THE GLOBAL HEALTH NETWORK NEPAL



## THE GLOBAL HEALTH NETWORK SEMINAR

Building Health Research Capacity through Networks

14th June 2023, Kathmandu















#### FROM THE LEAD, THE GLOBAL HEALTH NETWORK NEPAL



It gives me great pleasure to share few words on the occasion of the publication of the The Global Health Network Seminar Report on "Building Health Research Capacity Through Networks". The seminar was conducted on 14th June, 2023 in collaboration with Nepal Health Research Council and World Health Organization Nepal. The Global Health Network Country Center was officially launched in that occasion hosted in the office of Nepal Public Health Foundation.

This report serves as a reflection of the seminar's proceedings, consisting of key highlights from all the sessions. The launch of The Global Health Network Nepal is a significant milestone of collaboration between Nepal Public Health Foundation and The Global Health Network, Oxford University and The Global Health Network Asia, ICDDR, B.

It was a moment of honor to have Hon'ble Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, the vice chairperson of National Planning Commission and Prof. Trudie Lang, of Oxford University to officially inaugurate TGHN Nepal Center.

The Global Health Network Nepal Center was launched with the objective to facilitate dialogue and collaboration and the exchange of insights and experiences among and between experts and professionals from various sectors, nationally and internationally. The aim is to enhance research capabilities within their respective fields. TGHN Nepal has formed a coordinating committee, advisory board and Thematic group to facilitate networking among various stakeholders.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the distinguished guest speakers, presenters, chairs and participants for their active participation and for making this seminar a success. I would also like to thank Samana Sharma, Satya Kripashree Pradhan, Pranjali Dahal, Deepesha Silpakar, Dikshya Kafle, Rijana Maharjan, Aawash Regmi, Pratistha Bhusal, Pragati Shrestha, Sulochana Prajapati, Praneta Acharya and all those who have contributed in various ways to the activities of the Seminar.

I believe it is a great beginning of the research collaboration for ensuring good health as fundamental right of people.

Dr. Mahesh Kumar Maskey Lead, The Global Health Network Nepal Founding chair and Executive chief, Nepal Public Health Foundation

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#### **List of Abbreviations**

NPHF Nepal Public Health Foundation
 NHRC Nepal Health Research Council
 TGHN The Global Health Network
 WHO World Health Organization

NGOs Non- Governmental Organizations
SDGs Sustainable Development Goals
SWC Sustainable Development Goals
MOHP Ministry of Health and Population

ICDDR, B International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh

**NPC** Nepal Planning Commission

**NESOG** Nepal Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

MPDSR Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response

MNH Maternal and Newborn Health

**BPKIHS** B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences

**RESHAPE** REducing Barriers to Mental Health Task SHAring: Stigma Reduction in

Primary CarE

MMR Maternal Mortality Rate

MDG Millennium Development Goal

**IOM** Institute of Medicine

NCDs Non- Communicable Diseases

TU Tribhuvan University

**STAR** Society of Transnational Academic Researchers

**CBE** Community-Based Education

**CBPR** Community-Based Participatory Research

CSC Central Steering CommitteeRCTs Randomized Controlled TrialsDDA Dept. of Drug Administration

**LMICs** Low and Middle Income Countries

**OUCRU-NP** Oxford University Clinical Research Unit-Nepal

**ICUs** Intensive Care Units

EDPs Existing Development Partners
PAHS Patan Academy of Health Science

**KUSMS** Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences

#### **Background**

#### Introduction

The Nepal Public Health Foundation (NPHF), in partnership with the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC), orchestrated a seminar entitled "Building Health Research Capacity through Networks." This seminar marked the official inauguration of The Global Health Network (TGHN) Nepal Centre, which finds its home within the Nepal Public Health Foundation. The establishment of this Nepal Centre signifies a momentous milestone in the realm of health research and collaboration within Nepal.

The Global Health Network (TGHN), situated at Oxford University, is a knowledge-sharing community and a World Health Organization (WHO) collaborating center. It is widely utilized by the global health research community, striving to enhance research capabilities and leadership in regions and environments where health evidence is lacking. With regional centers in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the TGHN Nepal Centre aims to serve as a platform that nurtures and facilitates collaboration among research institutions, academia, and individuals involved in health research.

Through the hosting of the Nepal Centre, the Nepal Public Health Foundation (NPHF) demonstrates its unwavering dedication to advancing the field of global health and research within the country. The center's primary objective is to promote and strengthen health research collaboration by fostering opportunities for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and joint research initiatives.

The seminar was attended by distinguished researchers, scientists, government officials, and policy makers, alongside esteemed academic institutions, UN (United Nation) organizations, NGOs (Non- Governmental organizations), and students studying in the fields of medicine, public health, and nursing. The event received support from TGHN Asia, Nepal Health Research Council and WHO, Nepal.

#### **Objectives**

The objectives of the seminar were as follows:

- Facilitate the gathering of experts and professionals from various sectors to facilitate the exchange of insights and experiences. The aim was to enhance research capabilities within their respective fields.
- Foster collaboration and promote knowledge-sharing among participants. The ultimate goal was to develop effective strategies for building research capacity.

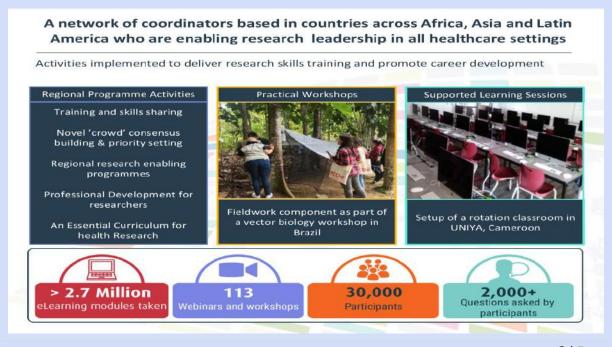
• Establish a dynamic platform that encourages the exploration of innovative ideas and the sharing of best practices in research.

#### **Attendees**

The seminar attracted a diverse audience, encompassing members of the National Public Health Foundation (NPHF), public health students, individual researchers, and representatives from various academic institutions. The event was graced by distinguished speakers from notable organizations, including the Ministry of Health, World Health Organization (WHO), TGHN Asia, and the Social Welfare Council. The keynote speech was delivered by Dr. Vasee Moorthy, Senior Research Advisor at WHO Headquarters in Geneva. The inauguration ceremony was officiated by Hon'ble. Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Vice Chair of the National Planning Commission of Nepal and Professor Trudie Lang, Professor of Global Health Research and Head of The Global Health Network, Oxford University. In addition to esteemed research scholars, academia, and government officials, the seminar observed active participation from UN agencies, NGOs, and students.

#### **Program Activities**

The seminar consisted of five sessions, each featuring distinguished speakers from both national and international backgrounds. The primary objectives of these sessions were to promote collaboration, facilitate knowledge-sharing, and devise effective strategies for building research capacity.





### Launching of The Global Health Network Nepal Center From Left to right: Prof. Arun Kumar Govindakarnavar, Mr. Manoj Bhatta, Dr. Sangita Kaushal Mishra, Dr. Aliya Naheed, Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Prof. Trudie Lang, Dr. Gehenath Baral, Dr. Aruna Upreti, and Dr. Mahesh Kumar Maskey

### **SESSION I:** Inauguration



Our Chief Guest Hon'ble Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha officiating the program

The official launch of The Global Health Network Nepal Centre was celebrated, highlighting its importance in advancing global health research and collaboration in Nepal. The commitment of the NPHF to strengthen health research and the objective of the Centre to facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange were emphasized. This session was chaired by Dr. Aruna Uprety, President Nepal Public Health Foundation and Dr. Gehanath Baral, Chairman, Nepal Health Research Council

#### **Opening of the Program**

The program commenced with a formal session, overseen by Ms. Satya Kripashree Pradhan, programme coordinator at Nepal Public Health Foundation. She extended a warm welcome to all attendees and provided a brief overview of the seminar's aims and objectives. Ms. Pradhan then introduced the Chairs, Chief Guests, Keynote Speaker, and distinguished guest speakers from TGHN, the Ministry, the Social Welfare Council, and WHO. She invited them to take their designated seats on the dais.

#### **Welcome Speech**

**Dr. Mahesh K. Maskey, Founding Chair and Executive Chief of Nepal Public Health Foundation and Lead, The Global Health Network Nepal**, commenced the welcome speech by expressing gratitude to all the attendees for their presence. He then announced a significant milestone in the collaboration between the Nepal Public Health Foundation and The Global Health Network (TGHN). Dr. Maskey highlighted their three-year collaboration with TGHN and emphasized the significance of the day as the official launch of TGHN Nepal Center, hosted by the Nepal Public Health Foundation. The primary objective of the center is to advance health research in Nepal and the region.

Dr. Maskey expressed confidence in the TGHN Nepal Center's potential to facilitate networking among various stakeholders. He also stressed that progress towards health-related goals outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relies on enhanced capacity in health research. Recognizing this, the Nepal Public Health Foundation has partnered with the Nepal Health Research Council to address the task of building health research capacity and fostering networking opportunities.

#### **Keynote Speech**

**Dr.** Vasee Moorthy, Senior Advisor for Research and Development, WHO Headquarters, Geneva, delivered the keynote speech through a pre-recorded video. He began his address by expressing his honor to give the opening speech at the inauguration of TGHN in Nepal. Leveraging his 25 years of experience, he shared valuable insights on global health, focusing on emerging trends relevant to the planned activities and initiatives in Nepal.

Dr. Moorthy emphasized the importance of conducting research that addresses both local and global needs. He highlighted the specific opportunities present in Nepal and stressed the need to align research efforts with the country's unique requirements. Furthermore, he underscored the critical role of local leadership in conducting research that caters to the needs of patients, communities, and healthcare workers. In conclusion, Dr. Moorthy extended his well wishes for the successful continuation of the program.

#### **Guest of Honor**

Professor Trudie Lang, Professor of Global Health Research and Head of The Global Health Network, Oxford University, graced the event as the guest of honor. She expressed her delight at being invited to Nepal for the launch and seminar. Prof. Lang underscored the significance of community-based research and collaboration within networks. She emphasized the importance of involving patients and communities in shaping research questions and addressing disease burdens. According to her, research should begin within the community and with the patients themselves, as it enables a proactive approach to prevent and address diseases. Prof. Lang highlighted the importance of involving practitioners, policymakers, and communities in setting research agendas, thereby funding research that addresses the most pertinent questions.

She expressed hope that by working together, we can address inequities and create opportunities for individuals to become researchers, ultimately building sustainable capabilities in Nepal. Prof. Lang concluded by expressing her aspiration to work as networks within Nepal and across Asia, as The Global Health Network aims to connect with colleagues globally, sharing expertise across regions like Asia, Africa, Latin America, and beyond.

#### **Guest Speakers**

The seminar featured four eminent guest speakers who shared their valuable perspectives on research collaboration and networking.

#### Mr. Manoj Bhatta, Member Secretary, Social Welfare Council (SWC)

Mr. Bhatta expressed deep gratitude to the organizers on behalf of Social Welfare Council for extending the invitation to the event. Recognizing the significance of research collaboration and networks in Nepal, he emphasized the need for concerted efforts in this area. Additionally, he expressed enthusiasm for exploring new avenues of partnership and collaboration. He stressed the importance of establishing robust and productive collaborations that require minimal technical assistance. By focusing on partnerships that promote shared knowledge and prosperity, the speaker expressed confidence in realizing Nepal's growth potential and achieving mutual benefits.

Furthermore, Mr. Bhatta highlighted the program's significance as a catalyst for creating a collaborative network within the nation. They emphasized that such a network would foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, and collective efforts in research and development.

#### Prof. Arun Kumar Govindakarnavar, Technical Officer (public Health Laboratory), WHO Health emergency programme

Prof. Govindakarnavar attended the seminar representing WHO Representative Dr. Rajesh Samjhajirao Pandav. He emphasized the importance and power of networks in research, practice, and policies, underscoring the need for enhanced collaboration and the establishment of efficient research networks in Nepal. On behalf of the World Health Organization (WHO), the representative urged researchers in Nepal to increase their collaborative research efforts and prepare their institutions to become part of the health research network.

They emphasized that WHO is ready to support the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC), Nepal Public Health Foundation (NPHF), and other organizations in Nepal in their commendable endeavors to build the country's research and networking capacity.

#### Dr. Aliya Naheed, Scientist Initiative for Non-Communicable Diseases, icddr,b and Regional Lead, The Global Health Network Asia

Dr. Naheed expressed deep gratitude to the Nepal Public Health Foundation (NPHF) for taking on the leadership role in operating the global health network in Nepal, in collaboration with esteemed institutions. She emphasized that The Global Health Network Asia serves as a regional hub for TGHN, with the primary objective of encouraging every country in Asia to establish its own network. In an announcement filled with pride, she declared that Nepal will be the first country to join as a country hub of the Global Health Network Asia.

Dr. Naheed highlighted that the global health network aims to provide essential support to Nepalese researchers, enabling them to enhance their skills at a high level. This support will equip researchers with the necessary expertise to ensure that their research documents meet the rigorous standards set by highly qualified committees. By offering such support, the network aims to reduce the likelihood of research proposal and paper rejections, thus facilitating successful contributions to the field of global health.

#### Dr. Sangeeta Kaushal Mishra, Additional Health Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population

Dr. Mishra expressed immense delight at being a part of such a significant event and extended heartfelt congratulations to the Nepal Public Health Foundation (NPHF) for leading the network and the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC) for their active participation.

Reflecting on the current state of research in Nepal, Dr. Mishra acknowledged that there is still a long journey ahead. However, she expressed optimism that the establishment of the Global Health Network Nepal center would contribute to improved collaboration and knowledge exchange in the field of health research. In particular, she emphasized the importance of disseminating research findings not only in large forums but also within the communities being studied. Dr. Mishra urged the network to prioritize the dissemination of research results at the community level, recognizing the significant impact it can have on local health outcomes and community engagement.

#### **Inauguration of the Global Health Network Nepal Center**

The official inauguration of the TGHN Nepal Center took place in the presence of distinguished personalities, including Hon'ble Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission, and Prof. Trudie Lang, Professor at Oxford University and Head of The Global Health Network (TGHN). The ceremony marked the formal establishment of the TGHN Nepal Center, signifying a significant milestone in the field of health research and collaboration in Nepal.

#### **Chief Guest**

Hon'ble Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Vice Chairman of Nepal Planning Commission (NPC), attended the seminar as our distinguished chief guest for the inauguration ceremony. In his opening remarks, Hon'ble Dr. Shrestha expressed his immense pleasure in participating in the seminar and highlighted the critical importance of scientifically robust health research in formulating evidence-based health policies. He emphasized that building health research capacity is a central task in achieving this objective, and thus, the seminar topic holds significant relevance not only for Nepal but also for regional and international cooperation. Dr. Shrestha further stressed that strengthening research capacity is essential for making progress towards the health-related Sustainable Development Goals.

Hon'ble Dr. Shrestha commended Nepal Public Health Foundation (NPHF) for being a well-suited organization for this purpose. He acknowledged that NPHF is widely acclaimed and recognized as one of the leading public health research organizations in Nepal, established by distinguished public health professionals. He firmly believed that TGHN Nepal Center, hosted by NPHF, will significantly contribute to the development of a robust network for health research in the country. Additionally, he requested his colleague, Honorable Member of the National Planning Commission, to take the initiative to convene a meeting of leading members from NPHF, Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC), World Health Organization (WHO), and academia to chart out further steps in meeting the need for research capacity building through networking.

#### **Vote of Thanks**

On behalf of Dr. Pradip Gyanwali, Executive-Chief/Member-Secretary of Nepal Health Research Council. Dr. Meghnath Dhimal, Senior Research Officer of the Nepal Health Research Council delivered Vote of Thanks, Dr. Dhimal extended his heartfelt gratitude to all the esteemed guests, speakers, chairs, and participants of the seminar. He expressed his deep appreciation to the Founding Chair and Executive Director of the Nepal Public Health Foundation for his exemplary leadership in establishing The Global Health Network in Nepal. Dr. Dhimal concluded by extending his best wishes for the successful completion of the seminar, hoping that it would yield fruitful outcomes and contribute to the advancement of health research and collaboration in Nepal.

#### **Closing Remarks from the chair**

The session concluded with closing remarks from Dr. Aruna Uprety, President of Nepal Public Health Foundation, and Dr. Gehanath Baral, Chairman of the Nepal Health Research Council. They both expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the speakers for their insightful presentations and to the participants for their active engagement throughout the seminar.

#### Dr. Aruna Uprety, President, Nepal Public Health Foundation

Dr. Uprety shared her personal experience as a community-based health professional. She emphasized the challenges faced by community health workers conducting research, they are well acquainted about the community's needs but it is difficult for them to put them forward into words. Dr. Uprety highlighted the importance of practical research that directly addresses the needs of the local population. She urged Nepal Public Health Foundation to prioritize research efforts and ensure that the findings are communicated in a manner that is easily understood by the local community. This approach, she explained, would be valuable for health workers, mother groups, female community health workers, and government policymakers. Dr. Uprety expressed her satisfaction in gaining inspiration from the speakers, about conducting research and ensuring that the knowledge gathered from the community is shared back with the community.

#### Dr. Gehanath Baral, Chairman, Nepal Health Research Council

Dr. Baral was delighted to collaborate with Nepal Public Health Foundation and was sure that it's just the beginning of the collaboration for research and capacity building which will be helpful for the society and internal strength. He reaffirmed the commitment of the Nepal Health Research Council to research capacity building and the promotion of networking, collaboration, and partnership in this regard. He added that Nepal Health Research Council moto is to ensure quality research in Nepal which will be done by enforcing international and national guidelines and directives as well as trainings and capacity build-ups.

Dr. Baral further added that The Global health Network Nepal will help in achieving that goal. He said that whatever research is done in Nepal it has to come back to the society. The community trials and clinical trials done should be generalizable and has to be customizable within the country. He shared that NHRC is always in favor of young researchers to build their capacity and emphasized that with the help of other collaborators and the global health network to build young researchers for the country and its people. He emphasized the council's dedication to supporting researchers and facilitating a conducive environment for impactful research in Nepal.









From Left to right :Dr. Mahesh Maskey, Dr. Madhur Basnet, Dr. Lochana Shrestha, Dr. Jagadish Prasad Agarwal, Dr. Rita Thapa, Dr. Suniti Acharya, Dr. Swaraj Rajbhandari, Dr. Meghnath Dhimal and Dr. Abhilasha Karkey

# THE GLOBAL HEALTH NETWORK SEMINAR Building Health Research Capacity through Networks 14th June 2023, Nepal In Collaboration Vivin Supporting Partner Organized by: Organized by: In Collaboration Vivin Supporting Partner Organized by: Organi

Distinguished speakers and chairs during the session

## SESSION II A: Building Research Capacity: Challenges and Opportunities

The session focused on discussing the challenges faced in building research capacity and explored opportunities for improvement. Experts and researchers shared their experiences and insights on effective strategies to enhance research capacity representing their respective sectors.

#### Welcome Remarks by Chairs

The session was skillfully facilitated by Dr. Rita Thapa and Prof. Dr. Jagadish Agrawal, who served as the chairs for the session. They warmly welcomed all the participants and expressed their gratitude to the esteemed speakers for their valuable presence.

Dr. Thapa and Prof. Dr. Agrawal provided a brief introduction of each speaker, highlighting their expertise and achievements in their respective fields. They created a supportive and conducive atmosphere for the speakers to share their insights and expertise with the audience.

After introducing the speakers, Dr. Thapa and Prof. Dr. Agrawal handed over the floor to each speaker, allowing them to deliver their presentations and share their knowledge with the audience. Their efficient facilitation ensured a smooth and engaging session, enabling the speakers to effectively convey their ideas and perspectives.

#### Health research priority setting in Nepal

**Dr. Meghnath Dhimal, Chief/Senior Research Officer, Nepal Health Research Council** (NHRC), Government of Nepal delivered a comprehensive presentation during the seminar. He provided a brief background on the history of health research in Nepal, emphasizing the vital role of the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC). Established on 12 April 1991 as an autonomous body of the Government of Nepal, the NHRC plays a crucial role in promoting high-quality health research to improve the health of the population.

Dr. Dhimal highlighted key approaches to promote high-quality health research, including health research regulation, capacity building in health research, evidence generation through health, and promoting the use of evidence. These approaches contribute to strengthening the overall health research ecosystem in Nepal and ensure evidence-based decision-making in healthcare policies and practices.

Furthermore, Dr. Dhimal discussed various criteria for prioritizing health research in Nepal. These criteria encompass the magnitude of the problem, including prevalence, incidence, and risk factors such as immune status, race, and genetics. Other considerations include the burden of disease, understanding etiology (agents, risk factors, and environmental factors), the course of the disease (morbidity, disability, mortality, survival), surveillance and early diagnosis, management of control programs, socioeconomic and cultural factors, and health promotion, education, behavior change, and rehabilitation.

Based on these criteria, Dr. Dhimal presented the health research priority areas in Nepal for 2019. These areas include the health system, non-communicable diseases, communicable/infectious diseases, maternal, newborn, and child health (including reproductive health), mental health and substance abuse, accidents, injuries, and violence, nutrition and food safety, environment, climate change, and occupational health, as well as Ayurveda and alternative medicine.

Dr. Dhimal's presentation provided valuable insights into the history of health research in Nepal, the role of the NHRC, and the prioritization of health research areas. This information serves as a foundation for future research efforts and aligns with the overall objective of enhancing health outcomes and well-being in Nepal.

#### Research capacity building in maternal and child health

**Dr. Swaraj Rajbhandari, Member, Nepal Public Health Foundation, Member and past President, Nepal Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (NESOG)** delivered a significant presentation during the seminar, focusing on maternal and child health. With over 40 years of experience in obstetrics and gynecology, she shared valuable insights into the condition and advancements in this field.

Dr. Rajbhandari highlighted various research, policies, and programs that have been implemented to improve maternal and neonatal health in Nepal. These initiatives include the prevention of postpartum hemorrhage, the establishment of Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) to eliminate preventable maternal and perinatal deaths, the MNH helpline, the President Air Rescue Programme, newborn resuscitation efforts, and the prevention of avoidable disabilities and birth defects through screening.

She specifically mentioned the MNH helpline, which was introduced during the COVID-19 lockdown to save the lives of mothers and newborns in 14 districts. Through this initiative, a pool of experts provided real-time clinical advice to maternal and newborn health providers working in remote birthing centers via telephone consultation during emergencies and complications.

Dr. Rajbhandari also highlighted the challenges faced by health research at different levels, including the national, institutional, human resource, health systems, and individual/community levels. To overcome these challenges and reduce the burden of maternal morbidity and mortality, she emphasized the importance of producing research evidence and leveraging the strengths of all individuals and organizations involved in the maternal and child health sector.

Overall, Dr. Rajbhandari's presentation shed light on the progress and ongoing efforts in improving maternal and child health in Nepal. Her insights and expertise provide valuable guidance for future research and interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being of mothers and newborns in the country.

#### Research capacity building in infectious diseases

Dr. Abhilasha Karkey, Vice Director and Medical Microbiologist, Oxford University Clinical Research Unit, Patan Academy of Health Sciences, delivered an insightful presentation during the seminar.

Dr. Karkey highlighted the diverse geographical regions within Nepal and the varying health needs associated with each region. She emphasized the importance of supporting researchers from countries like Nepal that face significant health and economic burdens due to infectious diseases. Sustainable support, including training, educational assistance, and mentoring, is crucial for reducing morbidity and mortality associated with these diseases.

Dr. Karkey particularly emphasized the One Health approach, which recognizes the interconnections between human health, animal health, and the environment. In confronting the challenges posed by infectious diseases, it is essential to provide training and support not only to scientists but also to allied healthcare workers, epidemiologists, physicians, veterinarians, and others involved in the One Health space.

By fostering collaboration and providing the necessary resources, including training and mentorship, Nepal can strengthen its research capacity and effectively address the health challenges posed by infectious diseases. Dr. Karkey's presentation shed light on the importance of sustainable support and collaboration in tackling these complex health issues.

#### Research capacity building for geriatrics and multimorbidity

Dr. Lochana Shrestha, Vice-President, Nepal Public Health Foundation and the President, Nepalese Society of Community Medicine and Council member, UN International Institute on Aging, delivered an important presentation on the need for research in the field of geriatrics.

Dr. Shrestha highlighted that strategies and actions are required to address the health needs of the elderly population. The World Health Assembly declared the decade of healthy aging in 2020, emphasizing four action areas. To implement effective strategies and achieve quality outcomes, research plays a crucial role in providing evidence-based solutions.

She pointed out that there is a limited number of physically and mentally capable researchers focusing on geriatric health. Currently, there are only 49 published articles conducted by Nepalese researchers in the field of geriatrics, with a majority of them focusing on social studies, depression, quality of life, and cognition. Descriptive studies on dementia also exist but are limited in number.

Dr. Shrestha highlighted several challenges in geriatric health, including limited accessibility to healthcare services, communication and supportive environments, lack of policy implementation, and a shortage of human resources. To address these challenges and build research capacity in geriatrics, she emphasized the importance of education and training, collaborations with relevant stakeholders, availability of infrastructure and resources, research funds and grants, dissemination and translation of research findings, and advocacy for policy support.

By addressing these areas and investing in geriatric research, Nepal can effectively respond to the healthcare needs of the elderly population and improve their overall well-being. Dr. Shrestha's presentation shed light on the challenges and potential solutions in the field of geriatric health research.

#### Research capacity building in Mental Health

Dr. Madhur Basnet, Associate professor, Department of Psychiatry, B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS), highlighted the history of mental health services in Nepal and specifically addressed the issue of suicide in the country.

Dr. Basnet mentioned the National Mental Health Survey conducted in 2020, which revealed that the prevalence of suicidality in adults is 7.2% and in adolescents is 4.1%. These statistics underscore the urgent need to address mental health issues, particularly suicide prevention, in Nepal.

Dr. Basnet also discussed several major research projects in the field of mental health in Nepal. These include initiatives such as the Community Mental Health Program, the Programme for Improving Mental Health Care, the Emerald project, the RESHAPE project, the Depression Identification Instrument Development, and the Highly Hazardous Pesticide Poisoning project.

Furthermore, Dr. Basnet outlined the challenges faced in mental health research in Nepal, including a lack of research culture, qualified manpower, research funding opportunities, administrative hurdles for fund mobilization, and the poor uptake of research findings into policies and programs.

On the other hand, he also highlighted the opportunities for mental health research in Nepal. These opportunities include being at the forefront of research in areas such as suicide prevention, child and adolescent mental health, and maternal mental health. Additionally, there is increasing recognition and prioritization of mental health research by the government, growing interest among stakeholders, and a gradual buildup of research culture and capacity at the national level.

The diversity of the population in Nepal, emphasis on justice, equity, and inclusiveness in global mental health, and the support provided by the global health network and WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health also present opportunities for research in the field.

#### **Open floor Discussion:**

During the open floor discussion, a participant raised a question regarding the requirement for researchers to obtain permission from both NHRC and SWC in Nepal. They also sought ways to reduce the associated hassle.

In response, it was clarified that under the current regulations, researchers in Nepal are indeed obligated to secure permissions from both NHRC and SWC. To alleviate this administrative burden, the speaker emphasized the importance of researchers coming together and advocating for legislative changes by actively engaging with the Parliament.

Another participant inquired about strategies to strengthen mental health research in rural areas of Nepal, given the prevalence of stigma and significant data discrepancies.

To address this concern, the speaker suggested integrating mental health services into primary healthcare systems and ensuring their availability in rural communities. They highlighted the importance of allocating additional resources and actively engaging the community. Notably, it was mentioned that integrated mental health programs have already been implemented in 65 districts across Nepal as part of primary healthcare services.

Lastly, a participant questioned why ethnicity poses a challenge in mental health research in Nepal and whether this challenge is rooted in cultural or language barriers.

In response, it was explained that the challenge of ethnicity in mental health research in Nepal is primarily linked to stigma and language barriers, particularly in the Madesh region. These factors contribute to discrepancies in mental health data. Researchers were advised to acknowledge this issue and incorporate suitable adaptation tools and culturally sensitive mental health apps into their study designs.

In summary, the open floor discussion highlighted the need for researchers to navigate the requirements of obtaining permissions, strengthen mental health research in rural areas through integration and community engagement, and address challenges related to ethnicity by considering cultural sensitivities and employing appropriate research tools.

#### Closing remarks from the chair

In the closing remarks, Dr. Rita Thapa, a founding member of Nepal Public Health Foundation, and Dr. Jagadish Prasad Agrawal, former dean of the Institute of Medicine (IOM), expressed their gratitude to the speakers for their insightful presentations and the participants for their active engagement throughout the session.

#### Dr. Rita Thapa, Advisor, Nepal Public Health Foundation

During her closing remarks, Dr. Rita Thapa expressed her appreciation for the progress made by Nepal in reducing the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) from 1800 in the '60s to 151 per 100,000 live births and raising the average life expectancy from to 71 years. With met early on all the targets of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4 on child mortality. She highlighted Nepal's constitutional commitment to the "Right to health as a social fundamental right".

Dr. Thapa emphasized that simply acquiring resources is not enough; there is a need to conduct research on health equity to reduce the ongoing health gap between urban and rural areas, as well as substantial health disparities between the poorest and richest segments of population. Dr. Thapa concluded by retreating that equity based research is critical for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3.

#### Dr. Jagadish Prasad Agrawal, Former Dean, Institute of Medicine (IOM)

Additionally, Dr. Agrawal commended the networking efforts at all levels and encouraged innovative research that can bring about positive societal outcomes. He also stressed the importance of motivating young researchers to adopt a spiritual approach towards enhancing health.

They emphasized the importance of the seminar in bringing together experts and researchers from various fields to discuss critical health research topics in Nepal. They highlighted the valuable contributions made by the speakers in shedding light on the current state of research, identifying challenges, and presenting opportunities in their respective areas of expertise.

Dr. Thapa and Dr. Agrawal recognized the significance of collaborative efforts in advancing health research and its application in policy, planning, and programs. They stressed the need for continued investment in research capacity building, funding opportunities, and the utilization of research findings to address the healthcare challenges faced by Nepal.

In conclusion, they expressed their hope that the seminar would serve as a catalyst for increased collaboration, knowledge exchange, and future research endeavors in the field of public health in Nepal.









From Left to right: Dr. Biraj Man Karmacharya, Ms. Bhagawati Kalikote, Ms. Mana Rai, Dr. Ram Adhar Yadav, Dr. Bishnu P. Choulagai, Dr. Badri Raj Pande, Dr. Mahesh K. Maskey, Dr. Bharat Yadav and Dr. Kedar Prasad Baral

# SESSION II B: Building Research Capacity: Challenges and Opportunities



Distinguished speakers and chairs during the session

This session discussed the challenges faced in building research capacity and explored opportunities for improvement. Experts and researchers shared their experiences and insights on effective strategies to enhance research capacity representing their respective sectors.

#### Welcome remarks by the chair

The session was facilitated by Dr. Bharat Yadav, Ex- Vice Chancellor of Patan Academy of Health Science, and Ms. Mana Rai, the President of Nursing Association of Nepal, who served as the chairs for the session. They warmly welcomed all the participants and expressed their gratitude to the esteemed speakers for their valuable presence.

Dr. Yadav and Ms. Rai provided a brief introduction of each speaker, highlighting their expertise and achievements in their respective fields. After introducing the speakers, they handed over the floor to each speaker, allowing them to deliver their presentations and share their knowledge with the audience.

#### Research capacity building for Ayurveda and Alternative medicine

Dr. Ram Adhar Yadav, Executive Director, National Ayurveda Research and Training Center (NARTC) and Assistant Professor/Consultant, Ayurveda Campus Teaching Hospital (IOM, TU) delivered an insightful presentation. During the session, it was highlighted that public health experts often prioritize healthcare management over seeking care management, drawing attention to a significant aspect in the field.

One of the major challenges facing Ayurveda is the lack of evidence, as it is sometimes considered a pseudoscience. However, Dr. Yadav emphasized that Ayurveda should not be dismissed as pseudoscience but recognized as an ancient medical science that takes a holistic approach to disease treatment. Insufficient investment in Ayurvedic research has contributed to its decline.

Efforts are being made to generate evidence for Ayurveda through various research endeavors. These include studies focusing on different types of drug research, as well as basic and clinical research.

Dr. Yadav highlighted several strategies that need to be proposed to enhance research capacity in Ayurveda:

- Development of infrastructure to support research activities.
- Emphasis on education and training initiatives.
- Improvement of training methodologies to enhance research skills.
- Promotion of collaboration and networking among Ayurvedic researchers.
- Conservation of traditional knowledge in Ayurveda.
- Strengthening quality control measures to ensure the efficacy and safety of Ayurvedic treatments.
- Raising public awareness about the principles and benefits of Ayurveda.

By implementing these measures, the aim is to create an enabling environment for Ayurvedic research, further validate its scientific basis, and increase public understanding and acceptance of Ayurvedic practices.

#### Research capacity building on NCDs

Prof. Dr. Biraj Man Karmacharya, Director of Public health/ Community Programs and Global Engagement, Dhulikhel Hospital and associate Professor, Department of Public Health, Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences delivered an insightful presentation highlighting about the research capacity building on NCDs.

Dr. Karmacharya briefly explained about the roles of academia, government and international Institutions for conduction of researches related to NCDs. Similarly, he emphasized on building rigorous research training through diverse and innovative training programs, enhancing collaboration between public health professionals, clinicians, nurses, social scientists, etc. Hence by fostering collaborations, the academia can strengthen researches on NCDs.

Likewise, he elaborated about the vital role of Government and EDPs (Existing Development Projects) in organizing national capacity-building programs, establishing centers of excellence, grants and other research funding by ensuring diversity and inclusion whereas international institutions can contribute by creating institutionalized collaborations, focusing equitable partnership and acknowledging the difference in the research ecosystem.

#### Research capacity building in Nursing

Ms. Bhagwati Kalikote, Lecturer, Maharajgunj Nursing Campus, Institute of Medicine, TU delivered the presentation. She holds the position of master trainer for Health Response to Gender-based Violence survivors and is a certified member of the Society of Transnational Academic Researchers (STAR) Scholars.

The outcomes of enhancing research capacity in nursing encompass various aspects. These include accomplishments in nursing research, such as publications, conference presentations, and project implementations. Additionally, it leads to improvements in the quality of nursing care, better nursing education, and overall development of the nursing profession. Research capacity building also promotes evidence-based practice, allowing nurses to integrate research findings into their clinical decision-making processes. Ultimately, these efforts contribute to increased levels of satisfaction among patients and nurses, as evidence-based practices enhance the overall quality of care.

In the current nursing research landscape in Nepal, several key observations can be made. Research has become a core subject at the undergraduate level in nursing education. Funding opportunities are available through organizations like the National Health Research Council (NHRC) and the University Grant Commission. Competency-based training programs are conducted by institutions such as the Nepal Health Training Centre and other relevant organizations. However, there is a need for further emphasis on interventional research within the field of nursing, which presents an area for potential growth and development.

#### Community engagement for research capacity building

The presentation was delivered jointly by Dr. Kedar Prasad Baral and Dr. Bishnu P. Choulagai.

Dr. Kedar Prasad Baral, Professor and Program Director, Master of Public Health, Patan Academy of Health Sciences, emphasized the crucial role of community engagement in research. He highlighted the importance of cultivating a specific mindset for effective engagement, emphasizing the recognition of individuals who can contribute meaningfully. According to Dr. Baral, communication, building relationships, and acknowledgment are prerequisites for successful community engagement. He underscored that recognizing social determinants is essential as community engagement is not merely a technical issue but is deeply rooted in principles of justice, empowerment, participation, and self-determination.

Dr. Baral emphasized the significance of understanding the context, considering factors such as the location, specific community, ethnic and age groups, and the nature of the issue at hand. Illustrating his points, he cited the example of the Community-based Palliative Program conducted by PAHS, where local health workers were trained to engage the community effectively while addressing health-related issues. This approach reflects a holistic understanding of community engagement as an integral part of public health research, grounded in ethical considerations and the principles of social justice.

Dr. Bishnu Prasad Choulagai, Head of Department/Chief executive, Central Department of Public Health, Institute of Medicine (IOM) and Life member, Nepal Public Health Foundation highlighted that in undergraduate medical programs in Nepal, practical fieldwork and community-based education (CBE) are included, which require students to reside in specific locations at different stages of their studies.

He stated that previous researches indicates that Tribhuvan University has achieved its learning goals in terms of students' participation in community-based education (CBE). However, the effectiveness of this approach in actively involving communities and empowering them has been limited.

According to him, to address this, collaboration between community members, medical students, and university researchers is crucial. Our strategy will involve adopting a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach, which actively engages in participant observation within communities. This approach will support communities in identifying health issues, involve them in designing health interventions, and assess the outcomes of these interventions.

#### Closing remarks from the chair

#### Dr. Bharat Yadav, Ex-Vice Chancellor, Patan Academy of Health Sciences

Dr. Yadav highlighted the challenges of inadequate funding and lack of proper guidance in the field of research in Nepal. He emphasized the importance of teamwork and networking, as well as the need for community engagement, to make advancement in the field of research. He highlighted that academic research are mostly limited to hospitals, but there is the need to engage the community further highlighting the importance of social determinants in research with more focus on conducting researches in rural areas rather than just focusing on the urban areas. He concluded by being hopeful that this initiative will build the research capacity as we move forward. He also expressed his gratitude to Nepal Public Health Foundation for the invitation as the chair of the session.

#### Ms. Mana Rai, President, Nursing Association of Nepal

Ms. Rai emphasized that nursing professionals often conduct research only as part of their academic dissertations, and encouraged them to develop a genuine interest in conducting evidence-based research that actively engages the community. Lastly, she expressed her gratitude to Nepal Public Health Foundation for providing the floor to explore the interest of nurses in research.









From Left to Right: Dr. Badri Raj Pande, Dr. Suniti Acharya, Dr. Aliya Naheed, Dr. Rita Thapa, Prof. Dr. Sharad Raj Onta, Dr. Dharma Sharna Manandhar, Prof. Trudie Lang, and Dr. Mahesh K. Maskey

#### SESSION III: Strengthening Networking for Health Research



Dr. Badri Raj Pande, member, Advisor and Founding, NPHF delivering his closing remarks.

During this session, the distinguished guests from Oxford TGHN Lead and TGHN Asia lead delivered a presentation on the establishment of a global community to facilitate research in various healthcare settings and the formation of sustainable and capable research teams. It also included discussion about the operational mechanisms of TGHN within the context of Nepal.

#### **Opening Remarks from the Chair**

The session was moderated by Dr. Badri Raj Pande, Founding Member and Advisor of Nepal Public Health Foundation, and Dr. Suniti Acharya, Advisor of Nepal Public Health Foundation. They began by providing a concise introduction of the esteemed speakers and then gracefully handed over the floor to each speaker for their respective presentations. Their adept facilitation set the stage for a smooth and engaging session.

#### **Overview of The Global Health Network**

**Prof. Trudie Lang, Head, The Global Health Network, Oxford University** delivered an insightful overview of The Global Health Network during her presentation. The emphasis was on the Network's mission to build research systems in health on a global scale. It strives to mobilize knowledge, enhance capacity, and connect excellence in order to support comprehensive health research within every healthcare setting.

A key aspect highlighted by Prof. Lang was the network's country coordinators located across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These coordinators play a crucial role in fostering research leadership within healthcare settings. The network implements a range of activities to facilitate research skills training and promote career development. These activities encompass regional programs, such as training sessions and knowledge sharing, as well as innovative approaches like "crowd" consensus building and priority setting. Professional development opportunities for researchers and enabling programs for regional research are also key components of the network's initiatives.

Practical workshops are an integral part of the network's activities. For instance, a vector biology workshop held in Brazil included a fieldwork component. Supported learning sessions and the establishment of a rotation classroom at UNIYA in Cameroon further facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building.

Prof. Lang introduced The Global Health Network Research Cycle Resource Centre, which focuses on different stages of the research process. From framing the research question to community engagement, measuring, operations, data science, and uptake and impact, the resource center offers valuable guidance and resources to researchers at each step of the research cycle.

#### Overview of The Global Health Network Asia

Dr. Aliyah Naheed, Scientist Initiative for Non-Communicable Diseases, icddr,b and Regional Lead, The Global Health Network Asia, commenced her presentation by emphasizing the importance of addressing the existing gap in research education. She underscored the need to take action in order to bridge this gap and meet the challenges faced in delivering healthcare services in the Global South.

Dr. Naheed acknowledged the limitations in public facilities, infrastructure, financial resources, and health access that are prevalent in the Global South. She specifically highlighted the shortage of healthcare providers, using Bangladesh as an example. The presentation then shifted focus to the role of the International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) in Research Capacity Building, with a particular emphasis on generating high-quality evidence in real-time.

An introduction to The Global Health Network Asia (TGHN Asia) was provided, along with an overview of its vision and the establishment of the TGHN Asia country network. The vision of TGHN Asia centers around building research capacity in health research and data science across Asia.

Dr. Naheed further highlighted the strategic priorities for the next five years, which include shifting leadership to the Global South, scaling up knowledge mobilization and capacity building mechanisms, supporting the entire health research ecosystem, enhancing research governance and management, promoting women in science, fostering scientific leadership for staff retention, achieving impact through research translation, and strengthening community partnerships for research co-production.

#### Mechanism of Functioning of The Global Health Network in Nepal

**Dr. Sharad Raj Onta, Founding General Secretary, Nepal Public Health Foundation** presented the preliminary onset plan for the functioning of The Global Health Network (TGNH) in Nepal. His presentation aimed to provide insights into how TGHN Nepal would operate and contribute to the global health network. Dr. Onta highlighted the structure of TGHN Nepal, which will include a Coordination Committee composed of 7-9 members representing various sectors such as government/NHRC, academia, civil society organizations, and professional organizations. Within the Coordination Committee, there will be a sub-committee dedicated to different health specialties.

This sub-committee will consist of 3-5 members who specialize in areas like communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, mental health, reproductive health, and geriatric health.

The operation modality of TGHN Nepal will be guided by the principles of communication and sharing, cooperation and support, and collaboration. These principles will shape the approach of the organization as it works towards achieving its goals within the global health network.

Dr. Onta's presentation laid the foundation for the functioning and structure of TGHN Nepal, showcasing its commitment to effective communication, collaboration, and expertise in addressing various health specialties in Nepal.

#### **Open Floor Discussion:**

During the open floor discussion, a question was raised regarding whether TGHN (The Global Health Network) needs to undergo registration with SWC (Social Welfare Council). In response, it was clarified that the need for registration at SWC or NHRC (Nepal Health Research Council) depends on the specific requirements and ethical considerations of the researchers. However, it was emphasized that TGHN itself does not require separate registration. Rather, TGHN functions as a network platform that facilitates collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the formation of a research community. Its primary focus is to provide an environment that caters to the needs of researchers and supports their research endeavors.

Another question arose regarding TGHN's plans to conduct research independently. In addressing this query, it was explained that the core philosophy of TGHN revolves around connecting the research community and providing a high-quality platform that enables researchers to compete on a global scale. TGHN aims to bring different groups together and foster a capable and sustainable research team that can effectively participate in global research initiatives. However, it was clarified that TGHN does not directly conduct research itself. Instead, its focus lies in capacity building and assisting researchers in developing strong grant proposals to secure funding from external sources. This approach helps researchers enhance their skills and successfully compete for research grants.

Overall, the open floor discussion provided insights into the registration requirements of TGHN, its role as a network platform, and its emphasis on capacity building and research support for researchers aiming to obtain research funding.

#### **Closing Remarks**

#### Dr. Badri Raj Pande, Advisor and Founding Member, Nepal Public Health Foundation

The chair expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the speakers for their enlightening presentations, which provided valuable insights and perspectives on the subject mattered. Dr. Pandey acknowledged the expertise and dedication demonstrated by the speakers in sharing their knowledge with the participants.

During his closing remarks, Dr. Panday expressed that The Global Health Network (TGHN) is brimming with numerous activities, including training, research, community engagement, and collaboration. He emphasized that its introduction in Nepal is a small but significant step, and over time, the network will progress further.

#### Dr. Suniti Acharya, Advisor, Nepal Public Health Foundation

Dr. Acharya added that the formation of the TGHN Nepal committee is the remaining task. To accomplish this, a meeting or session will be organized, during which the detailed information about the committee members and their functions will be provided. Dr. Acharya stressed the vital role of TGHN in networking and research capacity building, highlighting its collaboration with the Nepal Public Health Foundation (NPHF) as a crucial stride forward for Nepal's healthcare and research endeavors. The chairs also extended their appreciation to the participants for their active engagement throughout the session. They commended the participants for their enthusiasm, thoughtful questions, and meaningful contributions to the discussions, which greatly enriched the overall learning experiences.









From Left to right: Dr. Archana Shrestha, Dr. Budhha Basnyat, Dr. Mahesh k. Maskey, Dr. Janak Prasad Koirala, Dr. Diptesh Aryal, Prof. Trudie Lang

#### SESSION IV: Clinical Trial Guideline



Dr. Vasee Moorthy, Senior Advisor, Research & Development, WHO Headquarter Geneva delivering his presentation.

In this session, Dr. Vasee Moorthy, Senior Research Advisor at WHO, delivered a presentation focusing on the World Health Assembly 2022 resolution regarding clinical trials. The presentation was followed by a panel discussion which involved distinguished speakers from the field of Clinical trial.

#### **Opening Remarks from the Chair**

The session was led by Dr. Buddha Basnyat, Chairman of the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit Nepal, and Prof. Trudie Lang, Head of The Global Health Network. They introduced the speakers and invited them to present their insights. Their facilitation created an environment for effective communication and collaboration among the participants. Their opening remarks set the stage for an engaging and impactful session.

#### Presentation on WHO 2022 resolution on Clinical Trials

**Dr. Vasee Moorthy, Senior Advisor, Research & Development, WHO Headquarter Geneva** delivered his presentation virtually focusing on the significance of clinical trials in the field of healthcare. He highlighted the World Health Assembly's resolution on Clinical Trials, which underscores the crucial role of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) in generating reliable evidence for informed decision-making.

Dr. Moorthy emphasized the need for governments and stakeholders to recognize the importance of RCTs and their impact on healthcare outcomes. He discussed the resolution's key elements, including the call for national authorities and non-state actors to prioritize the generation of high-quality evidence and the request for WHO to develop comprehensive guidance on various aspects of clinical trials.

The proposed guidance will address essential aspects such as design quality, strengthening the clinical trial ecosystem, reaching underserved populations, and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved. The aim is to streamline clinical trial processes, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, and support capacity building initiatives for better global health outcomes.

#### **DISCUSSION AMONG THE PANELISTS:**

**Dr. Janak Prasad Koirala, Professor of Infectious Disease, Patan Academy of Health Sciences** delivered a speech underscoring the importance of the Global Health Network for research and the need for revising Clinical Trial Guidelines in Nepal. He highlighted Nepal's research experience and improved capacity through initiatives like the solidarity trial and recovery trial. Networking was identified as a valuable opportunity to further strengthen research capacity. Regarding the Clinical Trial Guidelines, Dr. Koirala emphasized the need for their update to reflect advancements in research capacity since their initial preparation. He discussed challenges faced by researchers, particularly when introducing new molecules into the country.

The Drug Administration (DDA) lacks regulatory research capacity, placing the responsibility on the National Health Research Council (NHRC). However, the NHRC does not have the authority to regulate drugs, creating a complex situation for researchers. Guidelines should be supportive, facilitating the initiation of research projects.

**Dr. Archana Shrestha**, **Associate Professor of Public Health**, **Kathmandu University School of Medicine** shared her experiences and perspectives on community-based clinical trials focused on lifestyle modifications for non-communicable disease control and prevention in Nepal. She expressed support for the WHO resolution promoting transparency and capacity building in LMICs. Local investigators and high-quality clinical trials were highlighted as valuable contributors to community health improvement. Challenges in clinical trials were discussed by Dr. Shrestha, including funding limitations hindering research pursuits and the lack of capacity building opportunities within the country, making it difficult to find qualified and experienced individuals.

**Dr. Diptesh Aryal**, **Member**, **Ethical Review Board**, **Nepal Health Research Council** (**NHRC**) expressed concerns about the lack of appropriate answers for patients in ICUs in Nepal. He observed that many available guidelines and protocols are derived from evidence gathered in high-income countries, which may not directly apply to the Nepalese healthcare context. Dr. Aryal has taken the initiative to address this issue by promoting a research culture and enhancing research capacity among ICU healthcare professionals. He has formed a network to strengthen research endeavors in Nepal's ICUs and has been actively involved in improving protocols and guidelines through the NHRC's ethical review board.

#### **Open Floor Discussion**

During the open floor discussion, a participant raised concerns about the ethical perspective of clinical trials in Nepal and whether subjects are being used for the sole purpose of researchers. The participant asked how the WHO guideline aims to address this issue.

In response, Dr. Moorthy acknowledged the importance of addressing ethical concerns in clinical trials. He emphasized that the guideline being developed by WHO is just the beginning process and aims to engage stakeholders from countries interested in practical discussions on how to further develop capacity. He further highlighted the need for practical improvements in health and research, moving away from disconnected elite activities. They mentioned that Nepal has the potential to take the lead in applied conferences and can receive support from organizations like The Global Health Network (TGNH). The speaker assured that WHO is committed to providing support throughout this journey.

Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of community engagement and the active involvement of participants in discussions about research and its results. It is crucial for communities and participants to be fully included in the research process. Overall, Dr. Moorthy emphasized the need for practical advancements in health outcomes, coordination among different agencies, and community engagement in the research process.

#### **Closing Remarks from Chair**

#### Prof. Trudie Lang, Professor of Global Health Research and Head, The Global Health Network, Oxford University

Prof. Lang emphasized the significance of the WHO Assembly and the need to discuss and address concerns and barriers raised by countries. She acknowledged the efforts of Dr. Vasee Moorthy and his team in seeking input from countries to ensure the effectiveness of global health initiatives.

#### Dr. Buddha Basnyat, Chairman of OUCRU-Nepal and Founding member, Nepal Public Health Foundation

Dr. Basnyat shared his perspective on the importance of implementation alongside randomized control trials (RCTs). While acknowledging Nepal's interest in conducting RCTs and its contributions to global trials like the Recovery Trial, he emphasized the need for improved implementation of research findings.

Dr. Basnyat highlighted the example of tranexamic acid, a medication proven effective in preventing postpartum hemorrhage deaths. Despite the evidence, its implementation in Nepal has been lacking. He believes that the World Health Organization (WHO) should take a more proactive role in pushing countries like Nepal to prioritize implementation efforts. As a respected authority, WHO's endorsement and advocacy can significantly influence adoption at the national level.

Dr. Basnyat also acknowledged the capacity-building aspect of adaptive trials like the Recovery Trial, which provided opportunities for knowledge and skill development. He expressed optimism regarding the usefulness of guidelines in Nepal's context. However, he stressed the need to address the gap between research findings and practical implementation, as Nepal has struggled in this regard.

Overall, Dr. Basnyat's remarks underscore the importance of not only conducting high-quality research but also ensuring that the findings are effectively implemented to improve healthcare outcomes in Nepal.









#### **ANNEXURE**

#### **ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Dr. Badri Raj Pande Dr. Rita Thapa Prof. Dr. Ramesh Kant Adhikari Dr. Suniti Acharya Dr. Buddha Basnyat Ms. Mana Rai

#### **COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

Dr. Mahesh K. Maskey
Prof. Dr. Sharad Raj Onta
Dr. Aruna Uprety
Prof. Dr. Gehanath Baral
Dr. Pradip Gyanwali
Prof. Dr. Lochana Shrestha
Prof. Dr. Dibya Singh Shah
Dr. Madhur Basnet
Prof. Dr. Abhinav Vaidya
Dr. Ram Adhar Yadav

#### Thematic Committee Maternal and Child Health

Dr. Aruna Uprety Dr. Swaraj Rajbhandari Prof. Dr. Gehanath Baral Infectious Disease and surveillance Dr. Janak Koirala Dr. Abhilasha Karkey Dr. Sabin Thapaliya

#### Geriatrics and Multi-morbidity

Prof. Dr. Lochana Shrestha Prof. Dr. Nidesh Sapkota Mr. Ganesh Bhandari Ms. Sharmila (Dahal) Paudel

#### **Neuropsychiatry**

Prof. Dr. Jagadish P. Agrawal Dr. Puspa Sharma Dr. Madhur Basnet Dr. Hemav Raj bhandari

#### Ayurveda and Alternative Medicine

Dr. Ram Adhar Yadav Dr. Amit Man Joshi Dr. Sirjana Shrestha

#### Non- Communicable Diseases

Prof. Dr. Dibya Singh Shah Prof. Dr. Abhinav Vaidya Dr. Biraj Man Karmacharya

#### Nursing

Ms. Bhagwati Kalikote Mrs. Ajanta Singh

#### Community Engagement

Prof. Dr. Kedar Prasad Baral Dr. Bishnu P. Choulagai

#### Health Policy and Health System Research

Prof. Dr. Sharad Raj Onta Dr. Sushil C. Baral

#### Epi-biostats/ Data science

Dr. Suresh Mehata Dr. Archana Shrestha

#### Biomedicine and lab surveillance

Dr. Sameer Mani Dixit

#### Environmental Health and Climate Change

Dr. Meghnath Dhimal



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