

## Publication

### Good collaborative practice: reforming capacity building governance of international health research partnerships

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In line with the policy objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, this commentary seeks to examine the extent to which provisions of international health research guidance promote capacity building and equitable partnerships in global health research. Our evaluation finds that governance of collaborative research partnerships, and in particular capacity building, in resource-constrained settings is limited but has improved with the implementation guidance of the International Ethical Guidelines for Health-related Research Involving Humans by The Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) (2016). However, more clarity is needed in national legislation, industry and ethics guidelines, and regulatory provisions to address the structural inequities and power imbalances inherent in international health research partnerships. Most notably, ethical partnership governance is not supported by the principal industry ethics guidelines - the International Conference on Harmonization Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceutical for Human Use (ICH) Good Clinical Practice (ICH-GCP). Given the strategic value of ICH-GCP guidelines in defining the role and responsibility of global health research partners, we conclude that such governance should stipulate the minimal requirements for creating an equitable environment of inclusion, mutual learning, transparency and accountability. Procedurally, this can be supported by i) shared research agenda setting with local leadership, ii) capacity assessments, and iii) construction of a memorandum of understanding (MoU). Moreover, the requirement of capacity building needs to be coordinated amongst partners to support good collaborative practice and deliver on the public health goals of the research enterprise; improving local conditions of health and reducing global health inequality. In this respect, and in order to develop consistency between sources of research governance, ICH-GCP should reference CIOMS ethical guidelines as the established standard for collaborative partnership. Moreover, greater commitment and support should be given to co-ordinate, strengthen and enforce local laws requiring equitable research partnerships and health system strengthening.

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