Is Research Possible in Developing Countries?

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The need

- ☐ **High disease burden**
  - ■ HIV/AIDS
    - ☐ 25.8m living with illness (64%)
  - ■ Cancer
    - ☐ 0.5 million annual deaths
    - ☐ 2020, 70% new cases in developing world
- ☐ **Minimal empirical evidence that services**
  - ■ Meet individuals' needs and satisfaction
  - ■ Provide quality care
  - ■ Are effective and value for money
  - ■ Provide lessons to replicate

The current status

- ☐ No palliative care research groups
  - ■ Limited organisational research capacity
  - ■ Individuals working in isolation
  - ■ *BMJ* issue – 'African research is moribund'
- ☐ No dedicated funding streams
- ☐ No national strategy for PC research
- ☐ Educational research
  - ■ Personal career advancement
- ☐ Courses with research components
  - ■ Time-specific, limited longevity

The challenges (1)

- Standing at starting blocks!
  - Attitudinal
    - Absence of a research culture
    - Finite scarce resources – 'care not research'
    - Value of research – not action orientated for local needs
  - Organisational
    - Limited research capacity
    - Clinicians/Nurses have limited research experience
    - Isolation
      - No network
      - No shared experiences
  - Strategic
    - No strategic vision for research
    - No regional priorities

The challenges (2)

- **Methodological**
  - ☐ Attrition - die in village
  - ☐ Research instruments
    - Unvalidated within Africa
    - Trans-cultural conceptual validity
    - Linguistic challenges
    - Logistics
- **Funding**
  - ☐ Limited sources
  - ☐ Deficiencies in application
    - No rigorous track record
    - 'Catch 22'
- **Ethical considerations**

The potential resources

- ☐ Regionally
  - ■ Indigenous palliative care experts
  - ■ University medical schools
  - ■ Hospitals
  - ■ African Palliative Care Association
  - ■ South-south partnerships

- ☐ Internationally
  - ■ North-south partnerships

The conclusion (1)

- ☐ Research is possible but …
- ☐ Change existing attitudes
  - ◾ Relevant research
  - ◾ Optimise finite resources
- ☐ Improve capability & capacity
  - ◾ Infrastructure
  - ◾ Technical ability
  - ◾ Ethical dimension
- ☐ Establish a research vision
  - ◾ Regional prioritised agenda

The conclusion (2)

☐ Partnership formation

  ■ Mutual trust & shared decision-making

  ■ National ownership

  ■ Research into policy & practice

  ■ Develop national research capacity (Costello & Zumla)

  ■ Long term commitment

☐ Think action, think local, think long term (Edejer)