

Report focuses on sustainability of infectious disease surveillance

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Just as the globalization of trade and travel is rapidly evolving, so is the globalization of infectious diseases and the need for cooperative approaches to detect, prevent and control them, according to Dr. David Dausey, chair of the Mercyhurst University Public Health Department.

The outbreaks of [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome](#) (SARS) and avian influenza [H5N1](#) in recent years showed how [infectious diseases](#) can significantly impact national economies and exposed the need for cooperation in detecting and controlling disease to protect populations and economies.

Such is the rationale behind a newly published paper in *Global Health Governance* by Dausey and eight co-authors from six different countries. The publication, "Sustainability of Sub-Regional [Disease Surveillance Networks](#)," describes the team's research in Southeast Asia to build and sustain sub-regional disease surveillance networks.

The purpose of a surveillance network is to measure the need for intervention, including early warning of emerging events and empower decision makers with timely and reliable information. While effective, surveillance networks face many challenges as they mature, from training to funding.

Using the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance (MBDS) network as an example, Dausey and his colleagues developed a model to enhance its sustainability, which they hope can be used across the board as a guide in

strengthening the sustainability of these networks.

The Mekong Basin area in Asia is considered a "hotspot" for "[emerging infectious diseases](#)" (EIDs). More than a decade ago, six Mekong Basin countries organized themselves into a "sub-regional" network to cooperate in border health and [public health surveillance](#) for diseases of shared concern.

The paper acknowledges that sub-regional infectious disease surveillance networking is distinct from national, regional, or global surveillance and is an important trend in global public health because such cooperation is organized and governed by member countries and directly addresses their shared priorities. MBDS is one of the longest-standing current examples of self-organized sub-regional infectious disease surveillance networks in the world.

Provided by Mercyhurst University

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