however, is challenging. This presentation will discuss the ongoing process, challenges, and lessons learned for developing a multidisciplinary HIV/AIDS research partnership between American and Tanzanian universities.

Process of Partnership. To date, HIV prevention programs in Tanzania have not been entirely successful, and numerous investigators have called for multidisciplinary models. For this reason, an investigator from the Wright State University (WSU) College of Nursing partnered with researchers from WSU's school of medicine and schools of nursing and public health at the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) in Tanzania. Initially, two WSU investigators travelled to Tanzania in June 2011 to confer with MUHAS investigators to get support for developing a collaborative research project. The meeting resulted in a WSU-funded needs-assessment project to be conducted in Tanzania in December 2011.

Observations and Conclusions. Taking a project to an international level involves practical considerations. Partnership expectations on data sharing and dissemination, leadership and authorship should be made explicit. Understanding all the steps for research approval and the ethical boards involved is also essential. Budgetary issues should be anticipated, as international research is expensive. For example, costs for the local investigators must be covered in the budget because data collection is best accomplished by local researchers, who have no local funding. Other potential barriers such as power outages, unreliable internet access, language differences, and cultural insensitivity should be considered.