

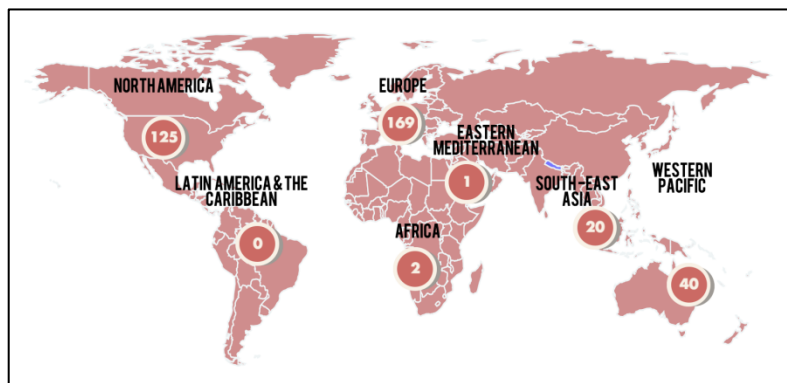
# Foreign Funding of Health Research in Nepal: Do Externally Funded Projects Support National Health System and Policy Goals?

Sangeeta Rana MBBS MPH,<sup>1</sup> Michael Stewart BIntS MPH,<sup>2</sup> Krishna Aryal BNYS MPH,<sup>3</sup> Meghnath Dhimal MSc PhD<sup>4</sup>

## BACKGROUND

Nepal is a low-income country with high levels of external funding in the health sector. It faces a triple burden of noncommunicable diseases, communicable diseases and injuries.

There is limited information available on foreign funded health research in Nepal. Research proposal records from the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC), Government of Nepal, represent the best available evidence.

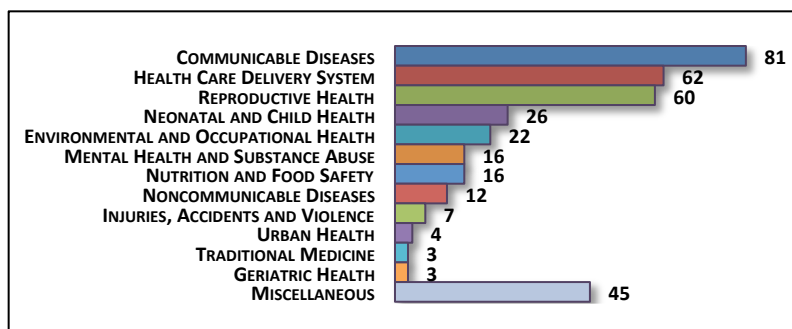


## KEY MESSAGES

- 357 foreign funded health research proposals were recorded in Nepal from 2010-2014. 82% were funded by organizations or individuals based in Europe or North America (see map).
- 8 proposals were from funders in low or middle-income countries; the majority of these (75%) were from Asia.
- The nationality of the bulk of Principal Investigators (PIs) named on research projects was Nepali (213), followed by American (45) and British (21).
- The largest proportion of funding (53%) came from universities (29%) and international non-governmental organizations (24%).
- The most frequent focus areas of proposals were communicable diseases (23%), health care delivery system (17%) and reproductive health (17%); the focus area of 13% of proposals was 'miscellaneous', which includes interdisciplinary research.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Health research funding is an important foreign policy and national planning tool.
- The results of this study suggest that substantial external funds support health research in Nepal. However, the focus of externally funded projects is concentrated in specific areas, such as communicable diseases, which may not align with national health research needs.



- Nepalese researchers are listed as leading the majority of research projects, indicating efforts to build local researcher capacity.
- Research funding information should be regularly evaluated and used to ensure foreign funders and donors are accountable to local needs.

- Further reporting and auditing of health research funding in Nepal, and internationally, is essential to enable informed prioritization and transparency.

## Authors' contact information:

1 Sangeeta Rana, National Health Service, London, UK [sangeeta.rana@mail.harvard.edu](mailto:sangeeta.rana@mail.harvard.edu)

2 Michael Stewart, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia [michaelstewart16@gmail.com](mailto:michaelstewart16@gmail.com)

3 Krishna Aryal, Nepal Health Research Council, Kathmandu, Nepal [krish.aryal@gmail.com](mailto:krish.aryal@gmail.com)

4 Meghnath Dhimal, Nepal Health Research Council, Kathmandu, Nepal [meghdhimal@gmail.com](mailto:meghdhimal@gmail.com)