

Strengthening South-North collaborations for research on diarrhoeal diseases

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Background

The majority of diarrhoeal diseases are attributed to unsafe water supplies and inadequate sanitation and hygiene. Although global mortality from diarrhoeal diseases has declined in recent years due to various interventions, it remains the second leading cause of death in children under five years of age in developing countries. In 2016, 8% of all deaths among children under age 5 were due to diarrhoea.

According to the 2017 G-FINDER report, diarrhoeal diseases received \$145 million in R&D funding in 2016. The European and Developing Countries Clinical Trial Partnership (EDCTP) is an Africa focused funding model that supports collaborative research between scientists in sub-Saharan African and the global north. EDCTP funds research to reduce the social and economic burden of poverty-related and neglected diseases (PRNDs) including diarrhoea diseases in developing countries by accelerating the clinical development of effective, safe, accessible, suitable and affordable medical interventions for PRNDs in partnership with sub-Saharan Africa.

Method

The first programme EDCTP1 established in 2003 focused on HIV, TB and malaria. However, recognising the growing burden of disease in sub-Saharan Africa, the second programme EDCTP2 from 2014 expanded its scope to include research on neglected infectious diseases (NIDs) and emerging infections. Furthermore, in 2016 this scope was further expanded to include lower respiratory tract infections and diarrhoeal diseases. We describe the EDCTP partnership model and present opportunities for funding for research on diarrhoea diseases including Rotavirus .

Results

Since 2016, multiple calls for proposals have been launched which proposals on diarrhoeal diseases may be submitted. These include individual fellowships, as well as a vaccine call specifically for diarrhoeal diseases and LRTIs for 23 million euros. To date, one clinical trial ROVAS-2 (A randomized controlled trial of two versus three doses of Rotarix™ vaccine for boosting and longevity of vaccine immune responses in Zambia) EUR499 456,25 has been funded. Another project on cholera vaccine was successful ChoVaxim (150 000 euros). Several 2018 calls are under evaluation.

Conclusions

There are multiple opportunities for funding under EDCTP for clinical trials and product-focused implementation research for rotavirus and other diarrhoeal diseases in sub-Saharan Africa.