Responding to ‘Countries in Need’

Professor Lai-Meng Looi
Chair, Countries in Need Programme
World Association of Societies of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine (WASPaLM)
About WASPaLM

- Global network of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (1947-)
  - 45 Societies in all WHO regions
  - Mission: Promote global health by promoting the teaching and practice of all aspects of Pathology/Laboratory Medicine
  - Acts through collaboration with Member Societies and cooperation with other international organisations (e.g. WHO, CIMOS, IFCC, APFCB, ISO TC212., Labs-are-vital)
  - Activity focus: (1) Global issues - evolving roles and practices of the profession (2) Inequalities of health - challenges in countries-in-need

‘Countries in Need’: What are the facts?

LMIC: Highest disease burden

Shortage of pathologists: SSA - 1 AP:1 million; Laos - 1 AP:5 million; Cambodia - 8 pathologists to 14 million; Vietnam 1: 250,000; Myanmar 1:170,000; China needs another 100,000 pathologists.

Variable standards. Lab accreditation: India (1%); Africa (10%); Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia (none). EQA not a standard practice.

10/90 Gap: Only 10% of global spending on health research is devoted to diseases or conditions that account for 90% of the global disease burden.

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Addressing the challenges: WASPaLM’s approach

• **Capacity-Building**
  – Education for countries-in-need
    • Intensive seminars and workshops in South-East Asia, Sri Lanka, India, Middle-East and Africa
  – World Pathology Foundation Gordon Signy Fellowships (1975-)
    • 52 beneficiaries from 22 countries (LMIC)
  – Support of WASPaLM Societies
    • RCPath (UK) initiative in Myanmar
    • Value add to National Conferences (LMIC)

• **Collaborations**
  – WHO collaborative work-plan on essential pathology services for LMICs
  – Disease Control Priorities-3
  – WASPaLM-APFCB: Education & Lab Accreditation
  – WASPaLM-IFCC: Young Scientists

The impact of our work

**An Essential Pathology Package for Low- and Middle-Income Countries**

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Key lessons

• Activities so far focussed largely on
  – Capacity-building in middle-income countries
  – Mainly enhancing expertise
• Many needs still not met
  – Quality, Accreditation, Management, Leadership
  – Low-income countries in Asia, Africa, South America
    • Needs different strategy
    • Lack national training programmes
    • Needs critical mass to spin home-grown programmes
    • Needs advocacy to policy makers

Replication & sustainability?

• Sustainability depends on....
  – Larger panel of contributors
    • Involvement of stronger Societies, Collaborative partners; Gordon-Signy Fellows
    • Build up web-based educational materials and archives
    • Better use of IT, telepathology, digital pathology
  – Development of stronger global voice
    • Collaboration for evidence-based advice to policy makers
      – WHO
      – Projects, guidelines, statements
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