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Global research preparedness for outbreak-related critical illness



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Dear Editor:

We thank authors Gobat, Butler, Webb and Nichol for their thoughtful and practical suggestions to advance our ability to perform practice-informing research in the context of outbreaks and pandemics. We too have been encouraged by the progress made with the Platform for European Preparedness Against Re-emerging Epidemics (PREPARE) initiative - a model for well-resourced health care systems to consider in preparing for the certainty of uncertain emerging infectious threats. While focused upon European preparedness, one additional promising aspect of PREPARE, is the provision to assist in addressing threats wherever they emerge. Novel viral pathogens often arise at the human-animal interface. Avian influenza, Ebola virus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronaviruses are but a few recent examples. While no region is protected, this interface frequently occurs in low- and middle-income countries, where preparedness funding and activities by necessity come after everyday urgent population and individual healthcare needs. We must encourage proactive humanitarian research preparedness from global regions with the luxury of this capacity. One such example is the freely available World Health Organization – International Severe Acute Respiratory & Emerging Infection Consortium (ISARIC) clinical characterization protocol [1], developed to provide clinicians and researchers with a case

report form, adaptable to many clinical infectious syndromes, and with tiered data collection options, responsive to the capacity of various health care settings, for both observational and experimental research designs. One emerging research collaboration to use this approach is the Short PeRIod IncideNce sTudy of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SPRINT-SARI) [2], a growing international collaboration of critical care and infectious diseases clinicians seeking to build research capacity during inter-outbreak periods. It's through such interdisciplinary collaborations across low-, middle- and high-income settings that we have the greatest hope of being prepared to perform globally relevant outbreak-related research.

Sincerely,

Conflicts of interests

None.

References

- [1] The ISARIC-WHO Clinical Characterization Protocol for Severe Emerging Infections. Available from: <https://isaric.tghn.org/protocols/clinical-characterization-protocol/>. (Accessed March 26, 2017).
- [2] Short PeRIod IncideNce sTudy of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection. Available from: <https://isaric.tghn.org/sprint-sari/>. (Accessed March 26, 2017).

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