



German and Indonesian researchers collaborate to tackle cervical cancer

A team of researchers, healthcare workers and policy makers from Germany and Indonesia have joined forces to devise an effective community-based screening approach to help prevent cervical cancer, which is a pressing health burden in Indonesia. This is one of over 15 projects supported by the German Alliance for Global Health Research (GLOHRA).

The cross-sector research project “Community Cervical Cancer Screening and Prevention in Indonesia” aims to increase the acceptance of screening for Human Papilloma virus (HPV) infections based on a novel molecular based diagnostic approach, which is a highly effective strategy for preventing cervical cancer. The project hinges on training community healthcare workers in Indonesia to deliver HPV-self testing kits to women.

By considering cultural perspectives and identifying barriers to acceptance, this project has seen major success. In the pilot phase of recruitment, there was a 100% acceptance of the self-test amongst the women. These promising initial findings mean that the approach will likely be scaled-up and integrated into Indonesian health policy. Prof. Jörg Haier, a project leader from Hannover Medical School notes: “The support of the district, provincial and national policy makers is already a great success that paves the way to include Indonesia in innovative healthcare research.” The team has received supplemental funding for measures to support capacity-building and trainings, based on the identified need for educational materials amongst healthcare workers and women in the community.

Supriyatiningih Wenang, a team leader from Indonesia who is currently completing her doctoral degree at the University of Münster, reflects on her experience as part of the GLOHRA-supported project: “It is a special, extraordinary experience. Engaging with Germany personally started in 2015 and since then I have learned so much about the meaning of collaboration. [...] I am very happy because this is the first time testing a model in Indonesia that combines innovative treatment and diagnosis with cultural acceptance.”

Prof. Haier notes how the knowledge exchange flows both ways: “We are doing a very similar trial in Hannover, so we can also compare results and learn from the findings in Indonesia to improve outreach approaches for underserved communities here in Germany.”

This project epitomizes the mission of GLOHRA, which is to tackle health challenges by supporting interdisciplinary and collaborative research. GLOHRA supports more than 15 projects with collaborators in 15 countries. The research projects vary substantially in their topic and approach, and yet share a commitment to health equity. The projects are one of many activities which strengthen global health research in Germany. GLOHRA also has more than 20 annual events and has implemented measures to support early career researchers.

In under three years, GLOHRA has grown to over 950 members. Researchers from all disciplines who are active in global health and affiliated with a German public research institution are encouraged to apply. International researchers can also benefit from many GLOHRA activities, including frequent trainings, public events and information shared via social media networks. We look forward to the continuous growth of GLOHRA, with strengthened partnerships in and outside of Germany.



The German Alliance for Global Health Research (GLOHRA) is an initiative supported by the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) to promote networking and strengthen global health research. Since June 2022, GLOHRA has received funding from the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) for additional measures to strengthen cooperation with partners in low and middle income countries. Over 950 global health researchers from all disciplines affiliated with more than 180 public research institutions across Germany have joined since GLOHRA was founded in February 2020. The elected 19-member interdisciplinary Steering Committee is the strategic decision-making body. The GLOHRA Secretariat is hosted by Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin.

IndoCerCa: Community Cervical Cancer Screening and Prevention in Indonesia is a research project supported by GLOHRA. The planned two-year project began in November 2021, supported by funds from the BMBF. Since January 2023, it has received additional funds from the BMZ. The team is comprised of individuals from the following institutions: Hannover Medical School, University Hospital Münster, Muhammadiyah University Yogyakarta, Gadjah Mada University Yogyakarta, BPJS healthcare insurance, Ministry of Health in Indonesia, District of Indonesia Yogyakarta, Deutsch-Indonesische Gesellschaft für Medizin e.V. & the Institute for Health Research and Public Health UG.

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