

Partners

Energizing health research systems the Asia-Pacific way

Prof. Chitr Sitthi-Amorn, Council for Health Research and Development (COHRED) focal point for Asia, organized a “3-day intensive exchange plus post-meeting dialogue” in Bali , Indonesia on November 13 - 15, 2001 to follow-up on commitments made in Bangkok during the International Conference on Health Research for Development 2000.

More than 50 participants came from countries in Asia and the Pacific to discuss ways by which such a huge and diverse region could speak as one, with a common framework to bring about equity in development through research in health. While everyone agreed that a unified voice would be powerful indeed, there were concerns regarding operationalizing the concept of an Asian Forum for Health Systems Research that would be independent of any funding or development agency. The Forum would function to promote the interests and welfare of people in Asia and the Pacific.

Participants agreed that the strength of such a forum would depend on the country systems so that country level capacity development should continue to be a core strategy. Inclusiveness and ownership are important to consolidate the many “voices” within the region. An important initial step would be to do a situational analysis and plans to fill gaps and needs of national health research systems.

In a related development, Dr. Tikki Pang, director, Department for Research Policy, WHO, announced that the World Health Report for 2004 will be on Health Research: knowledge for better health. A team is currently working on tools to measure health systems research performance that would provide the evidence base and generate knowledge using scientifically validated methods to improve health systems.

Dr. Agus Suwandono of Indonesia was elected as the focal point of the new Asian Forum for Health Research.

Cecilia Acuin, M.D.

CERTC, University of the

Philippines

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