



National Institute for Health
Research I.R.Iran

**Report of the Joint Collaboration Meeting of
World Health Organization (WHO) with National
Institute for Health Research (NIHR)**

(10 October 2018)

NIHR Conferences Hall

Introduction

This meeting took place due to the continuity of collaborations between WHO and NIHR. In fact, there has been different collaborations between WHO and NIHR and there are some plans that are going to be performed in the future.

The meeting was held by 6 parts. This report contains the parts explanation.

Part 1 – *The NIHR director started the meeting by a welcome note and the participants introduced themselves briefly.*

The meeting started with NIHRs' director (*Professor Fotouhi¹*) welcome-note and the participants introduced themselves briefly, afterwards NIHRs' members presented the following topics. History and background of the NIHR, previous collaboration background, and NIHR's current structure, capacities and agenda were the main presentations. The dean of School of Public Health (SPH) - (*Professor Akbari Sari*) presented

- The institute of Malariology evolved over time, and finally, in 1965, the Public Health Research Institute (PHRI) was established;

the NIHR & SPH common collaboration.

As soon as the presentations were over, there was a briefing on the NIHR departments and area of work by heads of departments. After that a discussion/ Q&A took place that participants left their comments and asked their questions.

After the coffee break, a visit to the NIHR building was done, and the group photo was taken, there was a remark by WHO representative (*Dr. Hamelmann²*) and a wrap-up.

Part 2 – *There was a presentation with the title of history and background of the NIHR, previous collaboration between WHO and NIHR, and NIHR current structure, capacities and agenda.*

History and Background of NIHR

- In 1952, under an agreement signed between University of Tehran (UT) and the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME), the Institute of Malariology was established to investigate the malaria situation in the country and to control it;
- Following the restructuring of the PHRI in 2009, the NIHR was formed;
- The new structure enables the NIHR to provide policy-makers with robust evidence to assist them in their decision-making;

¹ He became director of NIHR, recently (since 4 months ago).

² He became WHO representative (WR) of country office less than 6 months ago.



Previous Collaboration

A presentation took place about previous collaboration background with the information in the following.

NIHR and WHO fields of cooperation have been formed by International Relations Department (IRD) support, this cooperation started in 2014 and it has been continued up to present.

Health Transformation Plan (HTP) and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) have been the most important cooperation subjects of the NIHR and WHO's office in Iran as the main plan of MoHME during these years.

The NIHR was responsible for monitoring and evaluation of progress towards HTP goals and UHC. As a request by H.E the MoHME's Minister (Prof. Hashemi), WHO conducted several external evaluations. Therefore, the main aspect of common areas of collaboration in recent years, between WHO country office and NIHR was reinforcement and strengthening of Iran's health system in order to achieve UHC on the way of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The items that have been done in this field are in the following:

1. Summer (2015): The first round of external evaluation of HTP was

conducted by WHO entitled "*the Rapid Review of the I.R of Iran Health Transformation Plan (HTP)*". The policy-making secretariat of MoHME was planning the program and the NIHR provided the metadata, information,

analysis and interpretation of the report. The final report was disseminated by the NIHR. The second round was performed due to the first round performance (Dr. Tavila was Iran WR);

2. May 2016 – Feb 2017 (Dr. Sameen Siddiqi had just came to Iran):

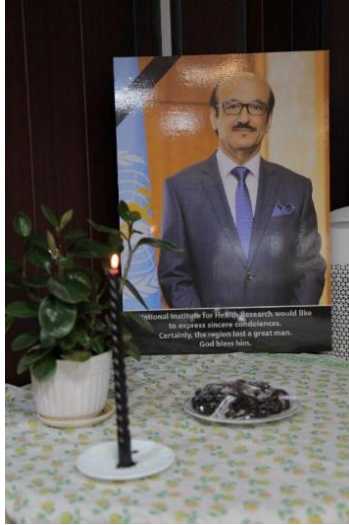
The second round of external evaluation of the HTP by WHO was conducted with the aim of evaluation of achieving UHC. At the beginning, Dr. Siddiqi provided a synopsis form and weekly meeting was held for 5 months for completing the necessary data and information as the main inputs for the second evaluation. The second round was conducted under Dr. Agnes Soucat's supervision. The team members stayed 2 weeks in Iran (Oct. 2016). A comprehensive report was drafted and submitted to MoHME in Feb 2017. NIHR got the final approval of the report and the main practical points provided to all MoHME's deputies;

3. March 2017 up to now: An agreement was signed between MoHME and WHO, based on the second round of external evaluation for developing a report entitled "*Strengthening the institutional performance for health transformation in the Islamic Republic (I.R) of Iran: an assessment of key health financing & governance issues*". It is a joint report between Iran and the WHO and it includes nine chapters. NIHR has been the coordinator of the joint report and

³ Director of Health Systems Governance and Financing, WHO

- hosted the team and chapter's authors for three times;
4. Editing some notes and providing materials for the regional committees (RCs): They were provided for the high-rank Iranian delegations in Egypt and Pakistan, Khartum;
 5. March 2017- hosting Strategic Purchasing (SP) Workshop: NIHR was the host of the SP workshop in March 2017. The workshop was held by WHO;
 6. Gathering and providing necessary indicators under supervision of IRD for all of the United Nations (UN) agencies and also WHO;
 7. NIHR is the especial focal point of the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO)'s *Core Indicators* (4-round) and indicator of tracking UHC at the international level (1st round-2012);
 8. Developing Operational Planning (2018-2019) for determining all deliverables of WHO and NIHR which contains following items:
 - a) Technical support to MoHME and NIHR for developing UHC master plan;
 - b) Team of consultants to review HTP implementation for financial sustainability, efficiency, equity, and social protection;
 - c) Building capacity of the NIHR to-develop a rapid-response program for decision makers, b- evidence-based knowledge broker role for MoHME for UHC, c- evaluate Research & Development (R&D) interventions and actions for access and affordable medicine and vaccine for UHC;
 - d) Team of consultant to introduce outcome-based information system for health services under insurance organizations and NIHR;
 9. Winter (2018): Starting the collaboration between MoHme and WHO, in order to run Disease Control Priorities (DCP)-3 in Iran. At the beginning of the program, a concept-note was edited by NIHR and approved by MoHME and this plan is currently ongoing;
 10. July (2018): Conducting CERQual Workshop in collaboration between NIHR, IRD and WHO country office.

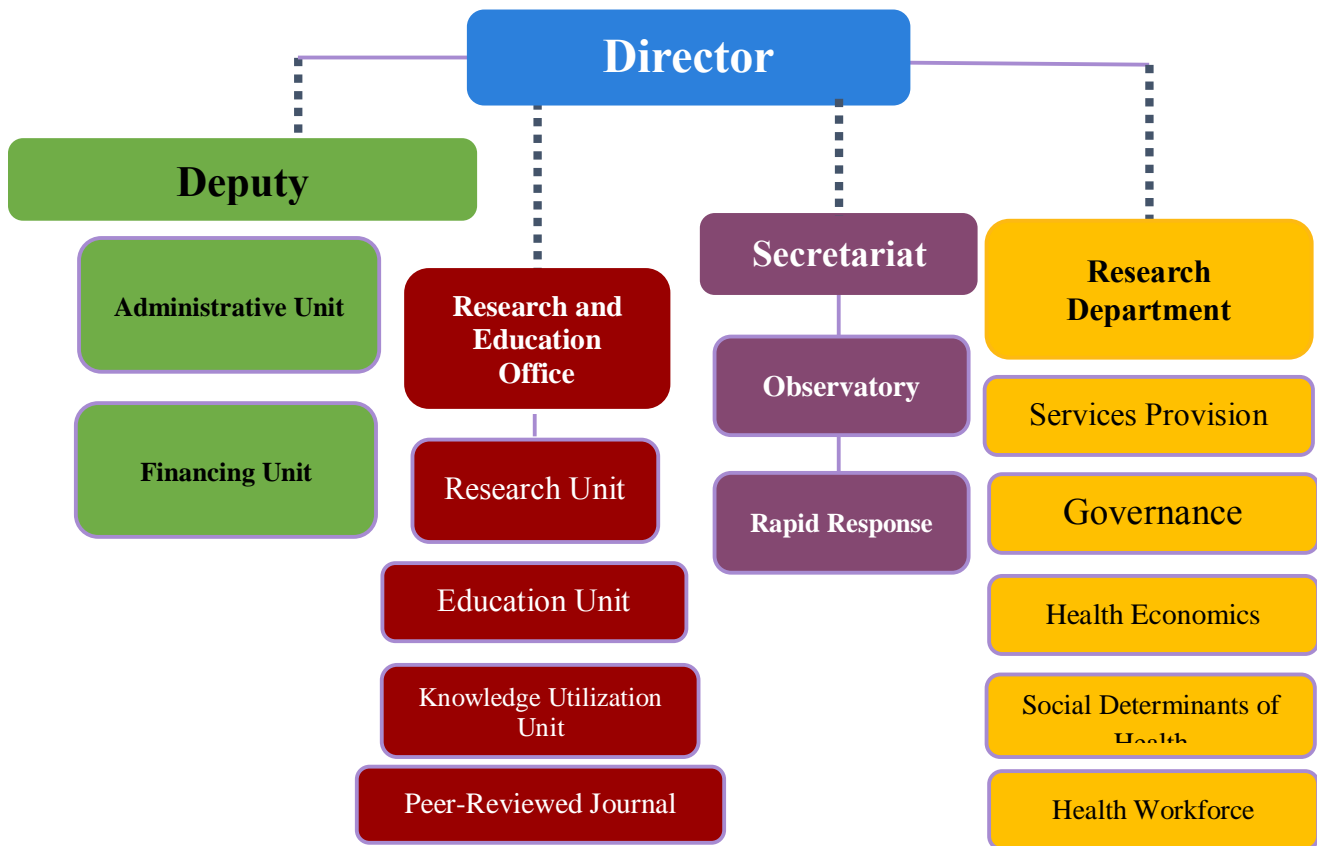
Some Photos of 3-year Collaboration of NIHR and WHO



NIHR Current Structure, Capacities and Agenda

There was a presentation about the NIHR current structure, capacities and agenda.

First, there was an explanation about the NIHRs’ structure as you can see in the following.



Then, the explanation about NIHR capacities began which you can see the items mentioned in the following.

- National Institute for Health Research like other similar institutes around the world has been established to provide health policy-makers with accessible, useable and evidence-based information and researches;

- NIHR is a budget-independent organization and works as one of the subsets of Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS) (one of the most important medical universities of the country);
- NIHR is serving an independent body for MoHME. This means that the NIHR is structurally depended on TUMS, but the MoHME knows it as

an independent organization. NIHR is in a close interaction with ministry units. The main responsible of the NIHR is assisting MoHME through providing timely appropriate evidence for health policy-makers to inform their decisions;

- NIHR includes multiple research departments and two secretariats (based on the above structure) which have been established according to the six building blocks of the health systems (WHO framework).

NHIR Interaction with MoHME

- Providing essential information for health system through performing national health surveys;
- Responding to questions raised by policy-makers of MoHME,
- Seeking international consultancy to assist MoHME in formulating policy and plans and advising on key issues;
- Evaluating macro plans of the MoHME (such as HTP) as an independent body outside the Ministry.

NIHR Partnership

The main partnership of NIHR as the following for doing its job:

- **Policy-Makers;**
- Research **leaders** and research **facilitators;**
- Different health care **professions;**
- Different research **disciplines;**
- **Researcher** and **Universities;**
- **UN** agencies.

NIHR Current Agenda

There are two main agendas as the following:

- Response to the ongoing questions of the MoHMEs' decision-makers. Some

of the activities of this area as the following:

- Monitoring and reporting country's health indicators;
- Acting as the national hub or gatekeeper for reporting indicators;
- Conducting the multi-year health surveys calendar;
- Designing and implementing dashboard for visualizing health indicators;
- Conducting rapid systematic review;
 - Developing a systematic model for doing rapid systematic review with collaboration with research centers and SPH;

- Analysis, interpretation and advocacy for using evidence in decision making;
 - Performing roles as a research broker (facilitate the implementation of the applied research projects that ordered by MoHME or other organizations);
 - Performing or supervising HTA projects;
 - Searching interventions to solve health system problems by benchmarking and international consultancy;
 - Advocacy for implementation of the selected interventions in Health system;
 - Monitoring and evaluating the interventions after their implementation.
- Responding to Requests raised by the health minister and his deputies.
 - Acting as the Health system observatory. Some of the activities of this area as the following:
 - A thorough Health system review;

2. Hold a workshop with stakeholders and WHO representative to appraise these reports and to plan for their completion;
3. Consulting with international advisers to:
 - i. Completing the health system review;
 - ii. Designing the plan of main health interventions;
 - iii. Advocating for the implementation of the health interventions;
 - iv. Monitoring and evaluation of the health interventions (in case of implementation).

Proposed Steps of Collaboration between NIHR and WHO

The proposed steps are summarized by three domains as the following:

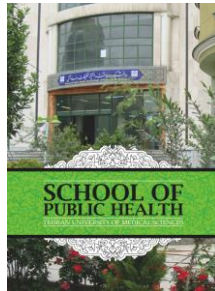
1. Summarizing the three rounds of health system evaluation conduction by WHO in collaboration with NIHR:
 - i. Totally, there are three rounds of external health system evaluation;
 - ii. However, they are not comprehensive enough. These reports have focused on some health functions without considering all health functions.

Part 3- NIHR & SPH Common Collaboration

The SPH dean introduced the school and explained the potential close collaboration:

- SPH history;
 - SPH at glance;
 - Oldest and largest SPH in Iran; 13 departments; 121 faculty members; more than 1400 students; 38 educ. programs; more than 850 peer-reviewed paper per year; 11 Med Journals; 35 overseas students; more than 8600 graduates; wide range of short courses and research activities.
 - SPH goals:
 - Provide the highest level of education in a wide range of interdisciplinary programs;
 - Foster innovative research, policy analysis, communication & consultation services;
 - Strengthen health capacities and services in the national and regional level;
 - Develop policies and programs to reduce health disparities;
 - Develop policies and programs to improve health and healthcare services;
 - Ensure people live in a safe and clean environment;
 - Ensure people have healthy eating and other lifestyle habits;
- with NIHR. The main discussed topics are as the following:
- Try to protect and improve the health of public and prevent illness and injuries;
 - Try to have bilateral collaboration with international organizations;
 - Promote ethics in all school activities and programs.
 - SPH departments;
 - SPH international training program
 - 15 malaria planning and control courses over 30 years;
 - Two international leishmaniosis program;
 - Training over 500 managers for the regions and across the world;
 - International MPH programs;
 - International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) workshop;
 - Field Epidemiology summer school;
 - SPH opportunities for collaboration
 - Encourage direct contact and research cooperation between faculty members;
 - Visit to the other institution by faculty members and researchers for conferences, seminars, lectures and scientific discussions;

- Exchange of academic materials and academic publications;
- Joint research activities;
- Creating opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students to take courses and to engage in internships, service learning and research at the other institution;
- Developing proposals for possible undergraduate or postgraduate student exchanges or Cotutelle PhD programs;
- Joint applications to secure national and international funding to run research projects of mutual interest;
- Publications of joint academic research.



Part 4- Briefing on NIHR Department and area of work.

A brief explanation of the NIHR's departments presented by heads of departments. The contents of presentation were the current situation, achievements, challenges and plans of each department, and some members of the departments provided information on their field of researches and interests of activities.

Part 5 – NIHR's Visit and Group Photo.

A group photo was taken and then the departments were visited by WHO representative and other guests along with the members of the NIHR, and NIHR's director introduced the rest of the NIHR's staffs and provided information on what they were doing now.



**Part 6- Remark by WHO Representative
and Wrap-up**

His speech began with thanking everyone and complementing the schedule, analysis, and approaches. He said that it was good for him to know about NIHRs' history, prepared records, and taken actions and he has a key role and was hoping that could find systematic way with each other's cooperation.

Dr. Hammelmann added that, he is looking forward to find a systematic way (again). We need to try to implement a way to work excellent from now on. We need to work with each other to build a network. He believed that the NIHR is the national leader and has a key role in academic research and

science among all the universities that exists, this center does a lot of implementation in education and it is responsible in many aspects. He also mentioned that this institute is a kind of national lead institute and he added, as the lead institute NIHR has such a mandate but how to translate that really into practice is important.

He explained: " So when the window is gonna be open, but to use the window you need to be ready, because when the window is there it is not going to be there for ever."

At last, he stated that from their side in WHO, they have understood the importance of NIHR and NIHR can also draw any advice or consultation on them, so that the strategy could improve.

Meeting Agenda

Session 1 (Conferences Hall, NIHR)		
09:00-09:15	Welcome note by NIHR (Prof. Fotouhi) Introducing Participants	
09:15-09:20	History and Background of NIHR	Presentation by Dr. Abdi
09:20-9:30	Previous Collaboration Background	Presentation by Dr. Ahmadnezhad
09:40-10:00	NIHR Current Structure, Capacities and Agenda	Presentation by Prof. Fotouhi
10:00-10:15	NIHR & SPH Common Collaboration	Presentation by Prof. Akbari sari
10:15-10:30	Briefing on NIHR Department and area of work	Presentation by Heads of Departments
10:30-10:45	Discussion/ Q&A	
10:45-11:15	Coffee Break, NIHR Visit & Group Photo	
Session 2 (Conferences Hall, NIHR)		
11:15-11:40	Remark by WHO Representative	Presentation by Dr. Hamelmann
11:40-12:00	Wrap-Up	

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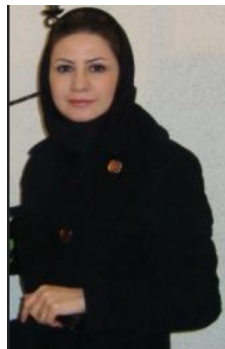
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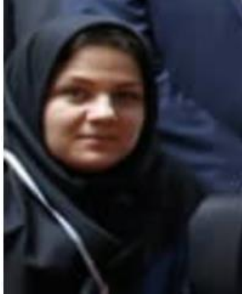
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Abbreviation

DCP- Disease Control Priorities

EMRO- Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office

HTP- Health Transformation Plan

ICRC- International Committee of the Red Cross

IRD- International Relations Office

MoHME- Ministry of Health and Medical
Education

NIHR- National Institute for Health Research

PHRI- Public Health Institute of Research

R&D- Research and Development

RCs- Regional Committees

SDGs- Sustainable Development Goals

SP- Strategic Purchasing

SPH- School of Public Health

TUMS- Tehran University of Medical Sciences

UHC- Universal Health Coverage

UN- United Nations

UT- University of Tehran

WHO- World Health Organization

WR- WHO Representative