



APHCRI Seminar
Canberra, October 20, 2005

Lost in Translation- Contemporary Challenges in Health Research

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Research Policy & Cooperation
Evidence & Information for Policy Cluster
World Health Organization, Geneva.



A key contemporary challenge for health research is to build a **bridge** between **research** and **action** in order to improve practice, policy and public trust

How does research improve health?

- **Better interventions**
- **Internalization by individuals-
changing of behaviours and
empowering people**



Julio Frenk, Mexican Minister of Health



Vietnam confirms a 4th bird-flu death

The Associated Press

HANOI: Vietnam confirmed its fourth death from bird flu in two weeks Thursday as the World Health Organization called the disease a "frightening virus" and urged stronger measures to combat its spread.

Phan Van Tu, chief virologist at the Pasteur Institute in Ho Chi Minh City, said tests had shown that an 18-year-old

woman being treated at a Ho Chi Minh City hospital has also tested positive for the disease, the government said.

Bird flu has killed 24 people in Vietnam and 12 in Thailand in the last year.

Medical experts have long expressed concern that bird flu might mutate and create the world's next influenza pandemic. So far, there has been no concrete evidence of human-to-human transmission of the disease, and most patients

worst case, 40 million to 100 million could die in a bird-flu pandemic.

"Influenza H5N1 is a particularly frightening virus," he said.

"Fortunately, the virus has yet to acquire the ability to spread easily from human to human, but were it to do so, the consequences could be horrific."

He added, "This formidable and frightening picture demands a formidable and bold response."



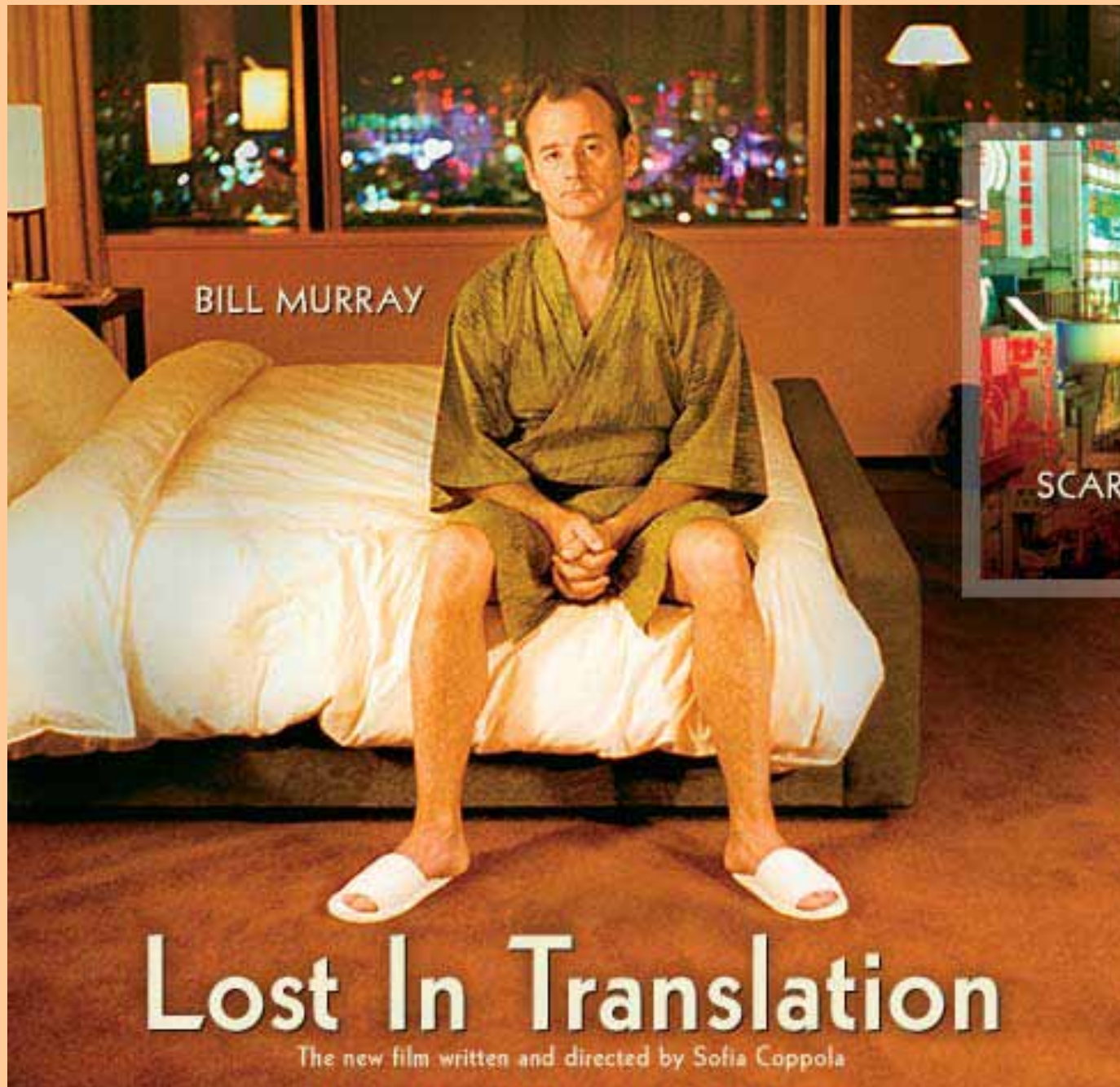
How does research improve health?

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Julio Frenk, Mexican Minister of Health





BILL MURRAY

SCAR

Lost In Translation

The new film written and directed by Sofia Coppola

UN Millennium Development Goals

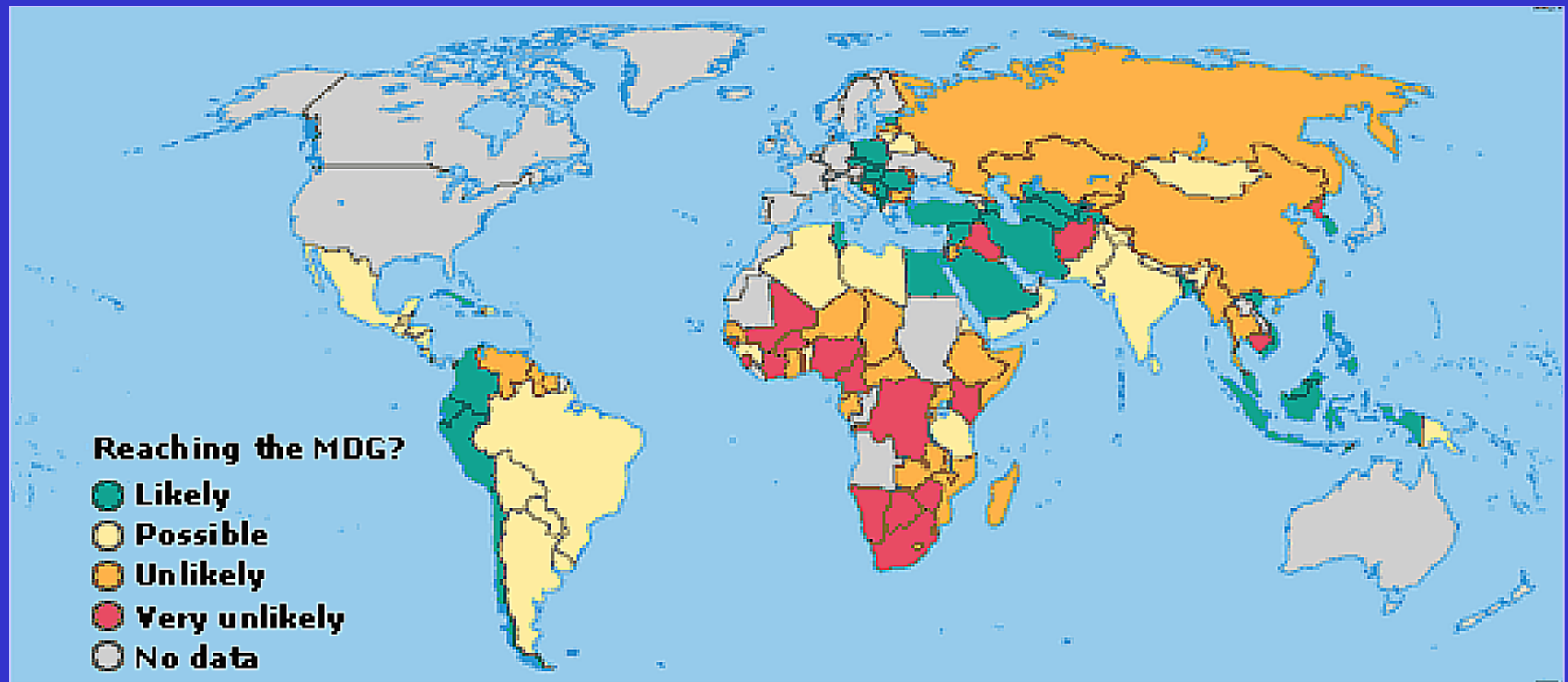
1. Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality & empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat AIDS, malaria, TB & other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development



Prospects of Meeting Millennium Development Goals

Child Mortality

Need : 4% decline per year



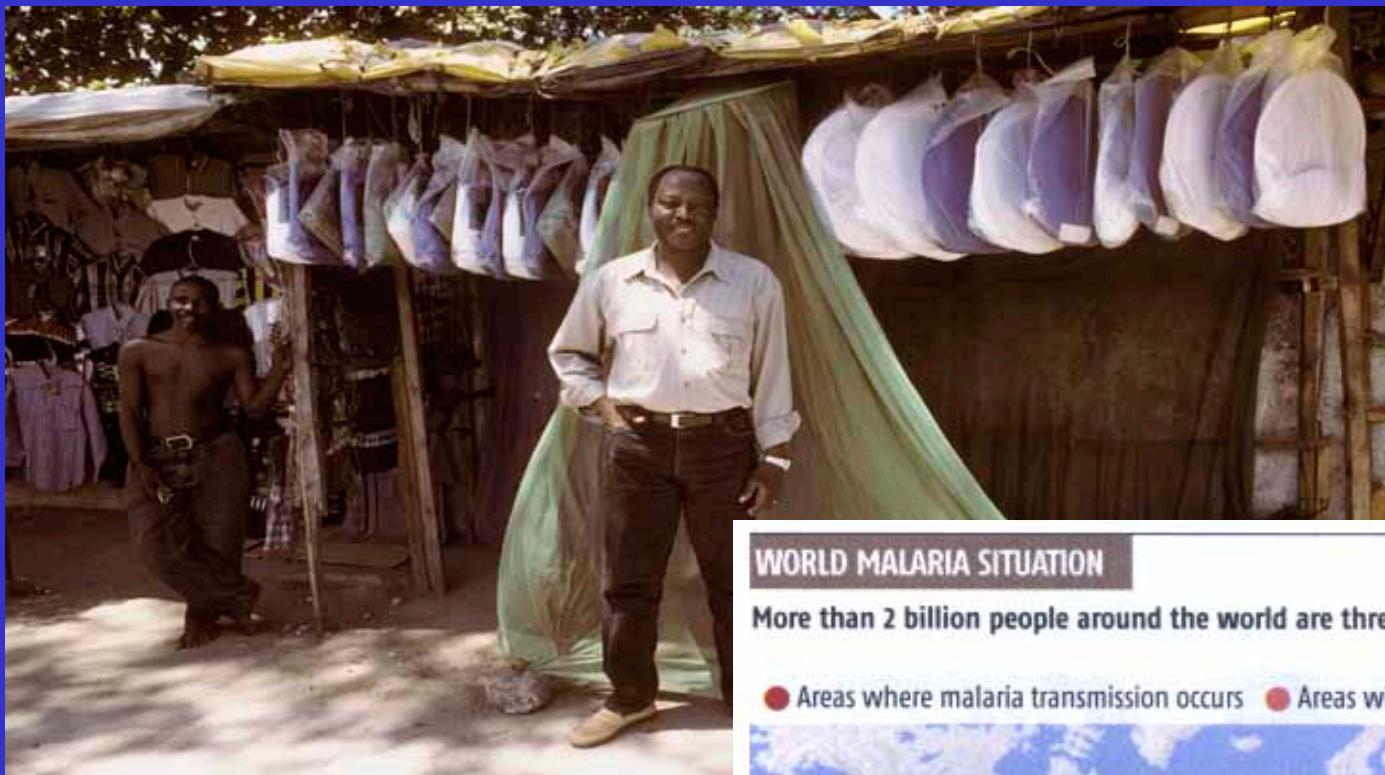
Source: World Bank Group, 2003



**11 million children under-5 yrs old die every year-
90% of them in the developing world**

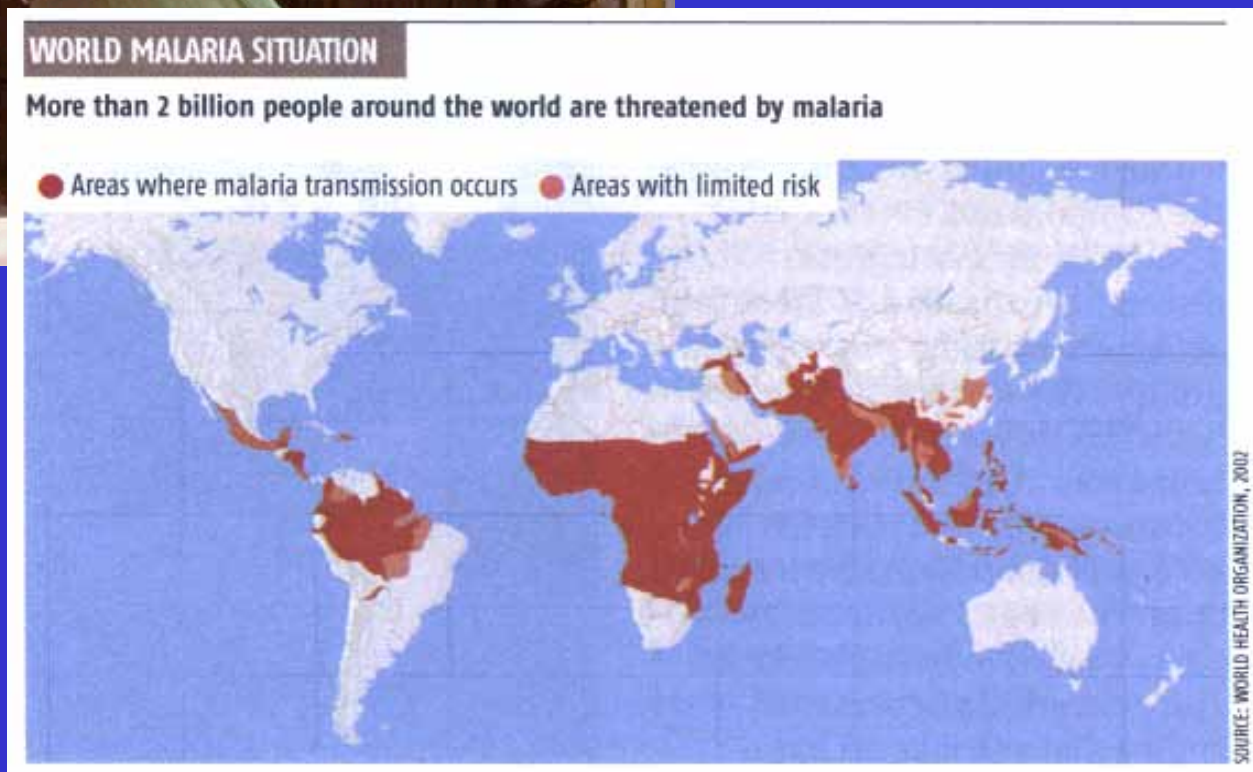


**2/3 of these deaths (7 m) can be prevented by
existing, safe, effective and cheap interventions**

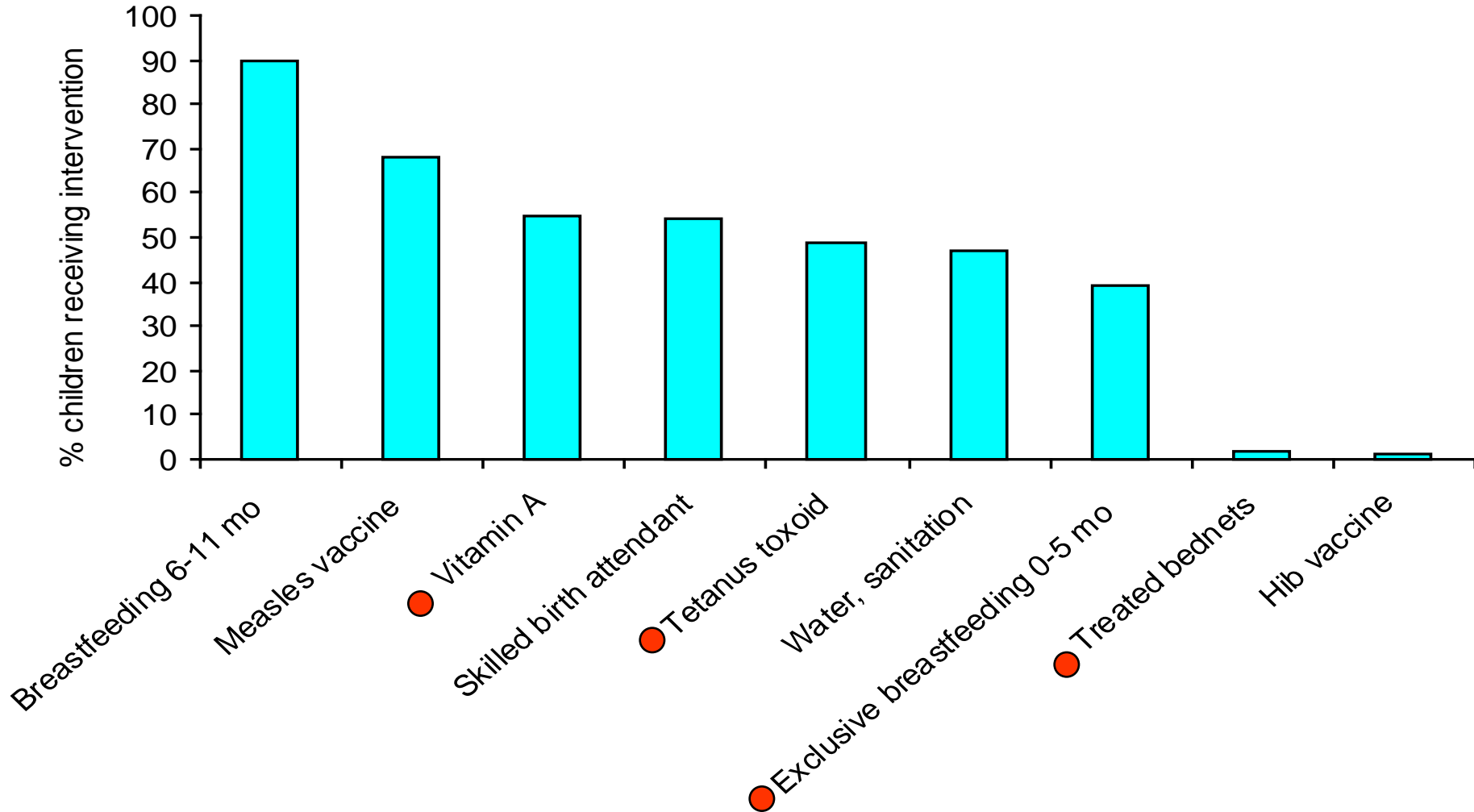


3 m estimated annual deaths from malaria

Only between 2-15% African children are sleeping under bednets (2001)



Child health - current delivery strategies are not working

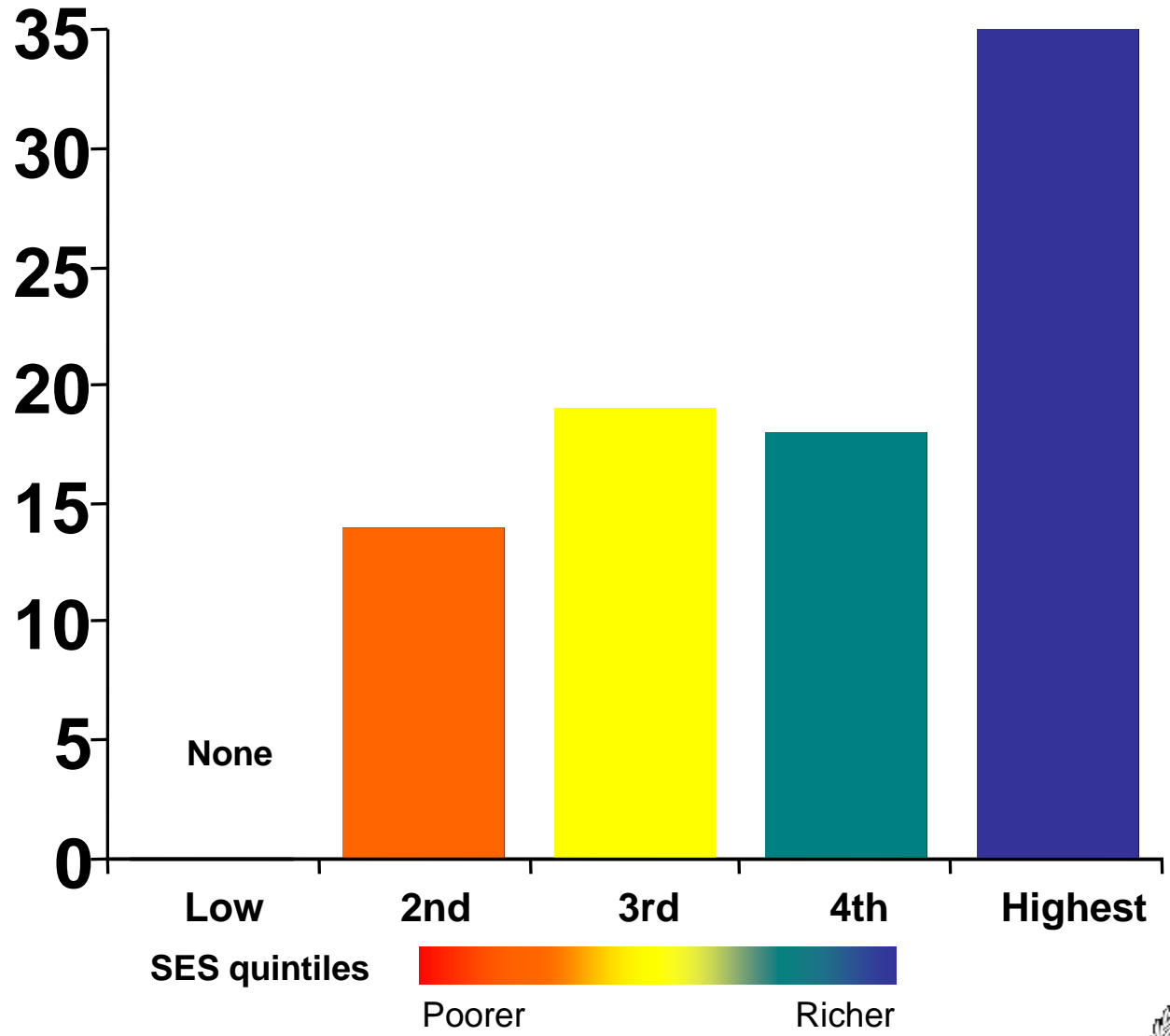


Jones et al, Lancet 2003, 362:65-71



Inequities in access to drugs

% children in rural Tanzania with probable pneumonia who received an appropriate antibiotic, 2000



Source: Inequities among the very poor: health care for children in rural southern Tanzania. Schellenberg et al. THE LANCET • Vol 361 • February 15, 2003



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Julio Frenk, Mexican Minister of Health



"As an organization, we are committed to linking research, policy and practice; stimulating, supporting, coordinating and interpreting state-of-the-art research within the context of current societal and economic realities"



David Nabarro
May, 2002



How to ensure better use of evidence? WHO's current roles

- **Advocacy**
- **Support relevant research**
- **Setting norms and standards and build public trust**
- **Promote uptake of evidence**

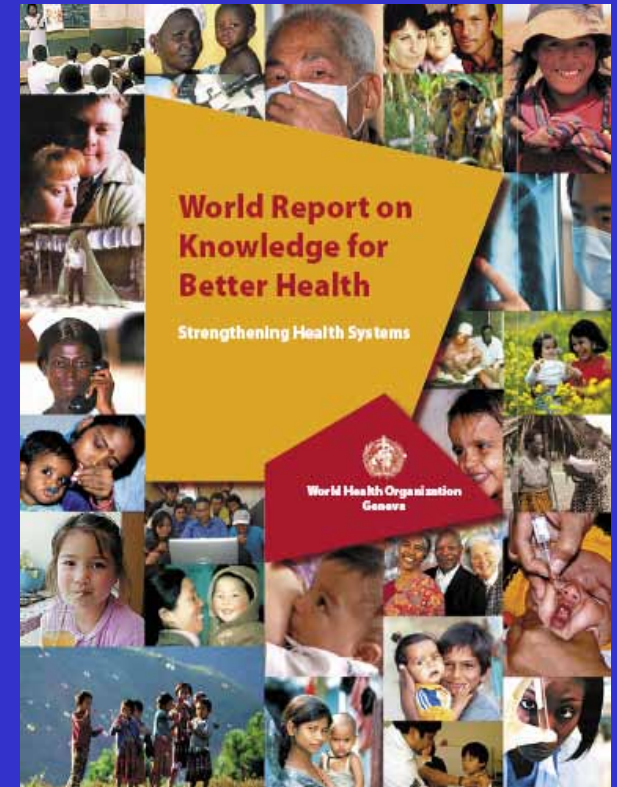


Ministerial Summit on Health Research, Mexico City, November 16-20, 2004



Key Messages from Summit

- More investment in health systems research
- Strengthen public confidence in science
- Translate knowledge into action to improve health



www.who.int/rpc/wr2004



58th World Health Assembly, Geneva, May 16-25, 2005





Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research

- Identifying HSPR priorities
- Improving methodologies
- Better synthesis and dissemination
- Supporting relevant HSP research



How to ensure better use of evidence? WHO's current roles

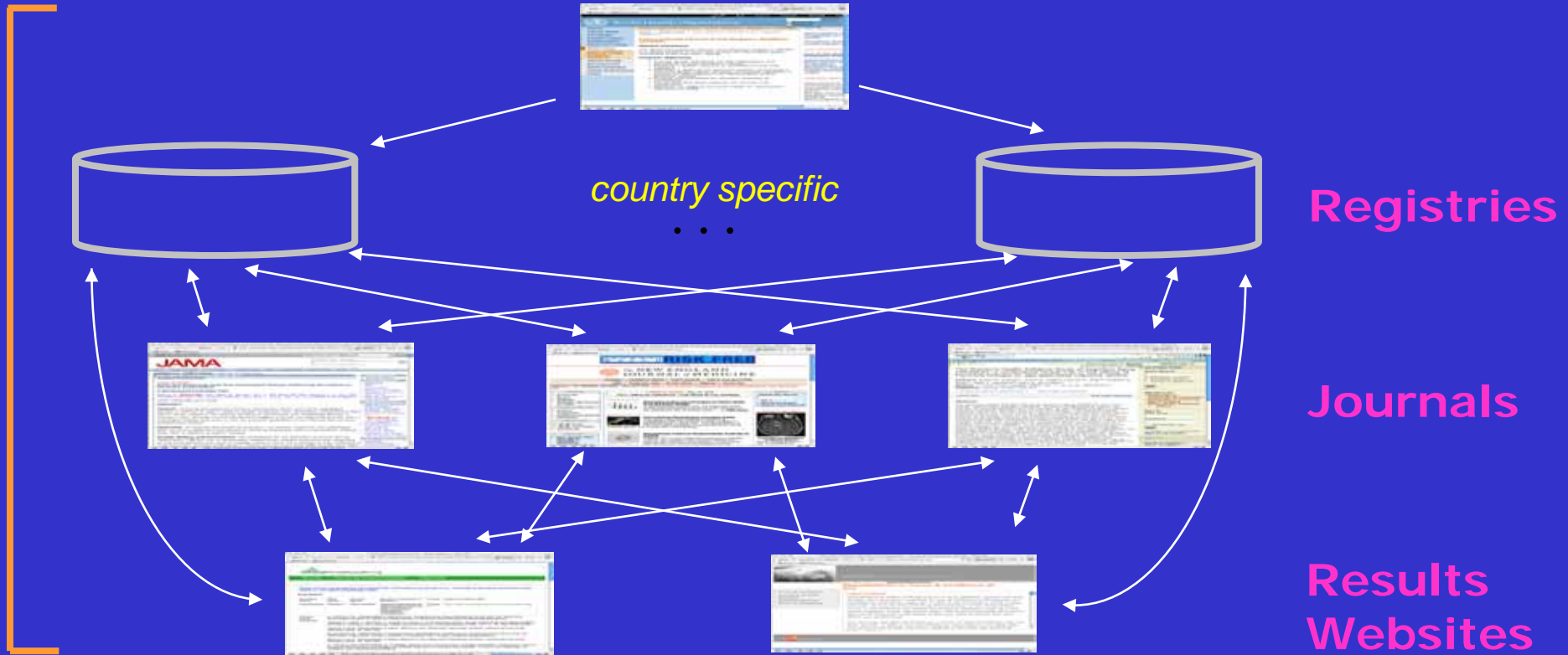
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WHO International Clinical Trials Registry Platform Overview

WHO Search Portal

WHO International Clinical Trials Registry Platform



WHO Registry Platform Specific Aims

- **Establish international norms and standards for trial registration and results disclosure**
- **Establish international certification of registers**
- **Establish unique numbering system**
- **Provide one-stop search portal for registers worldwide**
- **Advocate for compliance**
- **Advise & help build registration capacity as needed**



"Clinical trials remain a major concern for us. South Africa is overwhelmed and our people are exposed to too many trials. Regulation, coordination and better access to information on which trials are going on are essential to protect the people"



Manto Tshabalala Msimang
Minister of Health, South Africa,
World Health Assembly, May 16, 2005



Agence France Presse -- English: Human guinea pigs queue for cash as drug firms rush to India

September 29, 2005 Thursday 2:59 AM GMT

DATELINE: BANGALORE, India Sept 29

Lured by the money being offered by the dozens of global pharmaceutical firms doing clinical trials in India, human guinea pig M. Mahesh, is testing his sixth drug -- this time helping in the search for a cure for asthma. Dressed in chequered green hospital dress and wearing a badge bearing his photograph and a number, Mashesh, a welder, has no inkling at all about the drugs he has allowed doctors to introduce into his body over the past two years. For now he has no regrets.

As Science Lengthens Lives, It Could Widen Inequalities

By Jerome Groopman

BOSTON — My grandmother lived vigorously to the age of 100. She was raised in an impoverished shtetl in czarist Russia, arrived in America the day President William McKinley was shot, lived in a cold-water tenement, sewed garments in a crowded, filthy sweatshop and delivered four children at home.

I always assumed that she carried genes for longevity and a strong constitution. There were some in her family,

MEANWHILE

similarly healthy and long-lived, who inherited those genes, and others, less

The opposite painfully makes the same point. Families with genes that predispose them to serious illness, like the genes for breast cancer or the hyperlipidemia genes for heart attack, are marked by untimely deaths.

We will be faced with the decision of which life-limiting genes and proteins to remedy first. Should we address the most prevalent killer, atherosclerosis, or the maladies that affect younger people, like juvenile diabetes? Will some racial and ethnic groups be given short shrift, since minorities often have unusual genes predisposing them to rarer disorders?

commentary

Is science dangerous?

Does society need protecting from scientific advances? Most emphatically not, so long as scientists themselves and their employers are committed to full disclosure of what they know.

Lewis Wolpert

The idea that knowledge is dangerous is deeply embedded in our culture. Adam and

Divided loyalties

Trust in science is being eroded. How can we restore it?

portrayed as a soulless group, unconcerned with ethical issues.

But is science in fact dangerous, and do scientists have special social responsibilities? It is essential to recognize that reliable science



Reckless medical scans

For a prime example of medical screening that has proliferated beyond reason, consider the alarming case of full-body computed tomography scans to detect cancer, cardiovascular disease and other conditions. Narrowly targeted CT scans aimed at particular organs are undeniably valuable when used to pin down a diagnosis in sick patients. But full-body scans to screen healthy individuals for hidden disease have never been shown to be effective, and now there is evi-

patients to undergo needless further tests. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the American College of Radiology, among other expert groups, oppose full-body scans in people with no disease symptoms.

A study published in May found that radiologists and emergency-room physicians were largely unaware of how much radiation the scans delivered, and now a study by Columbia University researchers highlights the risk of dying from radiation-induced cancer. A single



Black market: Illicit medical supplies for sale in Phnom Penh.

Murder by medicine

Across the developing world, people are dying after being peddled fake pharmaceuticals. Peter Aldhous reports from southeast Asia, where scientists, doctors and regulators battle against organized crime.

How to ensure better use of evidence? WHO's current roles

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"There is a pathway from good science to publication to evidence, and to programs that work. In this way research becomes an inherent part of problem-solving and policy implementation"

Julio Frenk, Mexican Minister of Health



"There is unity between research and health care-there is no fundamental difference and the two are separated only by time"

Harvey Fineberg, President, IOM



**Politicians and
policymakers don't
see the light;
they feel the heat...."**

Christina Zarowsky

**Policymakers often regard
'research' as the opposite
of 'action' rather than the
opposite of 'ignorance'**

Martin Surr

Policymakers



Researchers

- **Complex policy problems**
- **Focused solutions**
- **Reducing uncertainties**
- **Speed**
- **Control & delay**
- **Manipulation**
- **Feasible & pragmatic solutions**

- **Simplification of problems**
- **Interest in related but separated issues**
- **Finding the truth**
- **Time to think**
- **Publish or perish**
- **Explanation**
- **Thoughtful deliberations**

World Report on Knowledge for Better Health, WHO, 2004



Better communication between researchers and policymakers

- Interaction must be structured-a platform or forum must exist
- Research translators or knowledge "intermediaries" are needed
- Research must be embedded into implementation
- Information needs must be clear



EVIPNet (Evidence-informed Policy Networks)

- Invitations to WPRO countries thru MOH to respond to first, planning phase by submitting letters of intent **to develop in-country mechanisms to strengthen research to policy linkages**
- Workshop for potential applicants in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (June 13-15, 2005)
- 7 teams participated (Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam and China-Shandong, Sichuan, Beijing)
- Evaluation of proposals ongoing, awards by end 2005
- **Extension of networks idea to Africa in 2006 (SIDA)**





EViPNET Workshop, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, June 13-15, 2005

What they told us about what works....

- **Simplify and package research results**
- Research embedded in implementation
- Integration of new interventions into existing platforms
- Researchers involved in scale-up
- "Hot" topic for government
- Long time frames



.....and what doesn't

- **Lack of timely data for policy makers**
- **Limited access to information**
- **Lack of appropriate research agenda (including post-policy research) and weak HSR capacity**
- **Lack of research quality assurance**
- **Poor understanding of the value of research**
- **Distortion of evidence**



What they told us about what works....

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HEN (Health Evidence Network)

Address http://www.euro.who.int/HEN Go

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- Submit a question
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Home

A service for you

HEN is an information service primarily for public health and health care decision-makers in the WHO European Region. It comprises two services:

- [answers to questions](#) to support the decision-making process; and
- easy access to [sources of evidence](#) such as databases, documents and networks of experts.

How does HEN define evidence?

Findings from research and any other knowledge that could be useful in decision-making on public health and health care

News

What are the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of home compared with hospital or satellite unit haemodialysis for people with end-stage renal failure?
04 May 2005
[More](#)

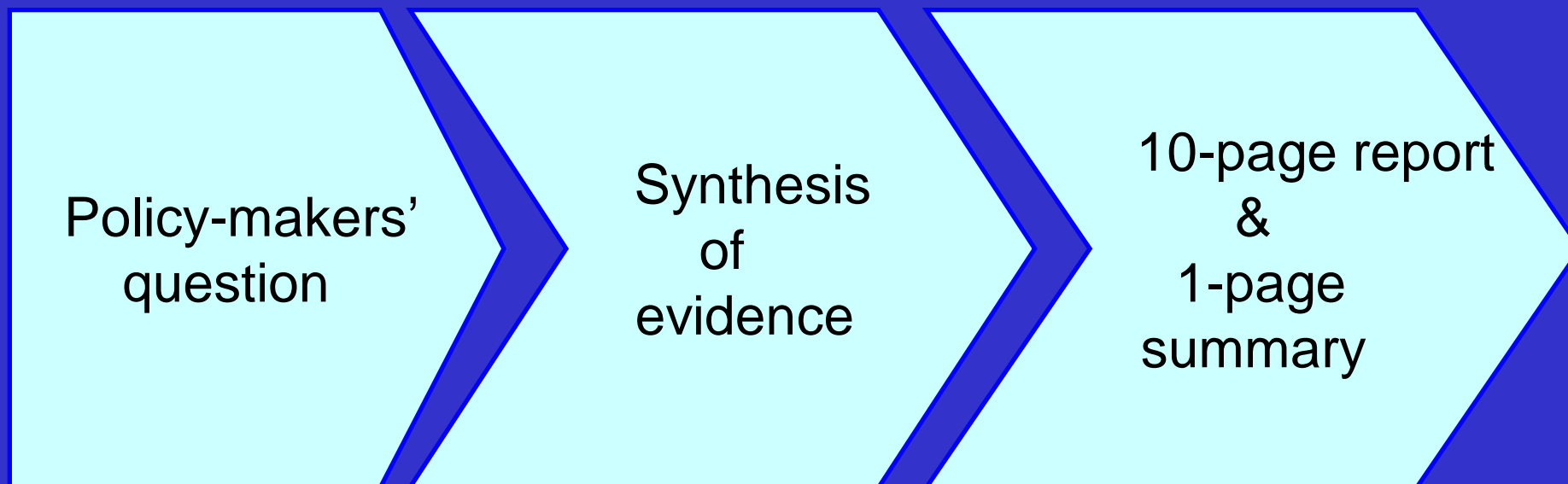
How does corruption affect health care systems, and how can regulation tackle it?
27 April 2005
[More](#)

Call for Competition - Designing the future of public health: a call from the World Health Organization
25 February 2005
[More](#)

HEN Health Evidence Network
EVIDENCE FOR DECISION-MAKERS

Done Local intranet

Policy-makers' questions are HEN's starting point.....



www.euro.who.int/hen



HEN has four means to achieve its aims

- HEN reports synthesising the best available evidence
- Summaries of existing reports
- Brief responses to questions coming from the HEN email box
- Availability of selected policy-relevant documents and databases on the web





Examples of questions sent to HEN

- **What is the efficacy/effectiveness of antenatal care?**
- **What are the main risk factors for disability in old age and how can disability be prevented?**
- **Which are the most effective and cost-effective interventions for tobacco control?**
- **Should mass screening for prostate cancer be introduced at the national level?**

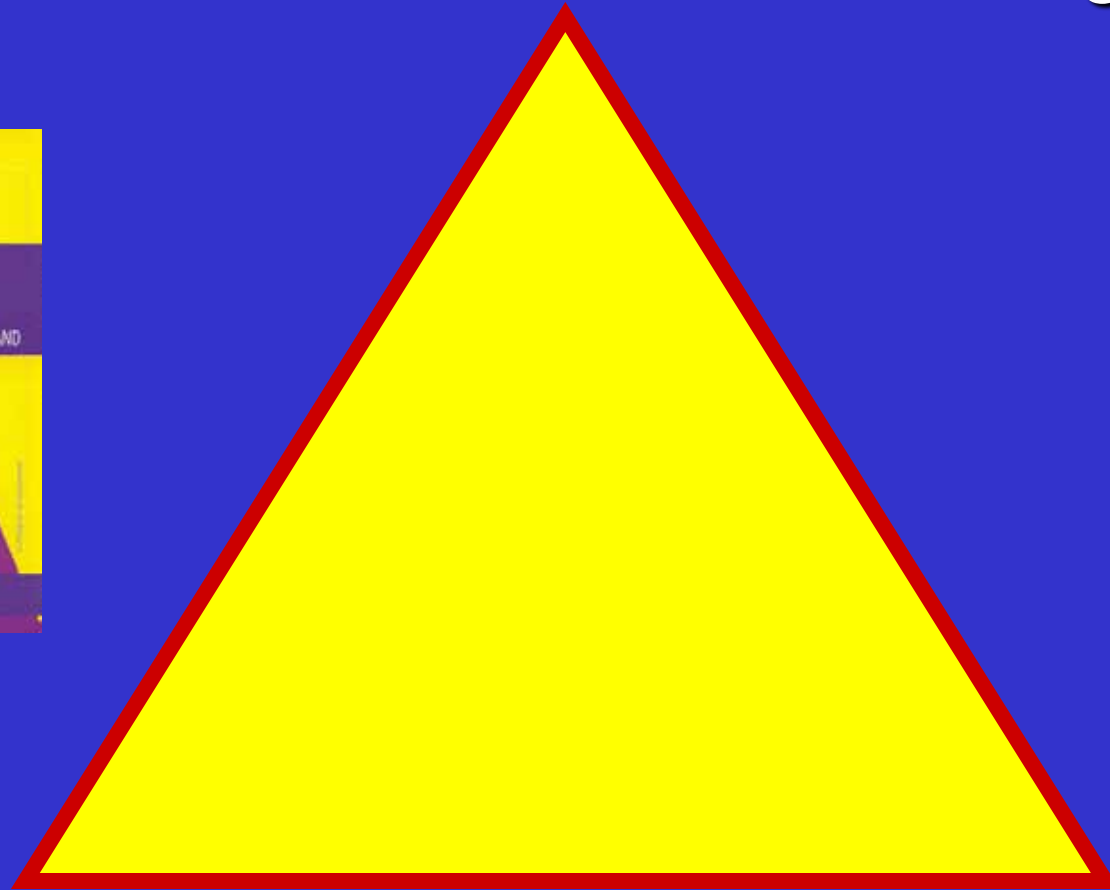
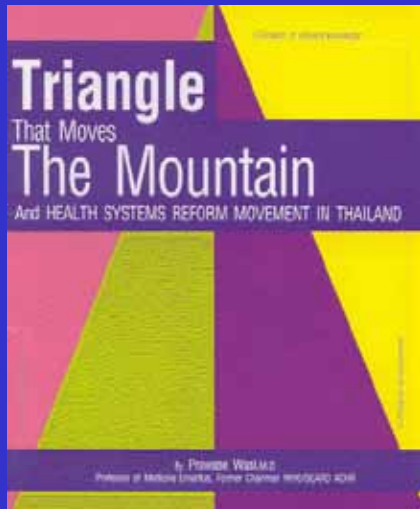


Health ministries are asking HEN about ...

- Belgium:
evidence on programmes for prevention of suicide
- Lithuania:
evidence on health care financing
- Luxembourg:
evidence on national screening programmes for osteoporosis
- Netherlands:
gender issues in interpretation of evidence



Creation and use of knowledge



Social movement

Political involvement



A key contemporary challenge for health research is to build a **bridge** between **research** and **action** in order to improve practice, policy and public trust

"The bridges we have to cross span increasingly troubled waters-where inequities and poverty leads poor people to see hope as more of a taunt than a promise"

Hon. Bob Hawke
Former Prime Minister of Australia
December 1, 2004

