

Linking producers and users of health research

One thing seems clear if we are to achieve a positive result in the three health-related Millennium Development Goals by 2015: these results can only be the product of stronger health systems in the poor countries of the world. In the midst of a rising global burden of disease and failing public health actions, the attainment of such goals remains a challenge. While stronger health systems need to come about by energetic, targeted (and perhaps expensive) multi-faceted approaches, one essential component is that of a stronger link between the producers and users of—badly needed—health policy and systems research. The gap between what is known and what is translated, especially as applied in health systems, needs to be bridged. As with any gap, bridging efforts will need a firm commitment from both sides, so that evidence truly informs decision-making at the health system level. As has been mentioned repeatedly in the past decade, there are some solutions to health systems activities that are available but these have not been applied or scaled-up. INCLLEN and clinical epidemiology have the mandate and the know-how to help in this critical task. Clinical epidemiology can significantly help promote and maintain healthier health systems, not only in the production but also in the synthesis and translation of ethical, culturally appropriate, and relevant knowledge to achieve the MDGs.

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