

*executive committee of
the directing council*



PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Topic 19: PLANNING FOR PAHO RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Pan American Health Organization, Regional Office of the World Health Organization for the Americas, has a unique opportunity to promote and assist in the development of international medical research in the Western Hemisphere. Research programs are fully consonant with the basic objectives of the Organization. Article 1 of the PAHO Constitution states, "The fundamental purposes of the Pan American Health Organization shall be to promote and coordinate efforts of the countries of the Western Hemisphere to combat disease, lengthen life, and promote the physical and mental health of the people."

Because of the unprecedented length of the association between the PAHO and the Health Ministries of this Hemisphere--almost 60 years of formal relationship--the Governments have come to trust the Organization as a source of cooperation and reciprocal assistance, which has had a significant and beneficial outcome in the improvement of health within the Continent and is fundamental to the development of an international medical research program in the Americas.

In recognition of the purposes of the Organization and of the growing importance of research as an essential component of a comprehensive program for health, the PAHO proposes to expand its program for medical research and research training in the Americas. This program will be related to the distinctive needs and opportunities for research existing within the Member Countries and will especially emphasize research activities requiring coordinated effort by more than one country and research projects that will eventually permit a wider application of existing knowledge to the special problems of each country. The recommendations of the WHO Advisory Committee on Medical Research, those of the study groups and expert committees of WHO, and the study which PASB expects to start in the very near future will provide guidance for the collaborative development of the PAHO research program along the lines suggested by the opportunities for research and the peculiar needs of this Hemisphere.

Research is not a new activity for the Organization. In one form or another it has been carried on for many years. Under the

aegis of PAHO/WHO, major research programs have been conducted at the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP) in Guatemala, the Pan American Zoonoses Center in Argentina, the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center in Brazil and by the technical branches of the Organization in collaboration with health authorities of Member Countries. Among the fruits of this research activity are the following:

- 1) Development of INCAPARINA, a vegetable protein mixture which, at exceedingly low cost, provides adequate protein intake for infants and children in areas where milk and meat are unavailable to most families.
- 2) Development of a procedure for using potassium iodate in the iodization of table salt, designed to meet the problem of goiter control under the particular conditions of salt consumption in Latin America.
- 3) Research in foot-and-mouth disease, resulting in the successful adaptation of strains of the virus to a number of laboratory animals.
- 4) Development of a modified live virus vaccine for foot-and-mouth disease, presently in the stage of limited field testing.
- 5) Field studies establishing the value of the cardiolipin tests for the diagnosis of syphilis, which permitted the standardization of simple procedures that are now accepted throughout the world.
- 6) The first large-scale field trials in Latin America of live attenuated poliovirus vaccine, which covered nearly 800,000 persons and demonstrated the practicability of this new approach to the control of poliomyelitis in Latin America.
- 7) A taxonomic study carried out in Guatemala to determine which species of black flies (Simuliidae) were transmitters of onchocerciasis.
- 8) Studies leading to a better understanding of the clinical and laboratory relationships involved in TPI tests for syphilis, and to the establishment of criteria for conducting the test and evaluating results.

With the expanded program of the Organization, with greater financial support available, and with ever increasing need to bring the techniques, tools, and benefits of research to bear upon the multitude of health problems of individual nations, groups of nations, and the Region, it is expected that the Organization will increase its research activities.

At the same time, the research aspects of the various programs and centers will continue to progress along lines which are indicated by a simple listing of a few of the present activities:

1. Research at INCAP on protein malnutrition and its prevention, assessment of nutritional status, nutritional requirements, the inter-

relationship of acute infections and nutritional status, and diet and its effect on chronic diseases.

2. Research at the Pan American Zoonoses Center on the preparation and testing of the Sterne anthrax vaccine, a new technique for carrying out the Ascoli precipitation test for anthrax, improved diagnostic procedures for hydatid disease, the relationship between animal reservoirs of salmonella and infant diarrheas, serological surveys of Q fever in animals and man, and studies on the epizootiology and epidemiology of and control measures against, leptospirosis.

3. Current research activities of the malaria eradication program which include:

a) Insecticide Testing--an outgrowth of the field studies on the possible usefulness of Malathion and Baytex against DDT-resistant mosquitoes in El Salvador. The study comprises two field projects, one in El Salvador and one in Bolivia. The El Salvador project consists of studying the duration of the residual effects of insecticides on a wide variety of surfaces, against both DDT-resistant and DDT-susceptible Anopheles albimanus; in Bolivia the experiments are being conducted with two other important species, A. pseudopunctipennis and A. albitarsis. The advantages of having an insecticide testing team organized, trained, and ready to evaluate promising new insecticides in field trials, and the value of determining the optimum cycles and dosages of presently available insecticides in view of the considerable discussion of possible economies in their use, led to the development of this research project.

b) Study of the obstacles that have been encountered in malaria eradication and development of epidemiological methods to assess the extent of the problem in each country, determine its cause, and train national and international personnel in these investigative methods.

An important recent advance that will strengthen the research activities of the Organization was the agreement announced jointly on December 16, 1960, by the Pan American Health Organization and the United States Public Health Service. The agreement issued as a "statement of arrangements" between the two organizations focused on three main points: (1) staff collaboration between the two organizations, (2) further development of PAHO research activities, and (3) definition of forms of USPHS aid that may be applied to PAHO research activities. The USPHS will consider grant proposals from investigators who may wish to participate in research programs coordinated by the Organization and grant applications for support of research to be conducted directly by the staff of the Organization (See Annex I).

In line with the spirit of this agreement the Organization, in 1960, encouraged the Bureau of Public Health Economics of the University of Michigan to apply for a research grant from the National Institutes of Health of the United States Public Health Service for a study of the

economic implications of malaria eradication in the Americas, and pledged to make a supplementary contribution equal to 10 per cent of the amount granted by the NIH. Consequently, when a grant of US\$95,000 was made by the NIH for a three-year study of the problem, the Pan American Health Organization provided US\$9,500. In addition to its grant, the Pan American Health Organization is to advise on planning the field work and selecting the areas to be investigated.

Early in 1961, the Organization received from the USPHS a research grant that will make it possible to plan and coordinate regional epidemiological studies in which comparable mortality statistics for selected cities of the Americas will be developed as the first step in the geographical study of diseases.

A Planning Conference for this epidemiological study was held on 1-4 May 1961 and was attended by several members of the staff of WHO Headquarters in order to assure coordination of this program with the WHO research program. After the Conference, meetings of the staff of WHO and PAHO were held for the discussion of WHO research activities in the Region of the Americas in the fields of cancer and cardiovascular diseases.

Notwithstanding the breadth and the importance of the research activities so far undertaken by the Organization, it should be possible to further enhance the advantages of this Hemisphere's alliance by providing the framework for certain types of research which require technical knowledge, physical facilities, and, the administrative cooperation of various groupings of nations.

In this manner the Organization will be able to assist in the development and conduct of research on problems of concern to several nations -- problems of a truly international nature-- the successful solution of which cannot be obtained without international cooperation.

The USPHS has under consideration a proposal for a grant of US\$120,750 to permit PAHO to carry out during the next year the studies necessary to provide the basis for a sound, effective, and productive expansion of its research policy and program. A study will be made of the research programs and activities in the Americas being carried out both by governmental and non-governmental institutions so that data on the research facilities, qualified personnel, and financial support available can be compiled. It will also review the most pressing research needs in terms of problems, manpower, facilities, financial resources, and the possibilities for research in areas where there is likelihood of success for productive work.

The research program of the PAHO will be developed and expanded within the general policies for international medical research established by the WHO and in close collaboration with any research program activities of WHO. This will ensure that the efforts of the two organizations will be fully complementary.

In view of the foregoing, the Executive Committee may wish to consider a resolution along the following lines:

Proposed Resolution

The Executive Committee:

Having considered the report of the Director on Planning for PAHO Research Program and the steps already being taken for the expansion of research in the Region;

Considering that such expansion of research will be of benefit to the health and medical programs throughout the Americas,

RESOLVES

1. To approve the program and policies outlined by the Director, document CE13/16, and to transmit the report to the XIII Meeting of the Directing Council

2. To request the Director to take necessary action for all possible further expansion of the research activities of the Organization for the mutual benefit of the countries of the Region.

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Public Health Service
Washington 25, D. C.

November 8, 1960

Dear Mr. Horwitz:

I am pleased to approve the "Statement of Arrangements Between the Pan American Health Organization and the United States Public Health Service for Research" appended to your letter of October 20. This arrangement, I am sure, will contribute to the development of useful research through the Americas

Sincerely yours,

(signed) L. E. Burney
Surgeon General

Abraham Horwitz, M.D.
Director
Pan American Health Organization
1501 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
Washington 6, D. C.

STATEMENT OF ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE
PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION (PAHO) AND THE
UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (PHS) FOR RESEARCH

The general objective of this statement is the establishment of an understanding between the USPHS and PAHO which will aid the organizations in administering their research activities more effectively in countries of the Americas by:

- A. Outlining ways in which the activities of the USPHS and PAHO relating to research in the Americas, particularly outside the United States, may be made more effective through appropriate collaboration.
- B. Stating the general lines of development of PAHO research activities.
- C. Stating the principles under which NIH research grants might be made directly to responsible investigators in the Americas.

1. Staff Collaboration

The informal staff activities characterizing PHS-PAHO relationships in research will continue. The two organizations will continue to exchange information on plans and actions relevant to their research activities in the Americas.

PAHO is prepared, upon request, to consider provision of advice to PHS on support of research in the Americas, and the USPHS is prepared, upon request, to consider aid to PAHO in developing PAHO's research program.

2. Development of PAHO Research Activities

PAHO is prepared to offer more extensive aid to the development of medical and health research in the Americas through such activities as:

- A. Provision of moderate financial support to research projects and programs;
- B. Conduct of research by the staff of PAHO;
- C. Provision of central professional advice and logistical support for research programs requiring coordinated work by scientists in more than one country;
- D. Aid in the development of scientists, scientific communication and other activities required in connection with research.

3. USPHS Relationship to Developing PAHO Research Activities

The USPHS is willing, upon request, to consider such forms of aid to the development of PAHO research activities as:

- A. Technical advice on research design;
- B. Provision of Research grants to investigators who may wish to participate in research programs coordinated by PAHO;
- C. Provision of research support directly to PAHO for research conducted by PAHO staff, or for central professional services or logistical aid provided by PAHO as part of coordinated research programs. USPHS will not make research grants to PAHO from which PAHO will in turn make grants to investigators.

The terms, conditions, and procedures for aid by USPHS to PAHO will be worked out in the light of the circumstances surrounding specific activities.