

Abstract

Background: Human resources required to ensure high standards of design and conduct of clinical trials are limited in resource poor settings such as Sub-Saharan Africa. Using funding from the Global Health Research Initiative, we targeted ethicists, laboratory and clinical staff as well as local communities for training, as part of a multi-faceted approach to clinical trial capacity building in the East African region.

Methods: In 2010, we established a clinical research training unit whose mandate was to train clinical research staff in Good Clinical Practice in research organizations in Kenya Uganda and Tanzania. Laboratory staff in the three countries also received training in Good Clinical Laboratory Practice as well as in laboratory quality management systems. In order to build research literacy and acceptance among health care providers in Kenya, nationwide workshops were conducted among lecturers in the Kenya Medical Training Colleges (KMTC) which generate > 80% of health care professionals in the country. We also partnered with the National Council for Science and Technology to conduct nationwide ethics training to members of ethics review committees in Kenya.

Results: A total of 171 clinical staff, 248 laboratory staff, 177 KMTC lecturers and 58 ethicists have been trained to date. An inventory of all accredited and non-accredited IRBs has been compiled and the development of a standardized training manual for IRBs is underway.

Conclusion: This program creates an opportunity to nurture South-to-South collaborations and to develop and cascade training programs that are based on culturally relevant experiences.