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**Identifying important research gaps in how  
primary health care is organised in low- and  
middle-income countries, and ways to address  
them**

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**Felicity Goodyear-Smith on behalf of the WONCA team**

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# Table of Contents

Table of Tables	3
Table of Figures	3
Research team	4
Principal Investigator	4
Project manager	4
Co-investigators: (in alphabetical order)	4
Lead authors of implementation plans	5
WONCA Regional President advisers	5
Funding	6
Abbreviations	7
Introduction	8
Aims and Objectives	10
Methodology	10
Development of prioritised research questions	10
Stakeholder engagement	10
Study design	11
Analyses	12
Scoping literature review	13
Gap map	13
Research implementation plans	14
Results	14
Development of prioritised research questions	14
Scoping literature review	20
Gap map	23
Research implementation plans	25
Research Implementation Plan Brazil	26
Research Implementation Plan South Africa	30
Research Implementation Plan Malaysia	35
Research Implementation Plan Nigeria	40
Discussion	45
Summary of results and relationship to existing literature	45
Strengths of our study	46

Limitations	48
Implications going forward	48
References	50
Appendix 1 Priority and specific research areas & potential research questions	73
Appendix 2 Collective networks of the research team	77
Appendix 3 List of low and middle income countries	80
Appendix 4 Text for Round 1 Delphi panel for Qualtrics	84
Appendix 5 Codes for organisation / models of care	88
Appendix 6 Search terms for PHC and LMIC since 2003	89
Appendix 7 PHCPI conceptual framework	91
Appendix 8 Number of studies per LMIC country	92

## **Table of Tables**

Table 1 Numbers of enrolled participants residing and working in low and middle income countries.....	15
Table 2 Demographics of LMIC panel responders in each round.....	16
Table 3 Research questions for PHC organisation rated for importance.....	17
Table 4 Number of studies per global region.....	22

## **Table of Figures**

Figure 1 Countries of enrolled participants .....	15
Figure 2 Coding matrix for PHC organisation.....	21
Figure 3 Flow chart for search on PHC organisation .....	22
Figure 4 Number of studies from each LMIC .....	23
Figure 5 Gap map of studies .....	24

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## Abbreviations

AAAPC	Australasian Association of Academic Primary Care
ABFM	American Board of Family Medicine
HIC	High income country
LIC	Low income country
LMIC	Low and middle income country
MIC	Middle income country
NAPCRG	North American Primary Care Research Group
NZ	New Zealand
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PHC	Primary health care
PHCPI	Primary Health Care Performance Initiative
PPP	Public private partnership
RGC	Robert Graham Center
SAPC	Society for Academic Primary Care
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization
WONCA	World Organization of Family Doctors
WP-R	Working Party on Research



## Introduction

Globally, it has long been recognised that timely access to affordable, acceptable health care from competent providers is crucial to achieving prevention, diagnosis, treatment and ongoing management of health problems.<sup>1-5</sup> A strong primary health care (PHC) sector with an ongoing responsibility for integrating and addressing multiple care needs is key to doing this in a cost-effective and proactive way that maximises patient empowerment and addresses population health needs. Delivery of PHC requires a well-trained and well-resourced workforce which is adequate and appropriate for specific regional and national contexts. This may require capacity building of primary care physicians, to work in the context of interdisciplinary teams. PHC has to apply general principles under prevailing socio-economic cultural and health care conditions, with a focus on the priorities of the population under care. However, many countries are only just beginning to understand how to apply these principles, and have not yet evaluated the factors which could support effective PHC in their settings. This makes PHC research capacity in LMIC an essential feature of PHC development.

In 1978, the Declaration signed at Alma-Ata identified the importance of primary health care, and called for it to be strengthened, particularly in low and middle income countries (LMIC).<sup>6</sup> The initial response was the introduction of vertical programmes for specific populations and conditions,<sup>7</sup> but contemporarily PHC is now expected to give access to a range of services spanning health promotion, prevention, acute and chronic care management, palliative care and rehabilitation for the whole population using multidisciplinary teams.<sup>8</sup> These are people-focused and community-based horizontal services for both individuals and families.<sup>9</sup> The Declaration recognised that key factor in its effectiveness is individual and community engagement in PHC organisation.<sup>6</sup>

In order to enhance the quality and accessibility of PHC, and to integrate medical care across different illnesses and needs, changes in the workforce may be needed. The development of family physicians (a ‘new’ speciality to some countries, though long established in others) is linked with the need to develop a robust academic base for family medicine education, training and research. However, many countries face ongoing challenges both in resourcing and managing academic capacity development, against a picture of global inequity – for example, sub-Saharan Africa is frequently cited as having 24% of the global disease burden but only 3% of the world’s health workers and less than 1% of the world’s health expenditure.<sup>10</sup> Research has disproportionately occurred in high-income countries (HIC),<sup>11 12</sup> and when conducted in LMIC has often been led by international agencies and governments, with little evidence of subsequent implementation.<sup>13</sup>

As part of the ongoing drive towards universal health coverage, and recognising the issues above, governments are increasingly considering how to improve their PHC sector. There is a global move to measuring who is working in this sector, what they do, and what the outcomes are. There is also an expectation that accurate data can be provided to support both PHC workforce profiling and activity. However, much research in practice is conducted in hospital

settings, focusing on new diagnostic and treatment modalities. Even in developed countries, recommendations for practice often lack evidence from primary health care settings because research capacity and data from this sector is not prioritised.<sup>14</sup> There is also the challenge of naturalistic change and variation in health systems as new models of care are implemented, often without concurrent systematic evaluation of the outcomes of such changes.

There is therefore a need to engage directly with the PHC sector to identify gaps in research, and to ensure that their views on the current models, key changes, and market factors are identified, and their ability to provide relevant data for future studies is tested. Research, plus knowledge from our collective work with primary care in LMICs, shows that different settings call for different models of care. For example, while patients in high income countries may all have their own primary care doctor, this goal may be unrealistic in the short term for areas of Africa with fewer resources - where a team-based approach led by family physicians may be a more sustainable model. The effectiveness of service delivery will depend on such elements as the composition of teams, their leadership structure, the degree they are horizontally integrated, and the ability of team members to share information. Adequate resourcing is required to establish and maintain an effective interdisciplinary PHC workforce of both family physicians and other interdisciplinary team members including nurses, midwives, mid-level care workers and community health workers. In many LMIC countries, data from the private as well as public health sectors are essential, as private health care may be a major provider; and this sector is the least regulated in terms of service design, quality, and equity of access. All of these factors must be considered, explored, and described when creating a research agenda for LMICs.

PHC delivery requires a community-based workforce, including medical practitioners. Family physicians (called general practitioners in some countries) are increasingly receiving postgraduate training to deliver first point of contact comprehensive generalist medical care for all.<sup>15</sup> They are frequently part of a multi-professional team which is also responsible for population-level services of health promotion and prevention, as well as acute and chronic care.<sup>16</sup> The scope of practice for family physicians varies with context and availability of other health professionals, and tends to be more extensive in rural and isolated areas. There has been task-shifting and other health practitioners such as nurses, nurse practitioners and community pharmacists are progressively taking on roles previously undertaken by family physicians, but family medicine training continues to be for generalist medical care which is comprehensive and with continuity over time.

A well-functioning health system requires vertical integration of PHC with secondary care services, and inter-sectoral integration across health and social services. An expanded chronic care model will incorporate population health promotion and disease prevention, and address social determinants of health and community partnerships. Identifying the contextual barriers and facilitators to integration of different systems in different contexts, ultimately informs policy, research, and implementation, and strategies to study and effectively scale up innovative interventions within and across countries. This adds another set of research dimensions. Finally, in 2017 the Primary Health Care Performance Initiative (PHCPI)

developed a conceptual framework of the five domains of highly functioning primary health care (PHC): system - inputs, service delivery processes, outputs and outcomes,<sup>17</sup> and subsequent mapping of 35 research topics across these domains.<sup>18</sup> The Primary Health Care Measurement & Implementation Research Consortium identified four prioritised research areas, with associated potential research questions (see Appendix 1 Priority and specific research areas & potential research questions). So workforce, service delivery models, and measurement, all may be areas where research is needed in LMICs.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to address the priority innovation area #3: Organization and models of care (workforce and team development, scale and new models for management).

Our aim is to identify and prioritise the knowledge needs of PHC practitioners and researchers in LMIC, leveraging on the work previously conducted by Primary Health Care Measurement & Implementation Research Consortium, also further informed by a scoping literature review.

Specific objectives are to:

1. Produce a list of 10-15 prioritised research questions.
2. Produce a gap map, including areas where there is evidence of what works to improve the gap, and where there are major gaps in evidence regarding how to measure and/or improve PHC organisation.
3. Prepare research implementation plans for the top four research questions.

## **Methodology**

### ***Development of prioritised research questions***

#### ***Stakeholder engagement***

Prior work confirms that the successful engagement of PHC providers in research enquiries requires fostering the belief that the project outputs will be helpful to their constituency; making efficient use of their time and resources; clear conceptual and linguistic communication; and trust in the agency making the enquiry.<sup>19</sup> Limiting replies to governmental responders may miss important stakeholders, and emergent examples of PHC research and innovation. It is essential to engage academic and clinical staff already working in PHC sectors, who understand the context of their own settings.<sup>20</sup> For this study we drew on our extensive collective networks, including WONCA (World Organisation of Family Doctors), Robert Graham Center, The American Board of Family Medicine, and the Besroul Centre (see Appendix 2 Collective networks of the research team). We also enlisted the support of Primafamed (an institutional network of family physicians, health professionals, academics and researchers in sub-Saharan Africa); The North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG); the South Pacific Community (SPC); Global Health at the

School of Population Health, University of Auckland; and the International Council of Nurses to disseminate information about this project. Furthermore, we specifically targeted rural networks, including WONCA Rural, -recognising that the rural voice is important, and these communities are often neglected in the global discussions.

### **Study design**

We used a modified Delphi panel of PHC experts from LMIC. This is an iterative technique in which sequential surveys are answered anonymously by a range of relevant experts, with summarised feedback to enable reaching a consensus.<sup>21</sup> LMIC were determined from the World Bank list of economies (see Appendix 4).<sup>22</sup> We aimed for a diverse sample, with representation from LMIC in each of the following six regions as defined by WONCA (<http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/AboutWonca/Regions.aspx>): Africa, Asia / Pacific; South Asia; Latin America and the Caribbean; Eastern Mediterranean, and Europe. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, 18 January 2018 (Ref 020630).

Participants were invited using the networks listed above, augmented by ‘snowballing’ sampling techniques (allowing invitees to disseminate the details to others who they deemed eligible).<sup>23</sup> We used a sampling matrix to ensure that our panel represented diversity in gender, age, residing country, location (rural or urban), role and discipline, and years of experience. Inclusion criteria were PHC practitioners, researchers or policy-makers residing and working in a LMIC. They required experience deemed relevant to provide opinions on regional or national research needs on the key area of PHC organisation (the way services are delivered, with best practice care and services for an individual or a population throughout the stages of a condition or an injury). While it would have been preferable to provide translations of the survey into the first languages of our participants, the limited time and resources available precluded this, hence an exclusion criterion was insufficient fluency in written English. People of LMIC origin now living and working in a HIC were excluded. Our approach was to use advisory stakeholders (providers, researchers, policy-makers) who may identify gaps not identified by a literature review, by providing them with key categories and conducting an iterative review throughout the process.<sup>24</sup>

We had a timeline of three months to recruit the expert panel and conduct three survey rounds. The first round was qualitative with the aim of generating as many ideas as possible, while the remaining two followed a modified Delphi method, providing anonymised summaries of experts’ responses to facilitate group convergence.

Participant recruitment took place in January 2018 via email. Responders whose details met study criteria were enrolled as panellists. The surveys were delivered using Qualtrics software, a web-based tool. Respondents had one week to complete each round. All rounds were anonymous. Round 1 survey was piloted among WONCA executive members prior to panel circulation to assess that it was comprehensible to non-native English-speakers, and easy and quick to respond to.<sup>25</sup> Modifications were made in response to feedback.

To protect the privacy of panellists in subsequent dissemination of research findings, participant demographics were limited to residing region and country; rural or urban; age (range); gender current role(s) (practitioner including type, academic, policy-maker), and years of experience.

In Round 1, participants were asked to generate research questions which addressed gaps in knowledge in organisation (such as workforce, models of care, use of teams, scope of care, transitions of care, government policy). The text for Delphi Round 1 can be found in Appendix 4. Enrolled participants were invited to respond through individual links to the survey. Extracted questions generated by the panellists were collated and coded into domains, categories and sub-categories using a general inductive thematic approach (see Appendix 5).<sup>26</sup> Two researchers independently coded the first 25 respondent replies and Cicchetti-Allison kappa co-efficients (a measure of rater agreement) were calculated to check for consistency in coding. Data were sorted by codes, collapsed, and synthesised to lists of questions for the key area. Where there were similar questions from a number of participants, these were combined into representative questions for Round 2.

In Round 2, all enrolled participants were invited to rate each question on a four-point Likert scale for level of importance to be researched in their country. The question lists were randomly presented to each participant to prevent response bias from the order of presentation. The participants' responses were used to calculate agreement, which was indicated by mean score, where a larger mean demonstrated more agreement. Collated responses were ordered in degree of importance, and the top 16 research questions were selected for both areas.

In Round 3, panellists were asked to prioritise the research questions by dragging and dropping them into order of importance for their country. The question lists again were randomly presented.

Ariadne Lab is concurrently funding similar work on PHC quality and safety, and on policy and governance. We identified that some of the questions related more to these areas than PHC organisation, and these were removed. We were separately conducting the same exercise for PHC financing, and one of the top-ranking questions generated from that work fitted better into PHC organisation, so we included this. The four highest-ranking questions for PHC organisation were selected for the subsequent formulation of research implementation plans.

### ***Analyses***

We used a general inductive approach to thematic analysis for Round 1.<sup>26</sup> Statistical analyses were performed with SAS version 9.3 (SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC).

### ***Scoping literature review***

The literature review was conducted to test whether there was already a LMIC literature base for the research questions generated by the panel. A two-dimensional coding matrix was constructed based on the PHCPI conceptual framework and the dimensions of PHC organisation identified through coding the questions generated in Round 1 of the panel. The coding matrix was designed to search for specific answers to questions generated by the panel. We wish to acknowledge David Peiris and his team at the George Institute for Global Health whose work informed our coding matrix, and to thank them for sharing their material with us and recommending use of Eppi-Reviewer 4. A selection of the searches were conducted by two researchers independently to avoid researcher bias and check for coding consistency.<sup>27</sup>

The search consisted of a string of terms for PHC and LMIC since 2003 (the last 15 years) – see Appendix 6. This was followed by MeSH and / or text words [tw] / or title and abstract words [tiab] relating to the specific domain or sub-domain from the coding matrix.

Inclusion criteria were studies conducted in a low income country or countries within the last 15 years in primary health care or family practice with MeSH or key terms pertaining to the questions of interest. Commentaries were excluded. Only covering a limited time period is an accepted technique for conducting rapid reviews.<sup>28</sup> The studies were screened for relevance, and those not meeting the inclusion criteria were excluded initially by reviewing the title, secondly the abstract, and thirdly on a rare occasion, the full paper as necessary. Due to the tight timeframe imposed by the funders, the search did not extend to the grey literature.

The search was conducted in PubMed through Eppi-Reviewer 4 literature management software with shared review. A two-dimensional coding matrix was constructed based on the PHCPI conceptual framework and the dimensions of PHC organisation identified through coding the questions generated in Round 1 of the panel. We wish to acknowledge David Peiris and his team at the George Institute for Global Health whose work informed our coding matrix, and to thank them for sharing their material with us and recommending use of Eppi-Reviewer 4.

Using our matrix, selected articles relevant to the question were coded for both axes, and for filters to be added to the map. These consisted of a list of the global regions and a list of all LMIC countries.

### ***Gap map***

A gap map does not answer a specific research question; rather it provides a broad overview of existing evidence. Our gap map is based on the generated questions of interest by our panellist, and our subsequent literature reviews to determine whether there is in fact existing evidence relating to these. It required development of a framework of the interventions and outcomes of interest.<sup>28</sup> In our case we used the domains, categories and sub-categories developed from the generated research questions to inform our conceptual framework, as

well as the PHCPI conceptual framework (see Appendix 4: PHCPI conceptual framework), and informed by similar work being conducted by Dr David Peiris and his team at the George Institute, Australia.

Once all our selected articles were coded, the software providers at Eppi-Reviewer 4 generated our gap map for us, to enable visualisation of the ‘bubbles’ of available evidence and the evidence gaps related to the 36 research questions.

### ***Research implementation plans***

A key component of the PHC perspective is the bottom-up approach, ensuring that research is conducted by and with, not on, the people for whom will benefit. Therefore once the top four questions were determined, we asked our panellists, members of the WONCA Working Party on Research and Besrouer Fellows to indicate if they had a particular interest in one, and if so, what methods might they use, did they know of any relevant datasets or innovative programmes in their country or region that might be evaluated or scaled up. Interest was considerable and rapid, with 45 responses within a few days.

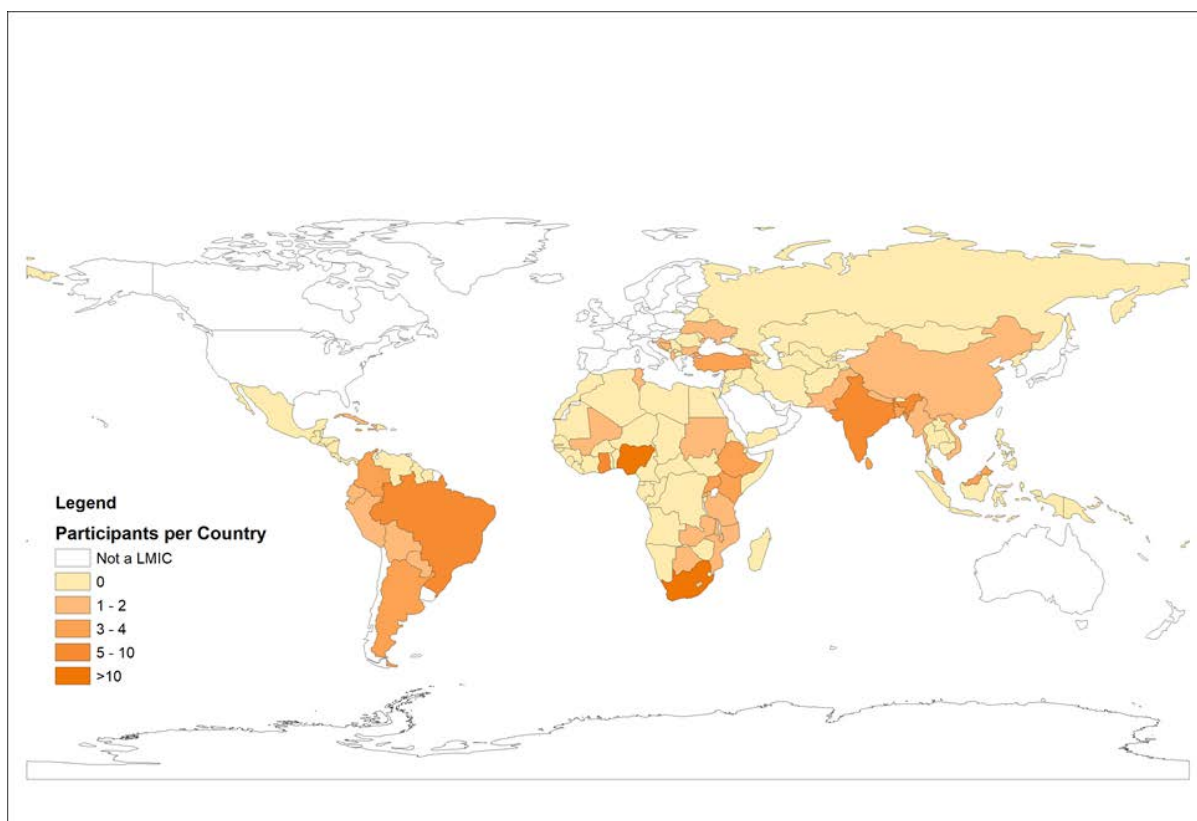
Research questions were allocated on the basis of judgement of the applying team to be able to deliver, based on their previous work, plus spreading the work throughout different countries and regions of the world. They were provided with a template to produce a three to five page outline research implementation plan to include specific aims, study design, targeted geographic regions, potential research team and partners, overview work plan, and estimated total budget needed to conduct the research. Research teams were offered a mentor from a HIC (member of the project research team or other) to provide support and feedback.

Draft plans were used at a workshop run by members of the research team at the WONCA Europe conference in Krakow, Poland in late May 2018. During the workshop, small groups of participants critiqued the plans and provided feedback. These critiques were then sent back to those preparing the plans for their LMIC to help refine them.

## **Results**

### ***Development of prioritised research questions***

There were 141 participants enrolled in the study from 50 LMIC from all global regions (Figure 1).



**Figure 1** Countries of enrolled participants

Africa had high representation including four low-income countries (LIC). Asia Pacific and the Eastern Mediterranean (i.e. North Africa and the Middle East) were relatively under-represented. See Table 1.

**Table 1** Numbers of enrolled participants residing and working in low and middle income countries

Global region*	Number of MIC / number MIC in region (%)	Number LIC / number LIC in region (%)	Number of enrolled participants
Europe	8/22 (36)	0/0 (0)	14
Africa	11/20 (55)	4/27 (15)	69
South Asia	4/6 (67)	1/1 (100)	19
Asia Pacific	6/23 (26)	0/1 (0)	11
North American Caribbean	3/6 (50)	1/1 (100)	5
South America	9/19 (47)	0 (0)	19
Eastern Mediterranean	3/13 (23)	0/1 (0)	4

Seventy (50%) completed Round 1 with a broad range of demographic characteristics (Table 2). A number hold dual roles as health practitioner and academic, and some also indicated that they have a policy-making role.



**Table 2 Demographics of LMIC panel responders in each round**

	<b>Round 1</b>	<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Round 3</b>
	<b>N=70 (50%)</b>	<b>N=84 (60%)</b>	<b>N=68 (48%)</b>
	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	42 (60)	46 (55)	39 (57)
Female	28 (40)	38 (45)	29 (43)
<b>Age in years</b>			
Under 30	2 (3)	4 (5)	3 (4)
30-39	16 (23)	21 (25)	15 (22)
40-49	22 (31)	24 (29)	18 (27)
50-59	18 (26)	22 (26)	22 (32)
60 and over	12 (17)	13 (15)	10 (15)
<b>Location</b>			
Urban	50 (71)	62 (74)	52 (76)
Rural	20 (29)	22 (26)	16 (24)
<b>Global region</b>			
Europe	9 (13)	13 (15)	10 (15)
Africa	31(44)	35 (42)	31 (46)
Eastern Mediterranean	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
South Asia	10 (14)	11 (13)	7 (10)
Asia Pacific	6 (9)	6 (7)	6 (9)
North America	2 (3)	5 (6)	2 (3)
Caribbean			
South America	11 (16)	13 (16)	11 (16)
<b>Health practitioner<sup>‡</sup></b>			
Family doctor	52 (74)	57 (68)	46 (68)
Other doctor	1 (1)	3 (4)	3 (4)
Nurse	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
<b>Years as health professional</b>			
<5	6 (9)	9 (11)	8 (12)
5-10	14 (20)	13 (15)	12 (18)
11-15	12 (17)	13 (15)	11 (16)
16-20	7 (10)	7 (8)	6 (9)
>20	15 (21)	19 (23)	13 (19)
<b>Primary care academic<sup>‡</sup></b>			
Junior academic role	24 (34)	37 (44)	20 (29)
Senior academic role	31 (44)	21 (25)	27 (40)
<b>Years as academic</b>			
<5	18 (26)	17 (20)	12 (18)
5-10	19 (27)	24 (29)	19 (28)
11-15	5 (7)	7 (8)	3 (4)

16-20	7 (10)	5 (6)	8 (12)
>20	6 (9)	5 (6)	5 (7)
<b>Policy--maker<sup>‡</sup></b>	18 (26)	16 (19)	14 (21)
Years as policy-maker	18 (26)	16 (19)	14 (21)
<5	9 (13)	6 (7)	5 (7)
5-10	5 (7)	6 (7)	4 (6)
11-15	2 (3)	2 (2)	2 (3)
16-20	1 (1)	2 (2)	1 (1)
>20	1 (1)	0 (0)	2(3)

\* WONCA global regions see <http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/AboutWonca/Regions.aspx>

<sup>‡</sup> Some panellists hold more than one role hence total >100%

Independent coding of the first 25 survey responses showed a high degree of consistency with a Cicchetti-Allison kappa co-efficient weight  $| = 0.879$  (95% CI 0.7345–1.000)  $p < 0.0001$  (almost perfect agreement). In the final LMIC dataset, 744 valid generated questions or responses were coded. Round 2 consisted of 36 questions on organisation for rating.

Eighty-four (60%) of the enrolled participants completed Round 2 (see Table 2). Individual respondents in each round could not be identified in order to maintain confidentiality, and therefore it is unknown how many completed all three rounds. Table 3 shows the 36 questions rated for importance, with the top 16 questions indicated above the black bar.

**Table 3 Research questions for PHC organisation rated for importance**

Organisation / models of care	Sum	Mean
1. How can family physicians be supported to provide comprehensive community-based care instead of resources being directed into vertical programmes?	290	3.58
2. What are the drivers for PHC teams to deliver high quality services (intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as pay, status, career pathway/promotion etc)?	286	3.53
3. How can education and training support the PHC workforce to deliver the range of services that address priority health needs of the community?	284	3.51
4. How does PHC impact the health indicators of the countries? What are these indicators? How are they measured? How do they compare between countries?	284	3.51
5. What are the factors that facilitate recruitment and retention of a PHC workforce in underserved community settings?	280	3.46
6. What are the best strategies to implement and monitor best practice in PHC?	280	3.46
7. Are the services and scope of practice of PHC aligned with people's health needs, taking into account variations in population needs, resources and geography, and what is the evidence on which the range of services/scope of care provided should be decided?	279	3.44

8. What strategies can be undertaken to ensure quality in the delivery of PHC service to patients (e.g. training/research/quality control)?	279	3.44
9. What are the factors or incentives that can improve distribution of PHC workforce or equity of accessing PHC services?	277	3.42
10. How can different stakeholders (e.g. policymakers, health system managers, health workforce organisations, academic institutions and communities) support and assist the PHC workforce and successful team functioning?	277	3.42
11. How can PHC services be integrated with other community-based health and social services?	276	3.41
12. What are the factors to be considered and negotiated for successful referral from primary to secondary care and back?	275	3.40
13. What PHC models of care provision in resourced limited environments provide the highest impact?	274	3.38
14. How should care be horizontally integrated and coordinated among the multidisciplinary PHC team?	273	3.37
15. What factors should determine the composition of the PHC team and what professionals should the team include as a minimum?	270	3.33
16. What are the essential features to ensure adequate coordination and collaboration among PHC team members to address the priority health concerns of the population they serve?	270	3.33
17. What procedures and protocols are required to ensure seamless transitions and transfers occur when required to and from primary and secondary care? What role can IT play in this?	269	3.32
18. What is the best leadership model for PHC? Who should lead the PHC delivery team where there is no physician?	268	3.31
19. How can different stakeholders (e.g. health system managers, health workforce members, academic institutions and communities) advise policymakers on how to ensure that PHC services address population health needs?	268	3.31
20. What can be done to prioritise limited resources and what alternatives including telemedicine can assist in providing PHC to under-resourced areas?	264	3.26
21. What tools and processes are best for assessing the match between PHC team structure and function and patient/community needs?	263	3.25
22. What is the effective panel (patient population) size for provision of effective, comprehensive PHC? How does this differ depending on worker type, PHC team composition, and location (e.g. urban vs rural)?	259	3.20
23. How does a PHC team establish practice priorities, what essential services need to be provided and decide what is out of scope?	255	3.15
24. Are there differences in the ability to access PHC based on the region of the country, and between rural and urban?	254	3.14
25. What are the most useful ways of delineating PHC services and hospital services in a generalist district health system model?	253	3.12

26. What do patients consider should be the basic / essential scope of practice for PHC team?	252	3.11
27. What role is there for specialists to see patients in community settings and for PHC workers including family physicians to work in secondary and tertiary settings?	252	3.11
28. Why is there a significant number of the populace not able or willing to access services in PHC?	251	3.10
29. What role is there for community members guide the development and delivery of public and private community-based PHC services and to contribute to government policy which supports these services?	247	3.05
30. What are the most effective and efficient means of tracking of where PHC workers practice after completing training in LMICs?	243	3.00
31. How do government policies impact migration (import or export) of PHC physicians in LMICs?	242	2.99
32. How can traditional healers be accommodated within a PHC system?	238	2.94
33. What are the legal barriers & enablers that most inhibit and facilitate access to PHC services?	234	2.89
34. Is there a role for high school graduates to work in PHC teams as community workers if physicians and other trained clinicians are not available, particularly in rural areas, and what would a standardised skill set for these health workers be?	233	2.88
35. How do different PHC terminologies in LMIC and HIC countries influence comparative international research outcomes?	231	2.85
36. Do centres of excellence in key urban areas focus predominantly on secondary and tertiary services in your country? Are workers sent to rural and PHC settings as a form of disciplinary action?	223	2.75

\* Maximum possible score = 336 (if all panellists rated the question very important)

Round 3 was completed by 68 (48%) of enrolled participants. One of our top ranking questions in our parallel PHC financing project ('How can the public and private sectors work more collaboratively to improve and integrate PHC coverage and prevent segmentation of the services?') was clearly more relevant to PHC organisation than finance, hence it was moved here. Team discussions on the feasibility of answering some of the questions meant that we moved some up or down the list.

The final top four ranked questions are:

- 1 What are the factors to be considered and negotiated for successful referral from primary to secondary care and back?
- 2 How should care be horizontally integrated and coordinated among the multidisciplinary PHC team?
- 3 How can the public and private sectors work more collaboratively to improve and integrate PHC coverage and prevent segmentation of the services?

- 4 How can different stakeholders (eg policymakers, health system managers, health workforce organisations, academic institutions and communities) support and assist the primary health care workforce and successful team functioning?

### ***Scoping literature review***

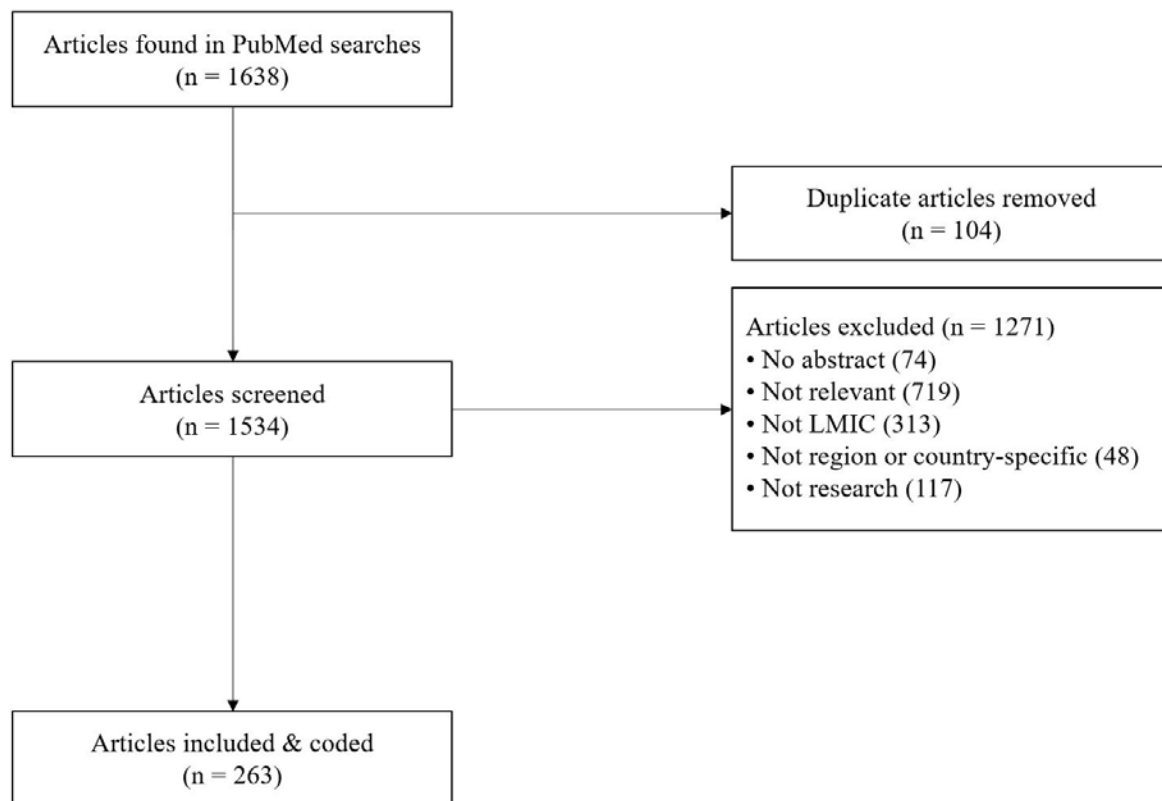
Our coding matrix is shown in Figure 2. One axis consists of components of service delivery (accessibility, continuity, comprehensiveness, coordination, person-centred care) and system outcome (equity, efficiency, effectiveness) and the other access dimensions of PHC organisation (workforce, teams, scope of practice, integration). Development of this was informed by our coding of the original 36 questions, as well as the PHCPI conceptual framework and the coding matrix previously developed by the George Institute which also looked at the organisation of PHC and models of care.

The LMIC(s) in which the study was conducted, and the global region, were added as filters.

		PHC service delivery				System outcomes			
		Accessibility / coverage	Continuity	Comprehensiveness	Coordination	Person-centred care	Equity	Efficiency	Effectiveness
<b>Workforce</b>	<b>Training</b>								
	<b>Recruitment &amp; retention</b>								
	<b>Distribution</b>								
	<b>Staff well-being (eg remuneration, satisfaction)</b>								
	<b>Mentoring / supervision</b>								
<b>Team</b>	<b>Composition</b>								
	<b>Competencies / task shifting</b>								
	<b>Organisation</b>								
	<b>Leadership</b>								
<b>Scope of practice</b>	<b>Health promotion</b>								
	<b>Public health</b>								
	<b>Prevention / screening</b>								
	<b>Services for specific conditions</b>								
	<b>Government funded services</b>								
	<b>In different settings eg urban vs rural</b>								
<b>Service integration</b>	<b>With secondary care, transitions care, referrals</b>								
	<b>With social services, community outreach</b>								
	<b>Public private relationship / partnership</b>								
	<b>Between different health professionals</b>								

*Figure 2 Coding matrix for PHC organisation*

The flowchart for total number of papers retrieved, excluded with reason, and final number included and coded is shown in Figure 3.



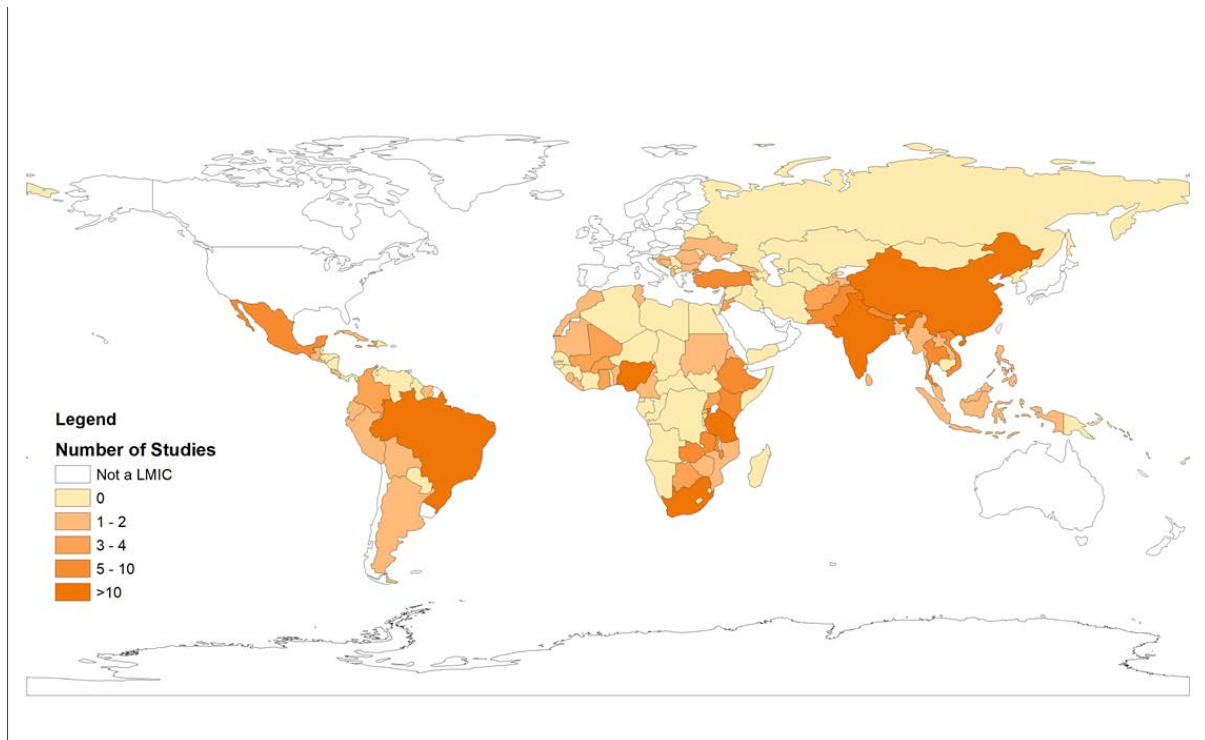
**Figure 3 Flow chart for search on PHC organisation**

There were 263 articles included from the searches, coded according to the matrix for the two axes, and also coded for region and country.<sup>29-278, 259-291</sup> All regions of the world were represented, with the most studies in Africa, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (Table 4).

**Table 4 Number of studies per global region**

Global region	Number of studies
Africa	93
Latin America & Caribbean	60
Asia / Pacific	47
South Asia	32
Europe	18
Eastern Mediterranean	13

The number of studies for each LMIC is shown in Appendix 8. These are presented in a world map in Figure 4.



**Figure 4** Number of studies from each LMIC

### **Gap map**

The bubble gap map was generated through Eppi-Reviewer. A static version can be seen in Figure 5. For the interactive web-based map which presents both heat-map and bubble-map versions, includes filters for LMIC and for global regions, and enables viewing of all studies in a cell by hovering over the bubble, click on:



PHC\_MoC\_GapMap\_269\_26062018.html

This map can be viewed in Google Chrome, Firefox or Microsoft Edge, but not Internet Explorer.



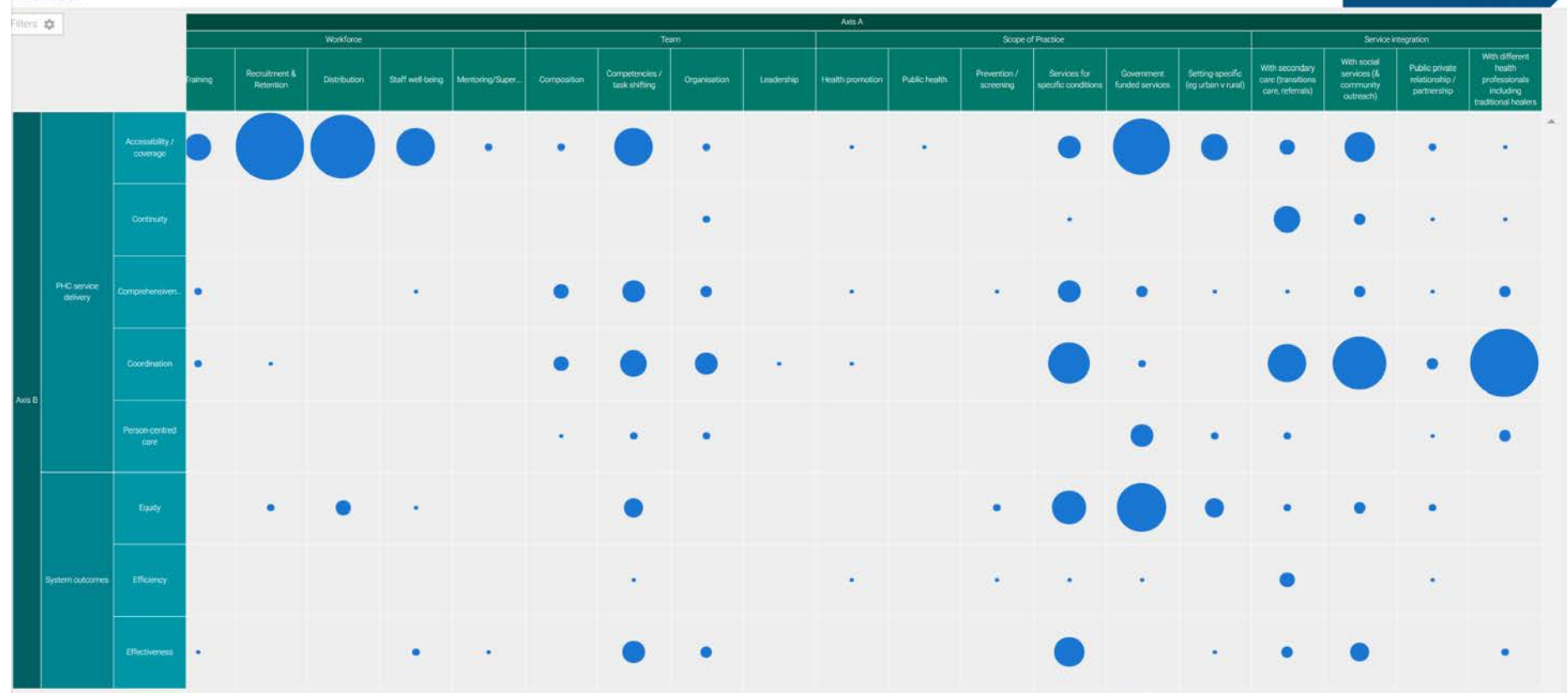


Figure 5 Gap map of studies

### ***Research implementation plans***

The top four questions relating to organisation of PHC were modified to relate specifically to the country or region for which the plan is developed. The final four questions are:

1. What are the factors to be considered and negotiated for successful referral from primary to secondary care and back in Brazil?
2. How should care be horizontally integrated and coordinated among the multidisciplinary primary health care team in South Africa?
3. How can the public and private sectors work more collaboratively to improve and integrate primary health care coverage and prevent segmentation of the services in Malaysia?
4. How can different stakeholders (eg policymakers, health system managers, health workforce organisations, academic institutions and communities) support and assist the primary health care workforce and successful team functioning in Nigeria?

The five-page proposals developed by PHC colleagues in these countries follow.

## **Research Implementation Plan Brazil**

*What are the factors to be considered and negotiated for successful referral from primary to secondary care and back in Brazil?*

### **Background and significance**

With the implementation of Brazilian Health System (SUS), institutionalized in Brazil by Laws 8080/90 and 8142/90, the development of primary health care (PHC) began to generate better health outcomes for Brazilian citizens. This level of care, recommended since the International Conference on Primary Health Care Alta-Ata,<sup>292</sup> as a driver of a broader view on health surveillance, population nutritional conditions and prevention, already a look beyond the individual, that is, for the family, environment and community.

The political agenda for strengthening PHC through the Family Health Strategy (ESF)<sup>293</sup> gradually consolidated in the country, and in 2006 became one of the priority dimensions of the Pact for Life. The ESF consolidation strengthened the Brazilian PHC, making it possible to extend coverage, provide integral care and develop health promotion. ESF became the main entrance of the SUS user, coordinating care and organising the Network Care Health (RAS, in Portuguese: Redes de Atenção à Saúde).

However, this broad mosaic of possibilities, which made it possible to expand health coverage in the Brazil, especially among the most vulnerable, left some gaps, especially in the communication between the primary and secondary levels of care, jeopardising WONCA core competencies such as primary care management (including care coordination, the so-called centrality of care carried out in the RAS) and the comprehensive approach.

Thus, considering these central aspects, we must investigate what factors should be considered - and negotiated - for effective referral between primary and secondary care in Brazil.

### **Specific Aims**

- 1) To identify factors that influence referral between primary and secondary care in Brazilian context.
- 2) To test and develop strategies to improve communication between primary and secondary care within the main systems of referral in Brazil

### **Objectives**

- To evaluate characteristics of the PHC task force that influence the attribute "care coordination" in the population of Brazilian physicians and nurses working in the PHC and also in secondary care.
- To explore and better detail the barriers and potentialities involved in referral between primary and secondary care.
- To construct and develop strategies to cope with the communication gap between primary and secondary care from tracer conditions (like depression, diabetes type 2 or cervical cancer but to be defined) (e.g., patient accompanied by different physicians and without medication conciliation; patients with multiple requests for the same laboratory or images studies by different physicians, disruption of the longitudinal care of the family doctor with his patient after referral, queuing and delay of care in specialised care).

## **Study design**

Five health regions will be studied (or ten, depending on financing, preferential), representing the five Brazilian regions, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics:

- Midwest: Distrito Federal and Anápolis
- Southeast: Rio de Janeiro and Ribeirão Preto
- Northeast: Feira de Santana and Teresina
- South: Porto Alegre and Florianópolis
- North: to be determined

## ***Rationale***

Brazil is a continental country with extremely diverse regions (population, socioeconomics, politics and culture). The Brazilian Health System (SUS) was developed based on local policies; it is necessary to research the local influence in the referral process between primary and secondary care. The workplace of researchers will be considered.

## ***Targeted population***

- Family Physicians or General Practitioners (GP) and Nurse Practitioners (NP).
- Workers of primary health care (In Brazil, not all workers of PHC are specialised).
- Workers of Hospitals and Secondary Care Centers
- Municipal managers of selected regions (health secretaries and PHC coordinators, Secondary care coordinators and care regulation coordinators).

## ***Methodology***

**PHASE 1:** Application of online national questionnaire developed (or a questionnaire validated; Primary Care Assessment Tool is indicated) to evaluate the attribute "care coordination" and variables that may influence this variable. Semi-structured interviews (online mode is possible) with primary health care professionals, managers and professionals of medium complexity services of 10 cities in five regions of Brazil will be held to: 1) define how Health Systems are organized in each of them, and; 2) the main barriers and facilitators allowing comparison between these different system when it comes to successful referral of the conditions studied.

**PHASE 2:** Case studies in each of the selected regions will be selected to deepen the analysis of successful referral from primary to secondary care and back in each area, detecting which mechanisms have been established to improve the GAP of communication between PHC and secondary care, so that barriers and best practices already existing can be better understand. The conditions have been selected to be studied of a list and are conditions that depend mainly on PHC for a good standard of care, but where coordination of care by PHC and good quality of communication are essential for the good resolution of more severe cases. These conditions will involve different RAS (like as Psychosocial Network, Chronic Conditions and Women's Health) in SUS allowing an opportunity to study the problems from a more complete perspective (e.g., patient accompanied by different physicians and without medication conciliation; patients with repeated requests for the same laboratory or repeated imaging exams by different physicians; disruption of the patient longitudinal care with the family physician/GP after referral; queuing and delay of care in specialized care).

**PHASE 3:** After the eight cities in four regions have been compared, the most frequent barriers and the best practices in each of them and in the national system will be identified,

providing a framework that can be used to improve communication and integration between these two levels in each studied case.

The next and final phase will be directed to motivate the development of successful strategies to improve PHC coordination and communication between primary and secondary care.

Participatory methodology will be used in the construction of intervention plans in each region, according to the selected marking condition. Assessment of indicators of structure, process and results

**Considerations:**

- It should be emphasised that according to the marked condition, patients or communication flows will be evaluated from the point of view of integral care. Collaborative / sharedcare is a form of integration and communication.<sup>294</sup>
- In phase two it will be used various methodologies for its implementation (therapeutic itinerary, questionnaires for the target population, focus groups).

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**Overview work plan**

	1 qr	2 qr	3 qr	4 qr
Year 1				
First researchers' meeting				
Data collection (online national questionnaire & semi-structured interviews)				
Phase 1 Data analysis				
Year 2				
Second researcher's meeting				
Case studies by region – data collection				

Case studies by region – data analyses				
Year 3				
Third researchers' meeting				
Communication strategies development				
Communication strategies implementation				
Final report – paper writing				

### Barriers to implementation

- Difficulty of understanding GP and NP about their role as care coordinators;
- Difficulty of understanding AS physicians about their role as a support network for PHC and the role of GP and NP as care coordinators.
- Reference to incomplete and non-standardized information (reference and counter-reference).
- Absence of integrated electronic medical record.
- Almost complete absence of mechanisms of counter-referencing and the need for qualitative improvement of it in places where it already exists.
- Still deficient monitoring of GP and NP on their patients in other levels of attention (mainly in secondary care).
- Different health policies adopted by municipalities with regard to integration between PHC and secondary care.
- Poor structuring and regionalisation of the service network.
- National and local policies that influence behaviour of GPs and nurses

### Dissemination of results

Plans for dissemination of the results to policymakers and communities, as well as next steps:

- Publication of partial and final project reports
- Seminars in the regions involved in the project (with professions, managers and researchers).
- Publication of articles in specialised journals.
- Presentation at forums in Family Medicine, PHC congresses, with municipal managers of selected regions (health secretaries and PHC coordinators, secondary & care regulation coordinators).
- Disseminate widely to people working on the ground.

### High-level budget for implementation of research

Task	Total
3 researcher meetings	\$17.000
8 researchers	\$172.800
16 Graduate students – 36 months	\$230.400
Quantitative and qualitative data analysis software	\$18.000
Equipment	\$12.000
Materials and supplies	\$10.000
Printing	\$1.000
Publication fees (mean of 4/5 articles)	\$10.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$471.200</b>

## **Research Implementation Plan South Africa**

*How should care be horizontally integrated and coordinated among the multidisciplinary primary health care team in South Africa?*

### **Background and significance**

The World Health Report 2008 on primary health care (PHC) stresses service delivery reform with a shift toward integrated people-centred primary care (focusing on population-based health needs and enduring personal relationships).<sup>295</sup> A review of African primary care shows the fallacy of disease-oriented approaches,<sup>296 297</sup> despite Africans wanting an integrated team-based approach.<sup>298 299</sup>

Task shifting is an effective strategy for addressing human resources for health in HIV/AIDS, non-communicable disease and mental illness, especially with in-depth training and on-going support.<sup>300-302</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) asserts that primary care is dangerously oversimplified in resource-constrained circumstances, and stresses that primary care requires teams of professionals with specific and sophisticated biomedical and social skills.<sup>295</sup>

Integrated care is being prioritised in South Africa with PHC re-engineering (including PHC Outreach Teams since 2011) and Integrated Chronic Disease Management (ICDM) since 2014, within the context of National Health Insurance (NHI) proposals.<sup>303</sup> This includes re-organising the health system in a move away from current mainly curative services, towards promotive-preventive community outreach services to a defined population with the inclusion of community health care workers.<sup>304 305</sup> There has been little focus on the optimal staff and skill mix in a team around the patient and a defined population.<sup>296</sup>

Integration is a layered process (functional, clinical, informational, professional, administrative, financial, etc.) and should be an organisational strategy with the patients' perspective as the organizing principle of the PHC team.<sup>306</sup> There has been little attention in Africa to the role of family physicians in the primary health care team.<sup>307</sup> Stakeholders in South Africa showed appreciation for the strong role family physicians could play. They felt that primary health care teams needed to include family physicians, in time, with a new supervisory model with nurses / clinical officers practicing with the principles of family medicine under supervision and support of doctors and/or family physicians. Family physicians were urged to develop staffing norms by breaking down tasks and structuring relationships for optimal skills mix.<sup>308</sup>

Family medicine has been slowly accepted in South Africa<sup>309</sup> and incorporated into some Health Districts. However, their role has been limited to servicing district hospitals and managing doctors in a few community health centres, 'pushing the queues'.<sup>310</sup> Family physicians have been advocating for stronger community-oriented primary care. A systematic review showed that the only model that incorporated all elements of community-orientated primary care (COPC) was the original work by the Karks in the 1930s.<sup>311</sup> Countries that derive inspiration from the Karks, like Cuba and Brazil, have large populations of doctors.<sup>312</sup> A comprehensive model based strongly on the Karks work in Pholela and termed "Community Practice" has been developed in a small part of the Chiawelo Community Health Centre (CHC) in Soweto's public primary healthcare service. It is strongly based on four elements of what we define as a community practice: 1) community health workers as team members in the community; 2) team-based doctor-led practice that manages the

individual, family and community with strong problem-oriented record-keeping; 3) regular strong stakeholder engagement (including multi-disciplinary, intersectoral and community action); and 4) a strong focus on targeted health promotion (with innovative communication). This is modelled with the doctor as team leader, potentially enabling private general practitioner-led community practices to contract with the NHI for panels of 10 000 people. Family medicine departments are keen on up-skilling GPs using the Diploma in Family Medicine and expanding the pool of family doctors for such NHI contracting.<sup>313</sup>

### ***Composition and processes of optimal teams***

There are different ways to define the multidisciplinary health team. It can be narrowly clinical including doctors, nurses, physician assistants together with support staff like clerks and community health workers. It can be wide to include other members of primary health care including dentists, optometrists etc. The World Health Organization advocates the use of the Workload Indicators for Staffing Need (WISN) to explore staffing norms. The WISN method usually involves a national validation workshop, field verification, data collection, and feedback to policy-makers. It has been helpful in revising staffing norms; improving staff equity across facilities; ensuring appropriate skills mix and estimating workforce requirements for new cadres. Key assumptions in the WISN scenario are: the precise setting (CHC, clinic, health post or complex), the population covered (10 000 – 100 000), utilisation (2-5 visits per person per annum), list of team members possible (as a uniform staff category) and times of work (normal working hours vs. late hours and Sundays vs. all hours).<sup>314-317</sup> Whilst WISN is useful the process of understanding team composition it needs to account for shared activities, skills management, supervision and referral within a contracted panel.<sup>318</sup>

There has been little done on team composition and process – roles, competencies and relationships - for a primary health care system re-organised towards personalised team-based care for defined populations in South Africa. This is more so if it takes a whole system approach, including private providers.

### ***Comparing outcomes for teams***

Work done using Primary Care Assessment tool (PCAT) indicates poor user perceptions of person-centredness.<sup>319</sup> There has been little done in South Africa on assessment of all-cause mortality for small practice populations apart from demographic surveillance in the larger rural setting of Agincourt sub-district, Limpopo and the national Saving Mothers Reports.<sup>320</sup> Preliminary work done in Chiawelo Community Practice (CCP) shows low utilisation rates, high population awareness, high patient satisfaction, short waiting times, high benefit and low costs (at 40% of the national non-hospital PHC expenditure).<sup>322</sup>

There has been little done on process-level outcomes, in relation to comprehensive and integrated primary health services in South Africa.

### **Specific Aims**

- 1) Describe the multidisciplinary team composition for community practice in South Africa
- 2) Compare outcomes of care at the level of process in all sites of interest and related controls

### **Study design and target populations**

The overall study design will be the development of Community Practices of 2000-10000 people within 4-6 Community Health Centres (CHCs) linked to different University Departments of Family Medicine. These Community Practices will use COPC principles: key stakeholders engaged, CHWs deployed into defined population served, practice orientation to



community, and targeted health promotion in 4-6 urban-rural sites identified by each Department of Family Medicine. The profiling of the community being served will be established in the process of COPC care. The patient base and a matched catchment community of the CHC (within which each Community Practice will be located) will serve as control. Each Community Practice will need a family physician able to direct a team led by a doctor and appropriate multidisciplinary team members who are able to set up a community practice within the public service and recruit a panel of 2000-10000 people. They will site these in low to middle income communities. The study designs of the various studies will vary as described below. The overall strategy will be reviewed by the national team of investigators. The question “*How should care be horizontally integrated and coordinated among the multidisciplinary primary health care team in South Africa?*” will guide the process.

## **Methodology**

1 The research question is what the optimal team composition is – roles, competencies and relationships - for a family doctor led community practice of 10 000 people in South Africa. Our plans are to:

- To annually explore team composition (including activity standards, based on the Workload Indicators for Staffing Need (WISN) methodology) using a modified Nominal Group Technique (NGT). The networks of Departments of Family Medicine will purposively identify stakeholder experts from South Africa.(Hasson, Keeney and McKenna, 2000; Keeney, Hasson and McKenna, 2006) The national study meeting will discuss the overall research process, team approaches and engage in the NGT process (using rounds to seek consensus on team activity standards using WISN) (Day and Bobeva, 2005). Thereafter a focus group meeting will be held reflecting on the WISN tool and overall process.

- 2 The research hypothesis is that there is a quantitative difference in outcomes at the levels of process, patient, population and practice management between community practices and controls.

Our plans are to:

- Examine each site of care as case studies in Year 1 and Year 3 with key informant interviews, local data and observation to explore the processes of care (including changes from the previous study).
- Undertake annual open-ended focus discussion in Year 2 and Year 3 with key groups in each site of care (staff; CHWs; stakeholders groups; women; and youth) on the processes of care and its impact on them (including changes from the previous study).
- Undertake an annual staff performance review by all related staff using a 360-degree feedback tool that is anonymized and examined by staff type.
- Compare the quality of primary care in Year 2 and Year 3 with the primary care assessment tool (PCAT) for consumer-clients looking at some of the key groups in each site of care (stakeholders groups; women; and youth).

For the process-level outcomes, a diversity of participants of key groups will be practically drawn from the population or sampling framework of patients in each site. Snowball sampling may also be used to identify further participants from these critical cases. The researchers will collect qualitative data from focus group discussions, interviews and journals after member checking, verbatim transcriptions of all digital recordings, anonymisation and crosschecking-validation by the researchers.<sup>323</sup> The researchers will do individual and

collective content analysis of the transcripts as well as written evaluation using a framework approach. There will also be some discourse analysis.<sup>324</sup> Case study methodology will be used to write up the cases.<sup>325</sup>

### **Potential research team and partners**

The project will be led by Prof Shabir Moosa from the Department of Family Medicine in the University of the Witwatersrand. The other eight Departments of Family Medicine in South Africa will be approached to join this project as partners.

### **Overview of work plan**

Q1: Stakeholder engagement and practice setup of 4-6 sites

Q2: Deployment of CHWs into defined populations

Q3: Development of patient base / data

Q4: Development of health promotion

Q5: Testing of research process

Q6: Approval of research process

Q7-Q11: Collection of data

Q12: Finalisation of reports

### **Barriers to implementation**

There may be difficulty with standardisation of the project and variables changing in sites. There may also be difficulty with buy-in from managers and the lack of involvement of staff at a local community practice level. The strategies to overcome this would be to have a national process in planning involving the national department of health and strong ongoing local stakeholder involvement in development of community practices.

### **Dissemination of results**

The results will be disseminated with stakeholder engagement using regular reports and policy briefs. Results will also be disseminated using accessible peer-reviewed journals. There is opportunity to develop this as a practice-based research network than can scale to Southern Africa and research more complex issues in community practice. There are many possibilities, given additional funding:

- Undertake annual surveillance of all deaths by fieldworkers with interview of family regarding history and experience of all-cause mortality (and/or referrals in each site of care (as a beginning to collecting data on births, migrations and full demographic surveillance)).
- Compare records and self-reported care for outcomes of common chronic patients in each site of care according to a modified standard of care based on the Integrated Chronic Disease Management (ICDM) manual.
- Compare the quality of primary care with the primary care assessment tool (PCAT) for consumer-clients.
- Compare each site of care for population health status and risk by examination and self-reported knowledge, attitude and practice based on SANHANES.
- Compare each site of care for practice-level differences by audit of practice and survey of patient and population.

### **High-level budget for implementation of research**

The central activity would cost about R2.2m for three years. The six sites with a registered panel of 5000-10000 people each would cost ± R720 000 each site over three years, costing ±R4.3m for all six and ±R6.5m over three years for everything (±\$500 000).

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Central Admin	R50,000	R50,000	R50,000	
Central Finance	R90,000	R65,000	R65,000	
Meetings	R150,000	R150,000	R150,000	
Accommodation	R150,000	R150,000	R150,000	
Travel	R100,000	R100,000	R100,000	
Research Assistant	R200,000	R200,000	R200,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>R740,000</b>	<b>R715,000</b>	<b>R715,000</b>	<b>R2,170,000</b>
<b><u>Per Site Cost</u></b>				
Infrastructure support	R120,000			
Operational Support	R100,000	R100,000	R100,000	
Field Agents (2 CHWs/1 AN)	R100,000	R100,000	R100,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>R320,000</b>	<b>R200,000</b>	<b>R200,000</b>	<b>R720,000</b>
<b><u>Overall Site Costs</u></b>				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>R1,920,000</b>	<b>R1,200,000</b>	<b>R1,200,000</b>	<b>R4,320,000</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>R2,660,000</b>	<b>R1,915,000</b>	<b>R1,915,000</b>	<b>R6,490,000</b>
Dollar Costs		USD: ZAR	13	USD499,231
		Rates		

## **Research Implementation Plan Malaysia**

*How can the public and private sectors work more collaboratively to improve and integrate primary health care coverage and prevent segmentation of services in Malaysia?*

### **Background and significance**

The Malaysian primary health care is a two-tier system which consists of the public and private facilities. In 2017, the public primary health care clinics in Malaysia consist of the following; 1060 health clinics, 1803 community clinics and 357 Malaysia clinics.<sup>326</sup> In comparison, the number of registered private medical clinics is higher at 7335.<sup>326</sup> However, access and referrals between the public and private health care services are segmented. Though some may argue that this is good for patients' choice, it certainly does not do any good in terms of coordination and continuity of care which is much needed for chronic disease management. Access to private health services is limited to the richer society who can afford out-of-pocket payments of higher fees.<sup>327</sup>

Segmentation means division or separation into different parts. Segmentation of primary health care services is seen in terms of public and private sectors, in-patient and out-patient care, different in scopes of services, availability of diagnostic facilities and medications, and types of health care professionals.<sup>328-332</sup> Segmentation of the population into different groups of health care needs may result in better health care provision,<sup>333</sup> but segmentation of services is not generally perceived to contribute towards better health of the people, nor more effective and efficient care delivery.<sup>334</sup>

Segmentation may be compounded by different payment systems between the public and private sectors and their respective further clinical and medical care in the hospitals. The availability of health insurances can also influence whether patients choose to seek treatment at public or private sectors, and their according scope, timeliness and quality of medical care. Accessibility of the public or private primary care services could also influence segmentation based on the incidence and prevalence of certain health conditions at the community, or when the clinical situation of the person takes higher concern over affordability or health care cost.<sup>335-338</sup> The quality of service provided, including waiting-time, doctor-patient relationship and adherence to patients' expectations, may also influence patients' preferences.<sup>339 340</sup>

Segmentation and fragmentation of health services and facilities may exacerbate difficulties in access to comprehensive and quality services for the population at large,<sup>328</sup> and cause low response capacity towards certain health conditions at the first level of care by the health care providers.<sup>341</sup> This results in inefficiencies.<sup>342</sup> The rate of hospitalisation or referral for conditions that could be managed at a primary setting of a certain sector could be an indicator that reflects response capacity or presence of segmentation of services at the primary care level of that particular sector of services.<sup>343</sup>

A pharmacy practice reform that integrates pharmacists into primary health care clinics can be a potential initiative to promote quality use of medication. This model of care is a novel approach in Malaysia, and research in the local context is required, especially from the perspectives of pharmacists.<sup>344</sup> The Malaysian pharmacist board has recognised many issues that causes segmentation of services in Malaysia, such as control over the supply of medicines, quality of medicines (original or generic), national health care fund, even distribution of pharmacy services, self-regulation in pharmacy services and practice, education and research, national formulary and pharmacopoeia and pharmacy legislation.<sup>345</sup>

Owing to the scarcity of data on the segmentation of primary medical care services in the current literature in Malaysia,<sup>346</sup> this study aims to expand our understanding of existing primary health care systems and present segmentation of services so that we may improve on them.

### **Specific Aims**

1. To determine the perception and experience of providing care in their own sector of public and private primary care practitioners, the constraints they identify, and the access to services in the other sector to which they would like to have access.
2. To determine the mechanisms used by people in the community to decide whether to access public or private primary care services when unwell.

### **Specific research questions:**

- a. Was a deciding factor the availability of specific services or personnel at the sector they chose?
- b. Did they ever have a cross-sector referral?

### **Study Design**

#### *Targeted geographic region and rationale for selection*

Public and private health clinics in urban, semi-urban and rural regions in Selangor will be studied. This state provides different regions of public and private primary health care services as mentioned. It is the most populated state in Malaysia including regions of high to low-income populations. It is also close to the researchers' institutions which increases feasibility.

#### *Targeted population*

The family medicine specialists (FMS), senior medical doctors (work experience of two or more years) and pharmacists at the public primary care clinics; and selected family physicians in the private primary care clinics will be invited in the Phase 1 study. Additionally, policy-makers at the districts, states and national levels including public health physicians, health directors and administrators will also be approached for focus group discussions or in-depth interviews about their perceptions and experience of possible segmentation of services in the Phase 1 until saturation of the themes occurs. In Phase 2, the similar groups of public healthcare professionals and private doctors throughout Malaysia will be invited via email. The contact information will be obtained from the Family Medicine Specialist Association for the public FMSs and Ministry of Health Malaysia for the public health physicians; and the Academy of Family Physicians Malaysia or Malaysian Medical Association will provide contact information for the private doctors.

The FMSs and senior medical doctors are identified as the targeted population in this research because they are important in identifying and highlighting areas for improvement and integration of primary care services; as well as in identifying areas to prevent segmentation. Involvement of the policymakers in this study increases importance and participation in this study, as well as drawing attention of and increasing the chance of implementation of the study findings by the health authorities at the higher levels. This issue is already being highlighted as an important area of concern by our current Minister of Health and medical health professionals would be interested in participating in this research.

Measures to be used to encourage the participation of family medicine specialists and doctors include educating them on the need for collaboration, and working out with them on the benefits of such a collaboration; such as reduction of the patient-load and workload in the public sectors and improvement of services in both the public and private sectors. In addition, there will be an increased income to the private sector, where patients who can afford private fees can also be referred from the public to private sectors. These measures will also improve continuous professional development between the two sectors.<sup>347 348</sup>

## **Methodology**

### Phase 1

A mixed qualitative and quantitative methods will be used. Firstly, there will be a qualitative study using purposive sampling. Study participants will be selected from public and private primary care practitioners. Their perception and experience of providing care in their own sector will be explored in detail. The primary care practitioners' constraints and access to services that they wish they could have to the other sector will be also explored in detail. Public health physicians and health directors as policymakers and experienced administrators will be approached in this study at their respective offices.

The purpose of the study will be clearly explained by the researcher and informed consent obtained from the study participants. We will also invite patients or general public to share their perceptions on segmentation of primary healthcare services. Patients visiting the clinics at selected public and private sectors will be approached and interviewed on their preferences of which health sector and for what reasons.

Public family medicine specialists, senior medical doctors, and pharmacists from different regions will be invited for in-depth interviews or focus-group discussion. Similarly, private family physicians or general practitioners will be visited at their respective clinics in the three different regions to record their perception and experience on the above matters. This is to ensure richness of the data and to influence data generation. Public health physicians and health directors will be engaged in personal interview sessions for their opinions on segmentation of primary care services, and on their opinions of the other respondents' perception collected earlier. This approach is intentionally arranged to increase this group of respondents' interest and participation in this study. The sample size of this study will be determined once data saturation is reached. We expect the sample size to be about 125 (25 per group of respondents from public FMSs, senior medical doctors, pharmacists, private family physicians, policymakers). Using semi structured interview protocols, the matters under study will be explored and discussed.

All interview sessions will be audio-recorded and video recorded. After each interview, audio recording will be transcribed. Transcripts will be examined against actual recording to ensure accuracy. Thematic analysis using NVivo 12 will be used to identify major themes. The coding of the identified themes will be cross - checked by other researchers in order to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the coding process.

Information will also be gathered from patients in selected public and private sectors on their preferences of which sector and for what reasons.

### Phase 2

Following the Phase 1 qualitative analysis, all the possible issues of segmentation of services at both the public and private primary health care services will be enlisted. These issues will

be converted into items of a questionnaire on segmentation of services at primary care in Malaysia. Then, a nationwide survey of the public physicians, pharmacists, public health physicians and health directors, and private family physicians will be conducted to identify, confirm and estimate the degree of health care services segmentation in Malaysia. This will be conducted via emails and online survey. The estimated sample size for the nationwide FMSs is 350, senior medical officers 1500, pharmacists 600, private family physicians 1000 and policymakers 300. Supplementing the email invitation, personal approach to the identified respondents via telephone calls or visits maybe conducted.

A further survey will be conducted in Selangor with a sample of respondents' representative of the nationwide users of primary health care services on what factors determine their choice between the public and the private primary health sectors they attended when recently unwell, or should they become unwell in the future. This will be conducted by post to the Selangor population in random by stratification of the geographical regions and types of residential area. The estimated required sample size is 5000 with an estimated 50% non-response rate. Supplementing the postal invitation, personal approach to potential respondents at public and private health clinics, will be conducted to improve the recruitment of participants.

### **Potential research team and partners**

1. Sherina Mohd Sidik (Professor Dr) (Universiti Putra Malaysia) – Principal investigator
2. Chew Boon How (Assoc Prof Dr) (Universiti Putra Malaysia)
3. Ambigga Devi Krishnapillai (Assoc Prof Dr) (Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia)
4. Aida Jaafar (Dr) (Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia)
5. Maizatullifah Miskan (Dr) (Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia)
6. Hasliza Abu Hassan (Datin Dr) (Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia)
7. Ng Kien Keat (Dr) (Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia)
8. Aznida Firzah Abdul Aziz (Assoc Prof Dr) (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia)
9. Noor Azimah Muhammad (Assoc Prof Dr) (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia)
10. Ummavathy Periasamy (Dr) (Ministry of Health Malaysia)
11. Muhambigai Perumal Samy (Ministry of Health Malaysia)
12. Vigneswary Perumal Samy (Ministry of Health Malaysia)

### **Overview work plan**

The Phase 1 will begin in the last quarter of 2019 and be completed by the third quarter of 2020. Preparation for the Phase 2 will be done in the last quarter of 2020 and will begin in the first quarter of 2021. Completion of the Phase 2 with results for dissemination can be expected by the last quarter of 2021.

### **Barrier to implementation**

Response rates to the online survey of the public and private doctors could be a challenge to achieve the desirable sample size. A letter or post card may be sent to the selected doctors before the arrival of the email and online survey. This is hoped to personalise the invitation and to better inform and prepare the potential respondents to the survey.

Similarly, the response rates of the general population to the postal survey may be too low or variable depending on region. Personal approach at the targeted regions and community may be considered to complement the shortcoming of the postal survey.

### Dissemination of results

Results of the study will be disseminated to the relevant stakeholders / policy makers, medical and health professionals and also the public; via publications in journals (national journals and also international journals with impact factor 2.0 and above), presentations at national and international conferences and meetings. Two postgraduate students will be able to complete their PhDs under this project.

### High-level budget for implementation of research

No.	Areas	2019-2020	2020-2021
1.	Personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-graduate students</li> <li>enumerators</li> </ul>	30,000 USD 10,000 USD	30,000 USD 50,000 USD
2.	Fieldwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hospitality during FGD/meetings with respondents</li> <li>Tokens of appreciation</li> </ul>	5,000 USD 2,000 USD	5,000 USD 10,000 USD
3.	Analytic work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transcription of qualitative data</li> <li>Data entry and cleaning process</li> <li>Qualitative data-software (Nvivo 12 Pro- Academic) purchase &amp; renewal for 4 investigators</li> <li>Quantitative data-software (IBM SPSS Statistics Professional v25) purchase &amp; renewal for 4 investigators</li> </ul>	10,000 USD 4,000 USD 10,000 USD	5,000 USD 4,000 USD 10,000 USD
4.	Supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voice recorders</li> <li>Laptops</li> <li>Printers</li> <li>Papers and stationery</li> <li>Questionnaires printing</li> <li>Postal and courier to-and-fro charges (for data collection in Phase 2)</li> </ul>	500 USD 1,500 USD 500 USD 2,000 USD 2,000 USD	5,000 USD 5,000 USD 25,000 USD
5.	Travel to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sites of data collection</li> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Courses/scientific conferences</li> </ul>	25,000 USD 2,500 USD 20,000 USD	50,000 USD 2,500 USD 30,000 USD
6.	Dissemination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Editing and proof-reading services</li> <li>Articles processing charge</li> <li>Report to the policymakers</li> <li>Study close-out meeting/presentation of the findings to the policymakers</li> </ul>		20,000 USD 25,000 USD 7,500 USD 10,000 USD
7.	Others: insurance, taxes		20,000 USD
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>125,000 USD</b>	<b>314,000 USD</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL: USD 439,000</b>			



## **Research Implementation Plan Nigeria**

### ***How can different stakeholders support and assist the primary health care workforce and successful team functioning in Nigeria?***

#### **Background and significance**

Primary health care (PHC) is the backbone of health systems, and its successful implementation is essential for improving health outcomes.<sup>349</sup> Since Alma Ata in 1978,<sup>292</sup> the implementation of PHC has improved health outcomes in developed, low- and middle-income countries (LMIC).<sup>350-352</sup> Effective PHC system is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>353 354</sup>

1. PHC is the cornerstone of the Nigerian health policy and represents the system that provides first point of contact care to most Nigerians with the health system.<sup>7 355</sup>
2. Recent assessment of the Nigerian PHC using the World Bank supported primary health care performance indicators (PHCPI) conceptual framework revealed serious underperformance of the system including low output and comparatively higher morbidity and mortality.<sup>356</sup> Effective PHC performance is hindered by lack of financial access to services, segmented supply chains, weak infrastructure and poor health workers' performance. Poor health workers' performance include providers' incompetence in handling clinical problems, negative attitude to work and poor supervision.<sup>357</sup>

A scoping review of intervention designs and methods that addressed support and performance improvement for PHC workers in LMICs identified a number of approaches including supervision and supportive supervision; mentoring; use of tools and aids; quality improvement methods; and coaching as successful interventions that have improved team functioning and overall performance of the PHC workers and systems.<sup>357</sup> The use of these interventions can be facilitated by different PHC stakeholders including policy makers, health system managers, health workforce organisations, academic institutions and communities. Apart from poorly carried out supervision in the Nigerian PHC system, little is known about the use of such proven interventions' to support and assist PHC workforce and PHC team functioning in Nigeria. This knowledge to practice gap needs to be further explored in the Nigerian PHC system.

It is essential to first assess the views, perceptions and experiences of PHC stakeholders and PHC teams on these proven approaches so as to identify the gaps in knowledge to practice as well as possible barriers to their use. Secondly, evaluate the functional status of PHC teams. Thirdly, bring the information together to construct a common status of PHC stakeholders' perceptions, experiences and expectations with support and assistance to PHC workforce and team functioning in Nigeria. Finally, incorporate such information into a supportive supervisory module and deploy such module to improve the performance of the PHC system.

This research shall address the research question with the different PHC stakeholders being policy makers, Federal Ministry of Health, Parliamentary Health Committee, National Primary Health Care Development Agency; National Community Health Registration Board; the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria; State Primary Healthcare Boards; State Ministry of Health; Local Government Services Commissions; Local Government PHC management committees; Universities Community Health Officers' training programmes; and schools of health technology and communities.

This study is aimed at examining the perceptions and experiences as well as identifying knowledge to practice gaps of PHC stakeholders and PHC teams with the use of support and performance improvement of PHC workers' proven approaches in the Nigeria PHC system. The information generated from the perceptions and experiences, as well as the knowledge to practice gap, will be incorporated into a supportive supervisory module and tested to ascertain its effectiveness in improving PHC team functioning and performance. The final report of this study is expected to stimulate stakeholders' interest to use the research findings to provide support and assistance to PHC workforce and PHC team functioning in Nigeria and contribute to the Country's attainment of the SDGs.

### **Specific objectives**

1. To assess perceptions, knowledge to practice gap and examine experiences of PHC stakeholders with the use of proven approaches for support and assistance for PHC workforce and PHC team functioning in Nigeria.
2. To incorporate the information generated from perceptions and knowledge to practice gap assessment into a Family Physician led Supportive Supervisory Module (FP-SSM) and test its effectiveness for supportive supervision in four PHC centres in four States in Nigeria.

### **Study Design**

This study will use mixed research methodology. First will be the use of qualitative methods (expert interviews, focus group discussion, climate team inventory) to explore and examine experiences and interpret perceptions of PHC stakeholders with the use of proven approaches for support and assistance for PHC workforce and PHC team functioning in Nigeria. Secondly, it shall use a quasi-experimental design to test use of a family physician-led supportive supervision module and patient care support to improve PHC team functioning and Provider competency in clinical case management at the PHC centre level.

### ***Targeted Region***

The study will be conducted in Nigeria in West-Africa. Nigeria has 186 million people from 250 ethnic groups spread over 36 states and organized into six geopolitical zones.<sup>358 359</sup> A zone has an average of six states with a state having a population of about 2.5million people.<sup>360</sup> The study will take place in four states organised as one state per geopolitical zone in four zones. The states are Plateau (North-Central), Kano (North-West), Oyo (South-West) and Cross-River (South-South). The selection of states takes into consideration the diverse ethnic, cultural and economic characteristics seen in the zones which may have potential effects on PHC services and PHC team functioning.

### ***Target population***

This study will focus on public sector PHC stakeholders and workforce as its target populations. PHC stakeholders will be those whose mandate as prescribed by the Government of Nigeria includes making policies, regulations or training relating to the PHC system. These stakeholders will be grouped as top policy-making; training; regulation; service delivery and community level stakeholders, because the roles and experiences within such subgroups will be similar. The PHC workforce will be the health workforce as defined by the WHO, who are working in the PHC system in Nigeria.<sup>361</sup> PHC teams will be health workforce working in PHC centres and in teams as defined by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency.<sup>353</sup>

## **Methodology**

### **Procedure**

- i. To address the first objective, two in-person interviews per each group category of stakeholders will be conducted in the policy-making, training, regulation and community level groups in each states. The most senior persons in rank in each group will be recruited as possible. There will be eight in-persons interviews per state, and 32 in the four states. There will be seven additional in-person interviews at the Federal Agencies situated at the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to capture the views and experiences of top level policy stakeholders in the country. A focus group discussion (FGD) will be held with LGA-PHC supervisory team (nine persons/team) and a Team Climate Inventory (TCI) exercise administered on a PHC centre in three LGAs and three PHC centres teams (11 persons/team) in each of the four States. The three LGA-PHC supervisory teams and PHC centres shall be selected as one per each of the three senatorial districts in each of the four States. This gives a total of 12 FGDs in the Study. Also, three TCI exercises per State and 12 in the study will be conducted.

An in-person interview guide (tool) will be developed and used to collect data. The guide will be structured to collect information on views, perceptions, barriers and experiences of the stakeholders with respect to common strategies/interventions for support of PHC workers identified in the scoping review.<sup>11</sup> The FGD guide (tool) will also address similar issues but tailored to the leadership at LGA/PHC supervisory level.

These qualitative data will be analysed using the thematic analysis method. The responses from these tools will be transcribed verbatim. After familiarity with the data has been achieved, the responses will be coded to summarise the essential messages. Similar responses will be grouped to form themes, initially at the semantic level and subsequently at a latent level to identify and examine underlying ideas. The themes will be reviewed in the context of the objectives while ensuring overlap is avoided. The themes will be defined and a relationship between these will be sought to create a thematic map, leading to a discussion of the findings. The relevant findings will be incorporated into a supportive supervision module for supervision of PHC teams at PHC centres by Family Physicians to address the second objective. The findings will also be disseminated to advocate for support and assistance for PHC workforce.

- ii. To address the second objective, the adapted module from Objective 1 will be pilot-tested and used for supportive supervision of PHC teams at PHC centres by family physicians. This is new because such a tool does not exist. Two PHC centres will be selected per state and randomly allocated into either intervention or control. A family medicine training institution shall be identified in each state and a family physician together with a trainee resident from the training centre will be selected to provide supportive supervision and patient care support using the Supportive Supervisory Module (SSM) to the intervention PHC centre. The second PHC centre shall serve as a control. The supportive supervisory visits shall be visited once every four weeks for 52 weeks and its effectiveness will be measured by change in team functioning as measured by TCI and providers' competence as measured by Health Sector Service Delivery Indicator module on assessment of providers' knowledge and ability. Information on team functioning and provider competence will be gathered at the two PHC centres at the beginning of the study, then at 27<sup>th</sup> week and at the end of the study at 52 weeks. The level of team functioning and the proportion of workers with diagnostic accuracy with an adult and childhood conditions

will be compared between the two types of facilities. The acceptability and feasibility of the supervisory tool will be assessed at an FGD session with the team at week 52.

### *Teams and Ethical consideration*

The team leader with the three co-leads will constitute the Central Coordinating Team (CCT) and will be responsible for the overall implementation of the study. The CCT shall seek for ethical clearance for the study and obtains permission to carry out the study from respective agencies. Interviewees will grant an oral consent which will be taped-recorded together with the interview session. Participants for both TCI and FGDs will sign a written consent after perusing an informed consent.

### *Tentative research team members*

This study will be carried out by four State teams consisting of eight researchers and four research assistants. There will be a 5<sup>th</sup> team of two researchers for the National level. Three will be a Central Coordinating team of four researchers comprising the Team Leader and three Co-leads as shown below.

1. Dr Aboi JK Madaki; MBBS; MA-HMPP; FWACP; University of Jos. Chair\_SOFPON Practice Based Research Network. Team leader. Email: [wankarani62@gmail.com](mailto:wankarani62@gmail.com).
2. Prof Udonwa Ndifreke\_ MBBS; MPH; FMCGP; FWACP; Professor of Family Medicine. University of Calabar. Email: [nudonwa@gmail.com](mailto:nudonwa@gmail.com).
3. Dr Akin Moses\_MBBS; FMCGP; FWACP; Department of Family Medicine, National Hospital, Abuja. Email: [lawakmoses@yahoo.com](mailto:lawakmoses@yahoo.com)
4. Dr Irabor Achiaka \_MBBS; MSc Devt Psych; FWACP; Family Physician trainer and researcher in Primary care. University College Hospital, Ibadan, Oyo State. Zonal Team Coordinator. [achiaka@yahoo.com](mailto:achiaka@yahoo.com).

### **Overview of the work plan**

#### ***First Year:***

***1<sup>st</sup> quarter*** Constitute the Study Coordinating Team, four State teams and 1 Federal Capital Territory (FCT) team. Identify and designate a Survey Coordinating Office. Notify study states, LGAs and PHC centres. Assemble survey tools and orientate the zonal teams on the use of survey instruments. Pilot test the instruments.

***2<sup>nd</sup> quarter*** Secure National ethical clearance and permission from states selected for the study. Carry out pre-study visitation to selected sites to assess readiness to participate in the study. Produce and deploy survey instruments. Produce a study sites visitation schedule.

***3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> quarters***\_ Mobilise study teams to sites and conduct first phase of the study.

#### ***Second Year:***

***1<sup>st</sup> quarter*** Analyse results of first objectives and produce reports targeting different levels of stakeholders. Also incorporate relevant finding into a supportive supervision module.

***2<sup>nd</sup> quarter*** Disseminate research findings through workshops at the National Level and through appropriate Zonal level fora. Produce a manuscript for publications at a peer-reviewed journal. Pilot-test the use of supportive supervisory module.

#### ***Third Year:***

***2<sup>nd</sup> quarter Second Year to 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter Third year.*** Commence and complete intervention study using the adapted supportive supervisory module to conduct visits to PHC centres.

***3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> quarters*** analyse and disseminate results through a National Workshop to stakeholders. Mount advocacy to relevant agencies (NPHCDA; SPHCBS; FMOH; Faculties of Family Medicine) for the incorporation of the strategy into the PHC system.

### **Barriers to implementation**

1. *Security challenges* Addressing insecurity in States with frequent episodes of farmers-herdsmen clashes, kidnapping and Boko Haram attacks is essential for the success of the study. Caution be exercise and high risk LGAs will be avoided at the selection level.
2. *Absenteeism* Absence from work by LGA workers is high and may affect the schedule of research activities. However, the teams shall start scheduling of visits early enough to secure timely appointments and keep the study on track.
3. *Lack of essential supplies* such as drugs and basic clinic equipment will affect improvement in providers' clinical competence. Selection of PHC centres will also consider availability of basic clinic equipment and availability of drugs.
4. *Lack of cooperation from PHC clinic staff* may impede the realisation of the objectives of the interventional arm of the study. Efforts will be made to educate all parties on the potential of this supervisory strategy and carry everybody along.

### **Dissemination of results**

Results addressing the first objective of the study shall be disseminated in the first quarter of second year to stakeholders at a National Workshop at Country's Federal Capital city. This workshop will seek to educate policy makers on the finding of study and advocate for the implementation of the recommendations of the study. Reports will be prepared in an easy to digest form and distributed to stakeholders. Results addressing the second objective will be disseminated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year at a National Workshop. High level advocacy visits to the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA); Federal Ministry of Health and Faculties of Family Medicine of the two post-graduate colleges will be carried out to advocate for funding for the implementation of the results. The ultimate will be to get Family Medicine training centre based Family Physicians to lead supervision of PHC teams at the PHC centre level with funding from the government for such integration.

### **High-Level budget for implementation of research**

Approximate resource allocation:

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ALLOCATED BUDGET in USD</b>
Personnel	\$86,502
Field and analytic work	\$91,014
Supplies	\$8,457
Travel	\$49,959
Dissemination	\$34,157
Miscellaneous	\$14,518
<b>Total over 3 years</b>	<b>\$284,607.00</b>

#### *Budget justification*

The outline of the budget above reflects the expected contribution of key personnel making the team and the desired activities to be implemented in three years. This team has already started making such contributions by putting up this draft proposal together. In building up the budget, we kept to our team principles of engagement: respect, equity, integrity and commitment to excellence. We are keeping the expected personnel cost very low as a mark of our willingness to make contribution to strengthening the PHC system in Nigeria. The personnel cost includes provision for a visit to Nigeria by a Besroul mentor as a way of strengthening our continuous and cherished collaboration which has brought great value to our work here in Nigeria.

## Discussion

### *Summary of results and relationship to existing literature*

This is the first global study to ask primary health care practitioners and researchers based in LMICs to identify their research priorities on the organisation and models of primary health care. The leading priority areas identified have focused on several key elements necessary for the strengthening of primary health care systems, including referral between primary and secondary care, integration and coordination of PHC, collaboration between the private and public primary health care sectors, the composition of primary health care teams, and the role of key stakeholders in supporting the PHC workforce.

A number of themes related to optimal team-based care, access and geographic distribution, integration and coordination between primary and secondary care, and what PHC should incorporate. The results also show a considerable degree of alignment with the Framework for Integrated People-Centered Health Services, which advocates that all people have access to health services that are coordinated around their needs, respects their preferences, and are safe, effective, timely, affordable, and acceptable.<sup>362</sup> Many of the generated questions relate to required health system reform, and hence complement the aforementioned work of the Primary Health Care Measurement and Implementation Research Consortium, which established some broad areas of research priorities.<sup>18</sup>

The research questions generated have a strong focus on the position of PHC in the health system, and its relation to hospitals and secondary care specialists. This may signal the challenges of PHC in stabilising its position as the integrator of first-point patient care in health systems that have traditionally been centred on hospital care. It is important to acknowledge this prioritisation, but at the same time keep track of the importance of horizontal links of PHC to other community-based sectors that impact on population health,<sup>11</sup><sup>363</sup> and of the invitation of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alma Ata Declaration to move beyond how health services have been structured, to how health services need to be organised to advance health equity and support people to actively participate in the maintenance of their health status.<sup>364</sup>

An interesting absentee in the generated questions is the importance of studying the distribution of the health problems in the population under care, whereas a WONCA conference on the role of PHC research had this as one of its main recommendations.<sup>365</sup> This may be because the original framing question about models of care does not draw attention to epidemiological issues. However, insight into the most important health problems in the population under care will inform the development of PHC. Such insight would be relevant for a number of the research questions that were generated, for example in relation to practice priorities, the interface of PHC and hospital care, or teaching and training. Often, exploring health problems in the PHC setting has been the first step to successful PHC research.<sup>366</sup>

A precursor to this work is a literature review conducted by the Primary Health Care Measurement and Implementation Research Consortium which established some broad areas

of research priorities.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the Primary Health Care Performance Initiative (PHCPI) has introduced a framework to assess PHC performance in LMIC to help guide health reforms.<sup>367</sup> Many of the generated questions relate to required health system reform, and hence complement this work.

The prevalence of questions related to the health work force among the top 16 research questions is not surprising. The delivery of health services within the primary health care framework is deeply (and some would say primarily) relational. Even as the world evolves to consider how technology, system planning, financing and improved management systems might support better primary health care, the crux of primary health care remains the interface between the provider (or providers) and the user or patient. The health work force, how it is selected, trained, deployed, coordinated into effective multidisciplinary teams, rewarded and recognised is bound to remain one of the most potent determinant of our collective success in ensuring access to quality PHC for the world's populations. In fact, many of the proposed questions related to team-based care hint to enumerable additional questions related to that subject, a subject we are only now beginning to explore and understand. The ways in which culture, for example, is bound to affect how teams form and perform will be a likely object of research for some years to come.

There is a recurring debate about the definition of primary health care, and similarly what research relates to it. In Labonte's review,<sup>11</sup> they included research addressing projects that were intersectoral and engaged communities, as well as clinical health care, but omitted projects which might affect health but did not involve actors from the health sector. Our literature review was informed by professionals from LMIC and in that way focussed on the specific LMIC context. Within the time frame of the project we were able to identify the available studies. From this we were able to corroborate the Delphi study findings and then to identify research gaps for LMIC. This enabled us to solicit context-specific implementation plans from colleagues in LMIC.

### ***Strengths of our study***

A strength of this research is the size and composition of our panel from LMIC. We recruited 141 panellists over two week period, with requests from people keen participate continuing after recruitment was closed. This demonstrates a hunger in the PHC sector for research into health service delivery and systems, to inform practice and policy. Access to, and knowledge of the local circumstances are vital for the success of PHC developments, where the general PHC principles need to be applied to local contexts. Having the voice of health care providers and academics enables traction at the community level. Bottom-up input is needed to counter the frequent top-down decisions made by policy-makers lacking in stakeholder engagement and therefore not being translated into effective change. Competing political and economic agendas in many LMIC, in addition to disproportionately high demand / supply ratios, means that what works and what does not fails to be evaluated.<sup>368</sup> This study therefore contributes to potential reforms on the most urgent needs in local contexts.

We chose to use the same panel for both organisation and financing because the development of effective PHC organisation and models of care cannot be isolated from mechanisms of funding, and these key areas go hand-in-hand. Evidence from our WONCA international comparative studies on primary health care policy implementation<sup>368-371298-301</sup> highlights the need for an integrated coherent approach. We agreed that new research might be relevant in both domains, and that different questions might be generated. While we asked separately about organisation and financing of PHC, some questions in one area fitted better in the other. This emphasises the inter-relatedness of the topics.

The large number of research questions suggested shows a significant sense that evidence is lacking. Although we used a modified Delphi technique, our methods met the Delphi CREDES recommendations for selecting the panel, piloting the survey, conducting the rounds, maintaining anonymity and developing consensus.<sup>372</sup> We chose the bottom-up approach, recruiting predominantly PHC practitioners and academics, not exclusively policy-makers. Using only 'known' experts would have been too exclusive and unnecessarily narrow for a global perspective. We reasoned that even the most senior academics will be likely not to have knowledge of all the literature, nor a global perspective. Being linked with being an active member of a WONCA email group or another international organisation and accepting self-definition gave a strong likelihood of expertise.

This way it was possible to recruit within the short period that was available for this study, a large panel of professionals from LMIC, and retain them through three demanding rounds of the Delphi study. It also made it possible to recruit leaders for the development of follow-up implementation studies in concrete LMIC settings.

A further strength is our use of robust qualitative analysis methodology, which achieved a high degree of inter-rater coding reliability. Use of the Delphi approach facilitated consensus for prioritised research question.

We have consistently used a bottom-up approach. Our literature review was undertaken from the perspective of the stakeholders, searching for possible evidence already available for the prioritised questions that they had generated. We have used researchers in LMIC who know their own contexts to develop implementation plans relevant to their own country or region's needs and resources.

Being able to use our collective networks of global organisations benefitted the project in a number of ways. As well as enabling us to recruit a large representative panel, it allowed us to access researchers in LMIC interested in developing implementation plans specific to their local contexts. Furthermore we have been able to leverage of the WONCA Europe conference for important feedback, and to plan dissemination and follow-up action in the context of important conferences like the WONCA World conference in Seoul, Korea this October, and regional conferences in 2018 and the North American Primary Care research Group annual meeting in November 2018 in Chicago, as well as WONCA regional meetings in 2019.



### ***Limitations***

We had insufficient time and resources to use translation services for our Qualtric surveys. This meant that we required our panellists to be fluent in English, and hence limited potential participation. We note that the countries of enrolled African participants (Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, Sudan, Tanzania) are mostly Anglophone. Furthermore our literature searches were conducted using PubMed and restricted to English language publications. This was necessitated by the limited time period that was available for the study. Some important country- specific research or implementation experience may be published in the national language, as this is the most direct way to communicate to professionals in the field, and would therefore not be captured by our searches.

Most panellists were family physicians whose experience and issues of concern may differ from those of other PHC professionals such as nurses or community health workers. Time constraints limited our ability to disseminate our panel invitation through some networks. For example the International Council of nurses is a federation of more than 130 associations, and there were unable to communicate with many relevant organisations prior to our recruitment cut-off date. This meant that most practitioners were family physicians. It should be noted however that in Round 2, only two questions related specifically to family physicians, and only one of these made it to Round 3.

We were unable to conduct the literature reviews as robustly as we would have liked, given the time restraint. Studies were mostly screened on based on abstract, and those lacking an abstract were excluded. However the majority of these would have been commentaries and editorials rather than original research, as most journals do require structured abstracts for the latter. We also restricted our searches to PubMed, accepting that there may be a small number of additional research papers available in alternative databases.

### ***Implications going forward***

The Primary Health Care Performance Initiative (PHCPI) has introduced a framework to assess PHC performance in LMIC to help guide health reforms.<sup>367296</sup> This work can be used to complement/ moderate their intended programme of work. The work is being disseminated through academic presentation and publication, and will raise the whole agenda around the need to develop research capacity and conduct health services research in LMICs. Hopefully this will lead into new funding for these settings, and also a next phase of work to fill in the gaps identified.

Finally we hope it will also guide policy and implementation of appropriate models of care for PHC in LMICs. 2018 is the fortieth anniversary of the Alma Ata declaration, and a global discussion is being led by WHO about strengthening primary health care for universal health coverage. It is hard to evaluate impact where these services do not exist, and there is already pressing evidence of need to invest in the PHC workforce and deliver evidence based care in

this sector. The four priority questions are all clearly key issues for effective health systems. We do not want this report to be read as ‘we cannot do this because the evidence is not there’ but as ‘we need to make changes in our system and evaluate early pilots and outcomes’. The implementation of a referral system is a complex intervention, but this kind of research is really important and assists change management and staff engagement.<sup>373</sup> We hope that our community and professional networks can make a further contribution to the next phase.

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## Appendix 1 Priority and specific research areas & potential research questions

Identified during the Primary Health Care Measurement & Implementation Research Consortium July 2017 Priority Setting Meeting

Prioritized Research Areas	Specific Areas identified for Research	Potential Research Questions
1) Quality, Safety, and Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data use</li> <li>• Quality management</li> <li>• Learning systems</li> </ul>	<p><i>Facility management</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the current “state” of facility management?</li> <li>2. What are individual competencies at the individual, facility, and system levels for effective leadership/management at PHC facility levels? How do we measure these three levels?</li> <li>3. How do we understand how context impacts how well good management can result in targeted outcomes including PHC functions?</li> <li>4. How do you improve management?</li> </ol> <p><i>Competence (technical and social)</i></p> <p><i>Assuming we know the areas of competency needed...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the minimum skill set and competency with new delivery models/systems?</li> <li>2. How does a PHC systems ensure a growing “degree of fit” between need and competency required?</li> <li>3. How can competent HCWs be recruited and retained?</li> <li>4. What changes are needed to ensure newly graduated HCWs are competent</li> </ol>
2) PHC Policies and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement</li> <li>• Social accountability</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are good models of mixed health systems for PHC?</li> </ol>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. How do we build governance models to support mixed health systems?</li> <li>3. What is the real situation with rural and urban workforce management? Is there a shortage of workforce in rural areas or an overflow in urban?</li> <li>4. How can we assess social accountability?</li> <li>5. How do we improve both internal and external accountability?</li> <li>6. What tools are needed to effectively set priorities at the local level?</li> <li>7. How are priorities being designed and executed? Can there be new ways of gaining resources while decreasing dependence on external aid?</li> <li>8. How can we improve strategic purchasing at the local level?</li> <li>9. What information is needed to address corruption at the local level?</li> </ol>
3) Organization and models of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce and team development</li> <li>• Scale</li> <li>• New models for management</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the taxonomy of models of care across different settings?</li> <li>2. Range of effective service delivery models in urban areas?</li> <li>3. Use patterns in PHC for a set of functions/conditions?</li> <li>4. Referrals/transitions of care? How do we measure these?</li> <li>5. What does a PHC maturity model look like?</li> <li>6. What is the taxonomy of PHC service delivery models? Setting, provider, user, integration?</li> <li>7. What are dynamic empanelment models? Insured; risk stratification linked with information systems?</li> <li>8. What are better team structures? How to help teams work</li> </ol>

		together? How do they work together?
4) PHC Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market structure</li> <li>• Political economy</li> <li>• Uptake of evidence</li> </ul>	<p><i>Private Sector</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does the presence of private sector provider influence the quality of public sector providers (and visa versa)?</li> <li>2. What are requirements for successful PPPs that allow scaling up of quality care in LMIC? Need implementation science.</li> <li>3. What is role of private sector in scaling up quality in PHC in LMIC?</li> </ol> <p>19</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. What do we know about best practices to level the playing field for quality and safety of PHC services between public and private sector?</li> <li>5. Is there knowledge and evidence about how to mobilize private sector to reach “last mile populations?”</li> <li>6. How do we make sure private sector is able to receive payment?</li> <li>7. How to best improve managerial capacity in ministries of health for contract management?</li> </ol> <p><i>Demand-Side Financing</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. How do different UHC schemes affect health equity?</li> <li>9. Does PHC need pooled funds against financial risk in LMICs?</li> </ol> <p><i>Payment Systems</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. What are appropriate payment systems for quality PHC depending on maturity model of PHC system and capacity to manage and implement payment systems with different levels of complexity? Relates to organization/models of care.</li> </ol>

		<p>11. How to develop provider payment mechanisms to promote vertical integration of care?</p> <p><i>Supply-Side Financing</i></p> <p>12. How do we make supply-side financing from governments more efficient?</p> <p>13. What commodities can be deemed cost-efficient?</p> <p><i>Political Economy</i></p> <p>14. Why do countries not scale/implement what they've identified as policy or best practices?</p> <p><i>Financial Management</i></p> <p>15. Alignment of incentives at facility level. Should facilities have a bank account? Should they have the autonomy to use it? Linked to accountability agenda</p> <p>16. What are the funding flows for PHC? How to ensure flow of funding to facilities are efficiently used?</p> <p><i>PHC Spending</i></p> <p>17. Is there a minimum level of spending for PHC that should be an international benchmark?</p>
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## **Appendix 2 Collective networks of the research team**

### ***WONCA World Organization of Family Doctors***

This project is sponsored by the World Organization of Family Doctors ('WONCA', see [www.globalfamilydoctor.com](http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com)), and the named investigators include the WONCA President, two Past Presidents, the Chair and two Members of the Working Party on Research. The WONCA Presidents for South Asia, Africa and South America (Iberoamericana) are included as advisors.

WONCA's mission is 'to improve the quality of life of the peoples of the world', by fostering high standards of care in general practice/family medicine. Founded in 1972, WONCA and its members are international leaders in informing, promoting, and impacting effective primary health care. WONCA has an extensive history of convening multinational stakeholders for review and prioritisation of Primary Health Care domains. Its 2004 Kingston Conference resulted in an extensive review of the priorities of primary health-care research and recommendations to build the research capacity to approach these priorities, and which has served as a template for WONCA and its member organizations in 131 nations to advocate for and support research in primary care in all regions of the world.<sup>303</sup> WONCA has its own Academic Membership category, and also supports the annual Brisbane Initiative for International Leadership, which fosters leadership and international collaboration in primary care research.<sup>304</sup>

WONCA at a global level has a regionalised structure, with Presidents for the 7 WHO regions, and the WONCA Executive (which includes Profs Howe as President and Kidd as Past Presidents) agreed that their leads and networks could be used for the research effort. We used the multinational networks of WONCA led through academics from its Working Party on Research and World Executive. WONCA has comparative panel data and member researchers from Ghana, Ethiopia, Malawi, Uganda, Sudan, Mali, Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Nigeria (Africa); Sri Lanka, South Africa, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan (South Asia); Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Japan, China, Singapore, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand (Asia Pacific); Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Cuba, Peru, México, Rep. Dominicana, Argentina, Ecuador, Panamá (Iberoamericana-CIMF); Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, Qatar, Sudan, United Arab Emirates (Eastern Mediterranean); Spain, United Kingdom, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Netherlands, Turkey, Denmark, Ukraine, Romania, Macedonia, Finland (Europe), and Canada, USA (North America). We also called on the wider WONCA membership organisations, many of whom come from a wide range of LMICs.

### ***WONCA Working Party on Research***

WONCA's WP-R has longstanding relationships and experience with practice-based research networks around the world.<sup>305</sup> These are critical for fostering grass-roots curiosity and translating this into researchable questions. We used these networks both to test research gaps and to support the evolution of these questions into mature research projects. The capacity for

primary health care-based research is critical for front-line clinician engagement in LMIC, and should be an important component of effective PHC research programs in LMIC.

The WONCA Working Party on Research (WP-R) is more than a decade old and seeks to expand research in general practice/family medicine and welcomes interested family doctors from all countries. The 82 members of the WP-R meet regularly electronically and its executive committee includes representatives from Africa, Europe, North America, New Zealand, South Asia, Asia Pacific, Iberoamericana, and East Mediterranean who also have responsibilities for coordinating activities at regional meetings

(<http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/groups/WorkingParties/Research.aspx>). In 2013, the WP-R revised its objectives to the following:

1. To promote all university departments of family medicine / general practice / primary health care (FM / GP / PHC) or equivalent institutions globally in supporting and engaging in research to provide essential evidence for informed clinical and health policy decision making.
2. To promote all nations and funding bodies in prioritising FM / GP / PHC research and providing it with competitive but protected funding.
3. To support countries and regions in the promotion and nurturing of FM / GP / PHC research in their respective nations, and the timely translation of its results into everyday clinical service.

The WP-R provides an important infrastructure and international relationships to support this proposal. We engaged with the WP-R Executive member Regional Presidents who represent the seven world regions (with the exception of North America, already represented by our team and with no LMIC in this region) and who have connections with policymakers and other stakeholders in many countries within their respective continents.

### ***Robert Graham Center and American Board of Family Medicine***

The Robert Graham Center (RGC) and American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) hosts international conferences including Starfield Summits which aim to advance the legacy of Barbara Starfield in the areas such as strengthening PHC towards health equity and social accountability. This will help inform this project. The RGC recently completed a study using national data from the U.S. to compare methods proposed by U.S. and other international efforts. Their networks enabled us to disseminate our call for LMIC panellists.

### ***The Besrou Centre***

The Besrou Centre fosters collaboration to advance family medicine around the world. It aims to achieve this mission through four strategic priorities:

1. Help establish family medicine as the foundation of health systems around the world
2. Increase the adoption of training standards and accreditation in family medicine
3. Advance faculty training in family medicine
4. Strengthen continuing professional development for generalist physicians and primary care teams.

The Besroun Centre has a network of scholars in LMIC who were approached to contribute to the panels.



## Appendix 3 List of low and middle income countries

### *World Bank list of economies (June 2017)*

Country	Region	Income
1. Korea, Dem. People's Rep.	East Asia & Pacific	Low income
2. Haiti	Latin America & Caribbean	Low income
3. Afghanistan	South Asia	Low income
4. Nepal	South Asia	Low income
5. Benin	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
6. Burkina Faso	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
7. Burundi	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
8. Central African Republic	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
9. Chad	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
10. Comoros	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
11. Congo, Dem. Rep.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
12. Eritrea	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
13. Ethiopia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
14. Gambia, The	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
15. Guinea	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
16. Guinea-Bissau	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
17. Liberia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
18. Madagascar	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
19. Malawi	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
20. Mali	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
21. Mozambique	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
22. Niger	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
23. Rwanda	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
24. Senegal	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
25. Sierra Leone	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
26. Somalia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
27. South Sudan	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
28. Tanzania	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
29. Togo	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
30. Uganda	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
31. Zimbabwe	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income
32. Cambodia	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
33. Indonesia	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
34. Kiribati	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
35. Lao PDR	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
36. Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
37. Mongolia	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
38. Myanmar	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
39. Papua New Guinea	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
40. Philippines	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income

41. Solomon Islands	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
42. Timor-Leste	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
43. Vanuatu	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
44. Vietnam	East Asia & Pacific	Lower middle income
45. Armenia	Europe & Central Asia	Lower middle income
46. Georgia	Europe & Central Asia	Lower middle income
47. Kosovo	Europe & Central Asia	Lower middle income
48. Kyrgyz Republic	Europe & Central Asia	Lower middle income
49. Moldova	Europe & Central Asia	Lower middle income
50. Tajikistan	Europe & Central Asia	Lower middle income
51. Ukraine	Europe & Central Asia	Lower middle income
52. Uzbekistan	Europe & Central Asia	Lower middle income
53. Bolivia	Latin America & Caribbean	Lower middle income
54. El Salvador	Latin America & Caribbean	Lower middle income
55. Guatemala	Latin America & Caribbean	Lower middle income
56. Honduras	Latin America & Caribbean	Lower middle income
57. Nicaragua	Latin America & Caribbean	Lower middle income
58. Djibouti	Middle East & North Africa	Lower middle income
59. Egypt, Arab Rep.	Middle East & North Africa	Lower middle income
60. Jordan	Middle East & North Africa	Lower middle income
61. Morocco	Middle East & North Africa	Lower middle income
62. Syrian Arab Republic	Middle East & North Africa	Lower middle income
63. Tunisia	Middle East & North Africa	Lower middle income
64. West Bank and Gaza	Middle East & North Africa	Lower middle income
65. Yemen, Rep.	Middle East & North Africa	Lower middle income
66. Bangladesh	South Asia	Lower middle income
67. Bhutan	South Asia	Lower middle income
68. India	South Asia	Lower middle income
69. Pakistan	South Asia	Lower middle income
70. Sri Lanka	South Asia	Lower middle income
71. Angola	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
72. Cabo Verde	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
73. Cameroon	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
74. Congo, Rep.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
75. Côte d'Ivoire	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
76. Ghana	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
77. Kenya	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
78. Lesotho	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
79. Mauritania	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
80. Nigeria	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
81. São Tomé and Príncipe	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
82. Sudan	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
83. Swaziland	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
84. Zambia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income

85. American Samoa	East Asia & Pacific	Upper middle income
86. China	East Asia & Pacific	Upper middle income
87. Fiji	East Asia & Pacific	Upper middle income
88. Malaysia	East Asia & Pacific	Upper middle income
89. Marshall Islands	East Asia & Pacific	Upper middle income
90. Nauru	East Asia & Pacific	Upper middle income
91. Samoa	East Asia & Pacific	Upper middle income
92. Thailand	East Asia & Pacific	Upper middle income
93. Tonga	East Asia & Pacific	Upper middle income
94. Tuvalu	East Asia & Pacific	Upper middle income
95. Albania	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
96. Azerbaijan	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
97. Belarus	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
98. Bosnia and Herzegovina	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
99. Bulgaria	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
100. Croatia	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
101. Kazakhstan	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
102. Macedonia, FYR	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
103. Montenegro	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
104. Romania	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
105. Russian Federation	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
106. Serbia	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
107. Turkey	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
108. Turkmenistan	Europe & Central Asia	Upper middle income
109. Argentina	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
110. Belize	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
111. Brazil	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
112. Colombia	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
113. Costa Rica	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
114. Cuba	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
115. Dominica	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
116. Dominican Republic	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
117. Ecuador	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
118. Grenada	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
119. Guyana	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
120. Jamaica	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
121. Mexico	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
122. Panama	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
123. Paraguay	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
124. Peru	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
125. St. Lucia	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
126. St. Vincent, Grenadines	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
127. Suriname	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income
128. Venezuela, RB	Latin America & Caribbean	Upper middle income

129.	Algeria	Middle East & North Africa	Upper middle income
130.	Iran, Islamic Rep.	Middle East & North Africa	Upper middle income
131.	Iraq	Middle East & North Africa	Upper middle income
132.	Lebanon	Middle East & North Africa	Upper middle income
133.	Libya	Middle East & North Africa	Upper middle income
134.	Maldives	South Asia	Upper middle income
135.	Botswana	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper middle income
136.	Equatorial Guinea	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper middle income
137.	Gabon	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper middle income
138.	Mauritius	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper middle income
139.	Namibia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper middle income
140.	South Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper middle income

## Appendix 4 Text for Round 1 Delphi panel for Qualtrics

### Identification of research gaps to enable better primary health care models of care and financing in low and middle-income countries

Thank you for your interest in our expert Delphi panel. You are eligible to join the panel if you are a health professional, academic or policy maker from a low or middle income country working in primary health care (PHC) and sufficiently fluent in English. We apologise that time and resources do not allow us to offer translated versions.

This project aims to identify priority research questions in the areas of primary health care (1) organisation or models of care, and (2) financing. The participant information sheet [can be found here](#). We want to identify knowledge gaps and determine the most important areas where research is needed. We would like you to tell us based on your knowledge of the literature and as an expert in primary health care in your country.

In the second round, we will combine all panellist responses into two sets of questions and ask you to rate the degree of importance of each question. This will help us achieve consensus of what should be researched first.

In the brief third round, we will ask you to rank in order our final lists for primary health care organisation and financing.

#### **1 First, a little information about yourself**

What country do you reside in? (drop down box)

What is your age? (20-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; 60+ years)

What is your gender? (male; female; other)

Are you a health practitioner / primary care academic / policy-maker? Tick/check all that apply

*(only available if yes to health practitioner)* What is your clinical / health practitioner role? (family doctor / general practitioner; other doctor [specify]; nurse [specify]; Other [specify])

How long have you been working in this capacity? Less than 5 years / 5 to 10 years / 11 to 15 years / 16 to 20 years / greater than 20 years

*(only available if yes to academic)* What is your academic role? Professor / Associate Professor / Senior Lecturer / Lecturer / Other [specify]

How long have you been working in this capacity? Less than 5 years / 5 to 10 years / 11 to 15 years / 16 to 20 years / greater than 20 years

*(only available if yes to policy-maker)* What is your role as a policy-maker? [specify]

How long have you been working in this capacity? Less than 5 years / 5 to 10 years / 11 to 15 years / 16 to 20 years / greater than 20 years

#### **2 Models of primary health care organisation**

This first section is about the organisation of primary health care and models of care in your country. A model of care is the way health services are delivered. It outlines best practice

care and services for an individual or a population throughout the stages of a condition or an injury. Based on your experience and understanding of the literature, what are the current **gaps in knowledge**? Short answers or bullet points of your ideas are fine, or questions you would like answered. You do not need to write something for every category, and please note that this is about research needs not about resolution of problems in the service per se.

Under each research question there is a sample research question just to give you some idea and get you started, but please generate your own.

Primary health care workforce (workforce is people involved in providing the services)

*Eg What are the issues facing primary health care workforce?*

Models of primary health care

*Eg What models of care exist across different settings?*

Primary health care team structures and functions (a team is a group of people working together)

*Eg Who should lead the team and who should it include?*

Services and scope of practice of primary health care

*Eg What are the range of services/scope of care provided by primary health care?*

Referrals and transitions of care between primary and secondary care

*Eg What conditions are seen to be “primary health care” versus requiring specialty or hospital care?*

Public and private primary health care

*Eg What is the role of private practice? What is the governance of private practice: integrated with or separated from the public sector?*

Government policy on primary health care

*Eg How is primary health care delivery driven by government policy? Are professionals restricted in how they practice in the community and provide access to first line services?*

If there are other areas of research into primary health care organisation you consider important for your setting that do not fit these categories, please add here.

### **3 Financing**

This second section is about the financing of primary health care in your country. Financing means how the funds are provided and services paid for. Based on your experience and your understanding of the literature, please suggest as many areas as possible where you think there is a **gap in our knowledge** that research might help fill, in each of the categories listed. Short answers or bullet points of your ideas are fine, or questions you would like answered.

You do not need to write something for every category, and please note that this is about research needs not about resolution of problems in the service per se.

Under each research question there is a sample research question just to give you some idea and get you started, but please generate your own.

Equity of primary health care system

*Eg Do differences in payment lead to variation nationally/regionally in which services are covered or in the availability of services?*

Quality and safety of primary health care services in the public and private sectors

*Eg What role does the private sector have in partnering with public? In improving access?*

Contract management capacity in ministries of health

*Eg What is the best way for contracts for services managed and decided?*

Appropriate payment systems for quality primary health care

*Eg What is overall health spending and is there protected money for primary health care?*

Scaling up / implementing best practice

*Eg Does the private sector have a responsibility in improving quality?*

Defining essential and cost-efficient commodities

*Eg How do we decide what services should be considered essential to provide universally?*

Pooled funds against financial and technical risks

*Eg Is there a policy to achieve universal health coverage? And if so: is primary health care an integrated part of this policy?*

Efficient funding for primary health care and flow to facilities

*Eg What is the best mechanism to enable community-based services to be adequately and reliably funded?*

Payment mechanisms to promote vertical integration of care

*Eg Are there payment incentives for PHC for the management of chronic health problems/care for the elderly?*

If there are other areas of research into primary health care financing you consider important for your setting that do not fit into any of these categories, please add here.

Thank you very much for your participation. We are very grateful for your contribution. Please submit your responses. You will be asked to complete Round 2 in the middle of March and Round 3 (ranking the questions) in early April.



## Appendix 5 Codes for organisation / models of care

Domain	Code
(1) Workforce	A- Workforce Training
	B- Workload & Working Conditions, capacity, recruitment & retention (J)
	C- Workforce Distribution
	J- Workforce Satisfaction
	K- Recognition & status of FM & PHC professionals
	M- Assessing outcomes related to workforce
	X- Role of PHC professionals including FPs in developing government policy
(2) Team	D- Interactions with other sectors
	F- Team composition
	G- Role & value of FP
	K- Recognition & status of FM
(3) Policy	V- Government & PHC & Public Health
	W- Relationship between PHC, PC & public health
	T- Measuring effectiveness
	Y- Inequalities in PHC funding
	BB- PHC Innovations
	Z- Measuring PHC delivery
(4) System	H- Resources & Infrastructure
	I -Service quality
	Q- Barriers to care
	P- Transitions of care
(5)Public/Private	R- Private practice in universal health coverage
(6) Scope of practice	N- Determine SOP
	P -Who decides SOP
(7)Geography	DD-
(8) Misc	XX
Null response	ZZ

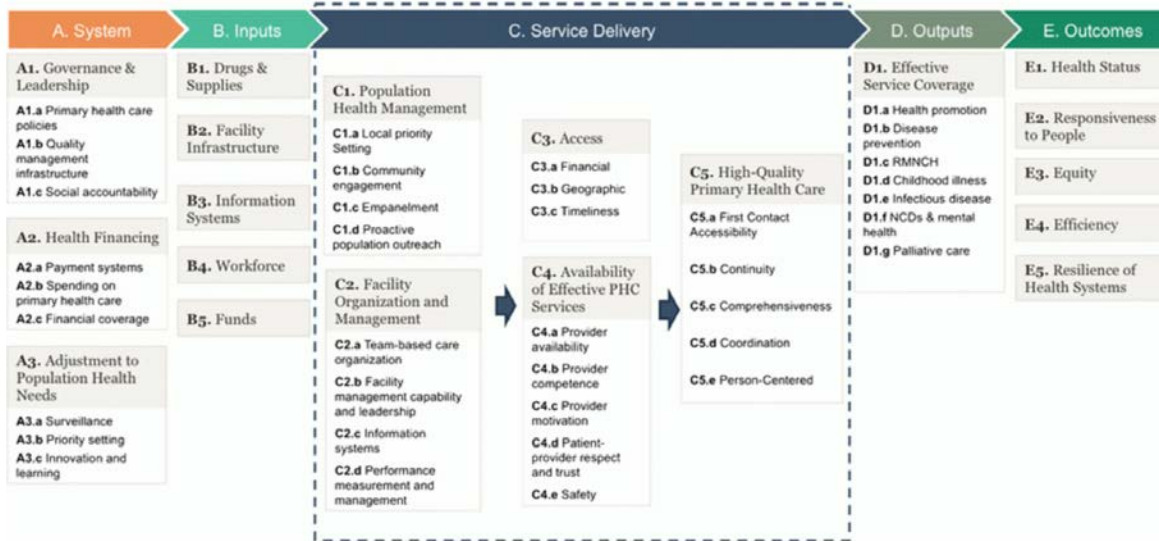
## Appendix 6 Search terms for PHC and LMIC since 2003

("Primary Health Care"[Mesh] OR "General Practice"[Mesh] OR "Family Practice"[MeSH]) AND ("Internationality"[Mesh:NoExp] OR "Developing Countries"[Mesh] OR (developing countr\*[tiab] OR under developed countr\*[tiab] OR developing nation\*[tiab] OR developing world[tiab] OR less developed world[tiab] OR lmic\*[tiab] OR (less developed[tiab] OR low income[tiab] OR lower income[tiab] OR middle income[tiab] OR low middle income[tiab] OR resource poor[tiab] OR resource constrained[tiab] OR low resource[tiab] OR limited resource\*[tiab] OR resource limited[tiab])) AND (country[tiab] OR countries[tiab] OR region[tiab] OR regions[tiab] OR settings[tiab] OR area[tiab] OR areas[tiab])) OR "Africa South of the Sahara"[Mesh] OR "Central America"[Mesh] OR "South America"[Mesh] OR "Latin America"[Mesh] OR "Caribbean Region"[Mesh] OR "Mexico"[Mesh] OR "Asia"[Mesh:NoExp] OR "Asia, Central"[Mesh] OR "Asia, Northern"[Mesh] OR "Asia, Southeastern"[Mesh] OR "Asia, Western"[Mesh] OR Afghanistan [tiab] OR Afghan [tiab] OR Albania\* [tiab] OR Algeria\* [tiab] OR American Samoa\* [tiab] OR Angola\* [tiab] OR Argentina [tiab] OR Argentinian [tiab] OR Armenia\* [tiab] OR Azerbaijan\* [tiab] OR Bangladesh\* [tiab] OR Barbados [tiab] OR Barbadian [tiab] OR Belarus [tiab] OR Belorussian [tiab] OR Beliz\* [tiab] OR Benin\* [tiab] OR Bhutan\* [tiab] OR Bolivia\* [tiab] OR Bosnia [tiab] OR Bosnian\* [tiab] OR Herzegovin\* [tiab] OR Botswan\* [tiab] OR Brazil [tiab] OR Brazilian [tiab] OR Bulgaria\* [tiab] OR Burkina Faso [tiab] OR Burkinabe [tiab] OR Burmese [tiab] OR Burund\* [tiab] OR Cambodia\* [tiab] OR Cameroon\* [tiab] OR Cape Verde [tiab] OR Cape Verdean [tiab] OR Central African Republic [tiab] OR Chad [tiab] OR Chadian [tiab] OR China [tiab] OR Chinese [tiab] OR Colombia [tiab] OR Colombian [tiab] OR Comoros [tiab] OR Comorian [tiab] OR Congo [tiab] OR Congolese [tiab] OR Costa Rica [tiab] OR Costa Rican [tiab] OR Cote d'Ivoire [tiab] OR Ivory Coast [tiab] OR Croatia\* [tiab] OR Cuba [tiab] OR Cuban [tiab] OR Czech [tiab] OR Djibouti\* [tiab] OR Dominica [tiab] OR Dominican [tiab] OR Ecuador\* [tiab] OR Egypt [tiab] OR Egyptian [tiab] OR El Salvador [tiab] OR Salvadorian [tiab] OR Guinea [tiab] OR Guinean [tiab] OR Eritrea\* [tiab] OR Estonia\* [tiab] OR Ethiopia\* [tiab] OR Fiji\* [tiab] OR Gabon\* [tiab] OR Gambia\* [tiab] OR Gaza [tiab] OR Georgia [tiab] OR Georgian [tiab] OR Ghana [tiab] OR Ghanaian [tiab] OR Grenad\* [tiab] OR Guatemala\* [tiab] OR Guinea [tiab] OR Guinean [tiab] OR Guyan\* [tiab] OR Haiti\* [tiab] OR Hondura\* [tiab] OR Hong Kong [tiab] OR Hungar\* [tiab] OR India [tiab] OR Indian [tiab] OR Indonesia\* [tiab] OR Iran [tiab] OR Iraq\* [tiab] OR Jamaica\* [tiab] OR Jordan [tiab] OR Jordanian [tiab] OR Kazakh\* [tiab] OR Kenya [tiab] OR Kenyan [tiab] OR Kiribati [tiab] OR Korea\* [tiab] OR Kyrgyz Republic [tiab] OR Kyrgyzstan [tiab] OR Laos [tiab] OR Laotian [tiab] OR Lebanon [tiab] OR Lebanese [tiab] OR Lesotho [tiab] OR Liberia\* [tiab] OR Libya\* [tiab] OR Macedonia\* [tiab] OR Madagasca\* [tiab] OR Malawi\* [tiab] OR Malaysia\* [tiab] OR Maldives [tiab] OR Maldivian [tiab] OR Mali [tiab] OR Malian [tiab] OR Marshall Islands [tiab] OR Mauritania\* [tiab] OR Mauritius [tiab] OR Mauritian [tiab] OR Mayotte [tiab] OR Mexico [tiab] OR Mexican [tiab] OR Micronesia\* [tiab] OR Moldov\* [tiab] OR Mongolia\* [tiab] OR Morocc\* [tiab] OR Mozambique [tiab] OR Mozambican [tiab] OR Myanmar [tiab] OR Namibia\* [tiab] OR Nepal\* [tiab] OR Nicaragua\* [tiab] OR Niger [tiab] OR Nigeria\* [tiab] OR

Northern Mariana Islands [tiab] OR Oman\* [tiab] OR Pakistan\* [tiab] OR Palau\* [tiab] OR Panama\* [tiab] OR Papua New Guinea [tiab] OR Paraguay\* [tiab] OR Peru\* [tiab] OR Philippine\* [tiab] OR Poland [tiab] OR Polish [tiab] OR Romania\* [tiab] OR Rwanda\* [tiab] OR Samoa\* [tiab] OR Sao Tome [tiab] OR Senegal\* [tiab] OR Serbia [tiab] OR Serbia\* [tiab] OR Montenegr\* [tiab] OR Seychell\* [tiab] OR Sierra Leone [tiab] OR Slovak Republic [tiab] OR Slovakian [tiab] OR Solomon Islands [tiab] OR Somali\* [tiab] OR South Africa [tiab] OR South African [tiab] OR Sri Lanka [tiab] OR Sri Lankan [tiab] OR Saint Kitts [tiab] OR Saint Lucia [tiab] OR Saint Vincent [tiab] OR Sudan\* [tiab] OR Suriname\* [tiab] OR Swaziland [tiab] OR Swazi [tiab] OR Syria [tiab] OR Syrian [tiab] OR Tajikistan [tiab] OR Tajik [tiab] OR Tanzania\* [tiab] OR Thailand [tiab] OR Thai [tiab] OR Timor-Leste [tiab] OR Togo\* [tiab] OR Tonga\* [tiab] OR Trinidad and Tobago [tiab] OR Trinidadian [tiab] OR Tobagonian [tiab] OR Tunisia\* [tiab] OR Turk\* [tiab] OR Turkmenistan [tiab] OR Uganda\* [tiab] OR Ukrain\* [tiab] OR Uzbekistan [tiab] OR Uzbek [tiab] OR Vanuat\* [tiab] OR Venezuela\* [tiab] OR Vietnam\* [tiab] OR West Bank [tiab] OR Yemen\* [tiab] OR Zambia\* [tiab] OR Zimbabwe\*[tiab]) AND ("2003/01/01"[PDAT]: "3000/12/31"[PDAT])

# Appendix 7 PHCPI conceptual framework

<https://phcperformanceinitiative.org/about-us/measuring-phc><sup>280</sup>



## Appendix 8 Number of studies per LMIC country

LMIC Country	Number of studies	LMIC Country	Number of studies	LMIC Country	Number of studies
Brazil	42	Cuba	1	Grenada	0
South Africa	26	Ecuador	1	Guinea	0
China	21	El Salvador	1	Guinea-Bissau	0
India	15	Eritrea	1	Guyana	0
Tanzania	12	Gambia, The	1	Honduras	0
Nigeria	11	Guatemala	1	Iraq	0
Ethiopia	10	Kyrgyz Republic	1	Kazakhstan	0
Nepal	6	Lao PDR	1	Kiribati	0
Thailand	6	Malaysia	1	Korea, Dem. People's Rep.	0
Turkey	6	Mauritania	1	Kosovo	0
Kenya	5	Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	1	Lesotho	0
Malawi	5	Morocco	1	Libya	0
Mexico	5	Mozambique	1	Macedonia, FYR	0
Pakistan	5	Myanmar	1	Madagascar	0
Vietnam	5	Peru	1	Maldives	0
Zambia	5	Philippines	1	Marshall Islands	0
Afghanistan	4	Romania	1	Mauritius	0
Botswana	4	Solomon Islands	1	Moldova	0
Colombia	4	Sri Lanka	1	Mongolia	0
Ghana	4	St. Lucia	1	Montenegro	0
Iran, Islamic Rep.	4	Sudan	1	Namibia	0
Burkina Faso	3	Suriname	1	Nauru	0
Haiti	3	Tajikistan	1	Nicaragua	0
Jordan	3	Ukraine	1	Niger	0
Mali	3	Zimbabwe	1	Panama	0
Uganda	3	Algeria	0	Papua New Guinea	0
American Samoa	2	Angola	0	Paraguay	0
Bangladesh	2	Azerbaijan	0	Russian Federation	0
Bolivia	2	Belarus	0	Samoa	0
Costa Rica	2	Belize	0	São Tomé and Príncipe	0
Croatia	2	Bhutan	0	Senegal	0
Georgia	2	Burundi	0	Serbia	0

Indonesia	2	Cabo Verde	0	Somalia	0
Jamaica	2	Cambodia	0	South Sudan	0
Lebanon	2	Central African Republic	0	St. Vincent, Grenadines	0
Liberia	2	Chad	0	Swaziland	0
Rwanda	2	Comoros	0	Syrian Arab Republic	0
Sierra Leone	2	Congo, Dem. Rep.	0	Togo	0
Timor- Leste	2	Congo, Rep.	0	Tonga	0
Tunisia	2	Côte d'Ivoire	0	Turkmenistan	0
Albania	1	Djibouti	0	Tuvalu	0
Argentina	1	Dominica	0	Uzbekistan	0
Armenia	1	Dominican Republic	0	Vanuatu	0
Benin	1	Egypt, Arab Rep.	0	Venezuela, RB	0
Bosnia and Herzegovi na	1	Equatorial Guinea	0	West Bank and Gaza	0
Bulgaria	1	Fiji	0	Yemen, Rep.	0
Cameroon	1	Gabon	0		