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giving sight

INTRODUCTION

- There is limited capacity to conduct research in epidemiology and public health in Africa.
- Coordinated research is needed to provide solutions and to generate a body of knowledge that can inform programs and policies across the continent.
- Policies in Africa need to draw on local research rather than on studies from abroad

AN AFRICAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

- The benefits of reducing the prevalence of visual impairment and blindness can only be achieved if Africa recognises the importance of research as a tool for health development.
- The recognition of this need resulted in the formation of AVRI in 2006 as an institute affiliation of the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa.
- AVRI is an African-based institute that links intellectuals, institutions, organisations and researchers to address the challenges facing Africa's eye health issues.
- AVRI aims to reduce the burden of blindness in Africa by supporting and conducting research relevant to disease control, human resource and infrastructure development.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop a cadre of researchers in public health.
- To mobilise resources to develop centres of eye care research.
- To support, collaborate or undertake relevant research projects.
- To support and promote the publication and dissemination of research finds.
- To promote South-South and North-South collaboration.

VISION

To be the premiere site of vision research for eye care and blindness prevention in African, and thereby address the impact that visual impairment and blindness have on the quality of life.

MISSION

To develop research capacity and appropriate skills in an effort to eliminate visual impairments and avoidable blindness in Africa.

To support Vision 2020 Right to Sight's aim of eliminating avoidable blindness by the year 2020.

ACTIVITIES

5.1 Research Training Courses

Promote research by providing short courses for African researchers.

Introduction to Research Methods:

Kenya: August 2007

Nigeria: March 2008

Future courses:

- Information management
- Research project management
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Introduction to Research Methods.

5.2 Regional Collaboration

- AVRI coordinated a collaborative proposal submission which consisted of:
- 11 African Research institutions
- 4 NGDO's
- 2 UK research institutions
- 1 Australian Institute
- 2 Professional Associations
- Such collaborative efforts will be a key focus.

5.3 Thesis Supervision

Assistance with formulating research questions, writing proposals and protocols, general project management and publication of results.

Current students:

- Masters: 9
- PhD: 2

5.4 Data Analysis

Assist with data management, conduct bio-statistical analyses, and write up results.

5.5 Writing Papers

Assist with compiling and writing papers, reports and documents for publication and dissemination.

5.6 Research Support

Assist with proposal writing, sourcing funding, project management and report compilation.

5.7 Web site

Resources to promote research such as: training courses, online ethics course, open source software for researchers, research collaborators, up-coming events and funding opportunities.

<http://avri.ukzn.ac.za/HomePage11670.aspx>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This information was partially presented previously as a poster at the 8th Annual General Assembly of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 2008.



Photos Courtesy of Dean Saffron