



# Health Research Brief

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HRI SERIES

## 25 Years of Health Policy and Systems Research (HPSR): Lessons for the Philippines

Increasing health policy and systems research capacity in low- and middle- income countries (LMICs): results from a bibliometric analysis by English, K.M. and Pourbohloul, B.

HPSR

### Health Policy and Systems Research (HPSR)

Health policy and systems research (HPSR) is an emerging field that seeks to understand and improve how societies organize themselves in achieving collective health goals, and how different actors interact in the policy and implementation processes to contribute to policy outcomes. By nature, it is inter-disciplinary, a blend of economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, public health and epidemiology that together draw a comprehensive picture of how health systems respond and adapt to health policies, and how health policies can shape – and be shaped by – health systems and the broader determinants of health. It excludes basic science, biomedical and clinical research. (WHO, 2009)

### RECOMMENDATIONS



#### Ensure availability of funding for health policy and systems research.

Avoid crowding out by basic sciences or biomedical/ clinical research.

#### Facilitate partnership between HPSR institutions in middle and high income countries with local institutions to systematically develop local capacity.

Consider sending critical mass of young scholars for MS, PhD programmes or short-term training.



#### Build HPSR capacity within the Department of Health.

This has the potential to inform and shape policies that foster rigour and equity, among others.

### KEY FINDINGS



**1. More low and middle income countries (LMIC) authors are being engaged in the process of solving their countries' respective health system issues through the conduct of HPSR.**



**2. Positive changes in HPSR can be attributed to large-scale interventions such as capacity building and efforts of national and international associations that drive the relevance and cause of the discipline.**

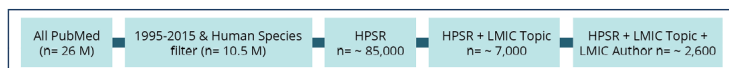
### METHODOLOGY

• Bibliometric Analysis (BA) was employed to survey and characterize HPSR publications in PubMed that were produced from 1990-2015 and that were filtered using the following (see figure 1)

• The search assumes that an HPSR publication must have the keywords “health and policy” or “health system” (and its alternatives, e.g. health systems) somewhere within its text.

• Clinical studies were disregarded.

Figure 1. Number of Publications



### RESULTS



• HPSR publications represent approximately 10% of total number of papers published in PubMed annually. This percentage is increasing at a greater rate than PubMed publications overall.



• Two out of three of HPSR studies on LMIC topics were authored by experts from High Income Countries (HICs).



• HPSR publications with topics relevant to LMICs and an LMIC-affiliated lead authors (specifically from low-income countries) are increasing at a greater rate than any other category within the scope of this analysis.



• Since 2000, LMIC authors have published more in life and biomedical science researches

Contributions to HPSR Literature per LMICs category		
LICs Horizontally diffused	Lower-MICs	Upperr-MICs
Primary contributors: Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nepal	India contributed the most	China led publications since 2000 however they do not focus on HPSR
Slight increase in publication (2013 and onwards): Malawi, Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Guinea, Cambodia, Mozambique, Mali	Improvements along with India (middle of 2000s): Georgia, Pakistan	With strong HPSR contributions: South Africa, Mexico, Brazil, Iran, Turkey
After normalization, contributions from LICs become insignificant.	After normalization, increased contributions since 1990s from: Papua New Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Ukraine, Nigeria	After normalization, outpacing PubMed overall: Venezuela, Jamaica, Cuba, Bulgaria

### TREND IN SUCCESSION OF HPSR THEMES:



Delivery of Health  
(early 1990s)



Healthcare Reform  
(1995 - 2008)



Health Services Accessibility  
(late 1990s)

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