

WHO Regional Publications, Eastern Mediterranean Series **30**

***A Practical Guide  
For  
Health Researchers***



World Health Organization  
Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

WHO Regional Publications Eastern Mediterranean Series 30

# A Practical Guide for Health Researchers

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Cairo, 2004

## WHO Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Fathalla, Mahmoud F.

A practical guide for health researchers / by Mahmoud F. Fathalla and Mohamed M.F. Fathalla.

p. (WHO Regional Publications, Eastern Mediterranean Series; 30)

ISBN 92-9021-363-9

1. Research–Scientific 2. Writing–Guidelines 3. Publishing–Guidelines 4. WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean I. Fathalla, Mohamed M.F. II. Title

[NLM Classification: Q 179.9]

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Cover design by Ahmed Hassanein

Printed in Cairo, Egypt, by Dar Mourad for Printing

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# Foreword

The central role of health research in improving health and stimulating national economic growth is now well established. Health research supports health systems in the delivery of better, fairer and more equitable health care to people. It does so by identifying challenges and providing best solutions, monitoring how health systems perform and producing new knowledge for better technologies and improved approaches to public health. The World Health Organization (WHO) has, time and again, affirmed that all national and international health policies should be based on valid scientific evidence; that such evidence requires research; and that the application of the knowledge, information and technology emanating from health research has enormous potential in promoting health.

Shifting epidemiological trends in disease patterns, rapid increase in populations, new and emerging health problems, increasing commercial interests of the private health sector and ever shrinking financial resources all contribute to the global inequity in health care. It is therefore extremely important that research addresses priorities and focuses on the most important health issues, conditions and determinants. Health research must serve as a driver for health policy and practice. For this to happen, the health research systems not only have to be fully accountable for the sake of transparency, but also have to be capable of delivering the desired returns, to justify the allocation of scarce resources to research and development.

Inadequacy in capacities for research and development remains a major impediment for the developing world. Despite over three decades of efforts to build capacities, during which thousands of scientists from developing countries have been trained, most of the expected breakthroughs have not happened. Large numbers of trained scientists are not working in their countries of origin. Therefore, building indigenous capacity for

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