Regenstrief Conference: Future-oriented agenda for global health research

INDIANAPOLIS -- U.S. researchers can do much to improve the health of citizens of low-resource countries, but how can a forward-looking agenda for global health research be developed? What should the research priorities be? How can faculty from competing research-intensive universities collaborate with one another?

A special supplement to the September issue of the Journal of General Internal Medicine presents the recipes for global health research generated by scientists from the Regenstrief Institute and a number of U.S. and international universities who attended the 11th Biennial Regenstrief Conference. They tackled the logistically, culturally and monetarily complex issue of how to develop a practical and effective future-oriented agenda for global health research.

Keynote papers presented at the conference and a conference overview focus on six areas:
- Moral foundations and ethics of global health research.
- Informatics and "data mining" tools.
- Basic and laboratory research.
- Clinical effectiveness and health systems research.
- Development of organizational policies and practices for research.
- Informatics and tele-education programs to improve quality of care.

“This working conference was a demonstration of faith in the potential of in-the-moment collaboration. We believed that a diverse faculty could come together in a very short time frame to envision potential research projects. It happened!” said Regenstrief investigator Thomas Inui, M.D., the Joe and Sarah Ellen Mamlin Professor of Global Health Research at the Indiana University School of Medicine. Dr. Inui, who chaired the conference, is director of research with the IU Center for Global Health and North American director of the Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare Research Network.

The Regenstrief Institute hosts AMPATH’s North American Research Program Office, which is affiliated with the Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute, the IU Center for Global Health and the IU-Kenya program. The AMPATH research program has received more than $75 million in research grants over the past decade. Much of this research takes advantage of Regenstrief-developed e-health infrastructure in urban and rural western Kenya to identify patients for prospective research projects, including clinical trials; provide clinical data; store study data; or perform retrospective epidemiologic studies.

The Eck Institute for Global Health at the University of Notre Dame, the Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute and the IU Center for Global Health co-sponsored the 11th Regenstrief Conference.

The Regenstrief Conferences were established in 1985 by the Regenstrief Institute to foster information exchange and intellectual discourse regarding a specific health research issue and its policy implications. The institute is an internationally respected informatics and health care research organization.

“Over the years, the Regenstrief Conferences have brought together scientists and health care providers from widely different backgrounds to tackle a single problem. This time, it was how North American universities can collaborate to ply their research skills and resources to find solutions to the scourge of infectious and degenerative diseases that are crippling the people and nations of the developing world,” said Regenstrief Institute President and CEO William M. Tierney, M.D., associate dean for clinical effectiveness research at the IU School of Medicine.
The Regenstrief Institute is a distinguished medical research organization dedicated to improving the quality and effectiveness of health care. The institute is the home of internationally recognized centers of excellence in biomedical and public health informatics, aging, and health services and health systems research. Institute investigators are faculty members of the Indiana University School of Medicine, other schools at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, or Purdue University.

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