

More research into chronic diseases urgently needed in all countries

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When considering chronic (non-communicable) diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes, in low-and-middle countries, a major shift in approach from declaring what needs to be done to using research to prioritise, evaluate, monitor and improve health outcomes is urgently needed, according to international experts from London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine writing in this week's *PLOS Medicine*.

The authors, led by Shah Ebrahim, also from the South Asian Network for Chronic Disease in India, make a strong case for conducting research in the prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases in all [countries](#) (high-income and low- and middle-income) for mutual benefit. Currently, research into non-communicable diseases in low- and middle-income countries is limited, and despite repeated calls for action, the burden from these diseases is increasing unchecked.

The authors say: "Global and local research, particularly if it can be conducted in parallel in high-income countries and middle- and low-income countries, can provide powerful arguments for the need to act globally."

Non-communicable disease research in high-income countries and low-and middle-income countries has other mutual advantages, such as discovering new causes of non-communicable diseases, replicating and extending findings, and exploring links between infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases.

Also, different non-communicable diseases are at varying stages of needing research, policy development, and action. These stages range from not knowing the population burden of many non-communicable diseases to knowing all that is necessary to take action.

The authors argue for changes in the global and national funding agendas to strengthen the research and health system capacity for non-communicable diseases, which should reduce deaths and disability.

The authors say: "The time has now come for all health-related research and development funders—global, regional, and national— to acknowledge the existence of non-communicable diseases and rise to the challenges they present."

More information: Ebrahim S, Pearce N, Smeeth L, Casas JP, Jaffar S, et al. (2013) Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases In Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Is the Evidence from High-Income Countries All We Need? PLoS Med 10(1): e1001377.

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