

6. Education, Training and Research (E.T & R) Services

Planning, co-ordination, implementation and monitoring of Education, training and research activities listed below, in the Ministry of Health are carried out by the Education, Training and Research Unit headed by a Deputy Director General.

- All basic and inservice (continuing) para-medical training of human resources for health (H.R.H) for the needs of the health care delivery services.
- All educational activities relevant to training and research.
- All research activities assisted by the Ministry of Health.

6.1 Basic Training

The ET & R unit is responsible for the basic training of following categories.

- i. Nurses.
- ii. Medical Laboratory Technologists.
- iii. Physiotherapists.
- iv. Occupational Therapists.
- v. Radiographers.
- vi. Pharmacists.
- vii. Public Health Inspectors.
- viii. Midwives (Public Health & Hospital).
- ix. Ophthalmic Technologists.
- x. Public Health Laboratory Technician.
- xi. Cardiographers (E.C.G Technicians).
- xii. E.E.G.Technicians.
- xiii. Entomological assistants.
- xiv. Speech and Language Therapists.
- xv. Orthopaedic Technicians.
- xvi. Public Health Field Assistants.
- xvii. Dispensers.
- xviii. School Dental Therapists.
- xix. Dental Technicians.
- xx. Medical Physicists (trained at PGIS)
- xxi. Audiology Technicians.
- xxii. Hospital Attendants.

In the year 2003 several categories of trainees were recruited to training schools (Table 13).

6.2 In-service /Continuing Education

6.2.1 Post Basic School of Nursing – Colombo

The inservice / continuing education programmes for nurses conducted at the post basic school of nursing is listed below.

- i. Paediatric Nursing.
- ii. Intensive care Unit training.
- iii. Surgical theatre training.
- iv. Psychiatric training.
- v. Management and Supervision training.
- vi. Tutor training.
- vii. Management training.
- viii. Midwifery training.
- ix. Orthopaedic training.
- x. Pain management training.

In the year 2003 in-service training for nurses was done in most of the above programmes.

6.2.2 National Institute of Health Sciences (NIHS) Kalutara

At the NIHS, in-service training programmes were carried out for the following categories during the year 2003.

- i. Medical Laboratory Technologists.
- ii. Pharmacists.
- iii. Public Health Inspectors.
- iv. Public Health Midwives

6.2.3 E.T.&R Unit, Ministry of Health

Special in-services training programmes were conducted for ambulance drivers during 2003.

6.3 Educational Activities

The E.T & R Unit is responsible for preparing relevant educational materials for training (both basic and in-service/continuing) programmes. The following curricula were revised as competency based during the year 2003.

- i. Radiography .
- ii. Cardiography.
- iii. Nursing.

6.4 Health Research Activities

Health research is an essential pre-requisite to the overall development of any country. The contribution health research can make towards the identification of cost-effective solutions to many problems faced by developing countries like Sri Lanka, is very significant. However, due to numerous constraints existing in these countries, health research has not developed to the extent evident in the more developed countries. Lack of a research culture among health personnel and the inadequate availability of accurate data on morbidity and mortality adversely affect the promotion of health research. There is little or no mechanism to promote and direct health research and disseminate relevant information to decision makers for use in health system development. Research is undertaken mostly for academic reasons or for personal interest. Inadequacies in research capabilities, absence of adequate incentives for research and near absence of a multidisciplinary and intersectoral approach to research are other major problems.

In spite of these constraints, Sri Lanka has achieved impressive results in affording better health status for its people. There is scope for further improvement in the area of Health Research for Development.

6.4.1 Research Activities in the Year 2003

The Education Training and Research (E.T&R) Unit of the Department of Health Services funded many research projects. Financing was done from the World Health Organization (WHO) regular country budget. In the year 2003 funds for research were not made available from the consolidated fund.

6.4.2.1 The National Institute of Health Science has carried out Health System Research Methodology training programmes for interested researchers. Similar programmes were conducted for nursing and paramedical personnel. The outcome of these programmes is the development of research proposals by the participants. Some of the proposals developed were carried out by the researchers.

6.4.2.2 The Medical Research Institute (MRI) conducts research in different areas of health sector, specially in biomedical and applied

health. It also conducts training programmes for undergraduates and postgraduates in medicine, medical laboratory technologists, nurses, public health inspectors, entomological assistants etc. Also surveys in various fields, particularly on nutrition and epidemiology of non-communicable diseases are also carried out. The MRI in addition to being the premier biomedical research institute in the country, provides services to all hospitals in Sri Lanka with special diagnostic laboratory tests. It functions as a laboratory diagnostic centre and as a reference laboratory to poliomyelitis diagnosis.

6.4.2.3 The coordinating committee for research in Reproductive Health (HRP) established in 1989, for the promotion of research in reproductive health has representatives from all medical faculties, and the Ministry of Health and the Sri Lanka Family Planning Association. The research activities are implemented through task forces established at the universities of Colombo, Ruhuna, Peradeniya and Jaffna. Funding for research activities and institutional development comes from the special programme on HRP, WHO Geneva.

In the year 2003 the HRP committee through its task forces has funded many research projects, carried out workshops, seminars in the field of Human Reproductive Health. Several research training grants have been awarded to researchers to develop their knowledge and skills in relevant fields.

6.4.2.4 The Postgraduate Institute of Medicine promotes health research as a part of its postgraduate training. PGIM trainees have undertaken many research studies during the year 2003. Though these research studies were mostly academic in nature, some of the recommendations have been of significant use to policy makers in arriving at decisions to improve health services.

6.4.2.5 Faculties of Medicine of Universities and the Teaching Hospitals have also conducted research during the year 2003. They were mainly biomedical or clinical in nature. Some other governmental and non-governmental research organizations such as the National Science Foundation

(NSF) have supported many health related research activities.

6.4.2.6. Certain selected units of department of health services such as the Epidemiological Unit, Family Health Bureau and specialised Disease Control Programmes have undertaken research studies in their relevant fields.

6.4.2.7. During the year 2003 many individual researchers in both curative and preventive fields have contributed scientific knowledge through the Sri Lanka Medical Association for the Advancement of Science and other Professional Associations.

6.4.2 National Health Research Council

The National Health Research Council (NHRC) has identified the priority areas of research in Sri Lanka. In 2003, NHRC conducted a research management workshop. It also got the services of a WHO consultant to draft an act for the NHRC. The preparation of the draft act is over and awaiting final legal formalities.

The council also scrutinized several research proposals for funding and funds were given through WHO country budget. Regular monthly meetings were held to review the progress in research activities.

6.4.3 Health Literature Library and information Services (HeLLIS)

The HeLLIS resource-sharing network is one of the activities co-ordinated by office of the ET & R Unit from 1997 to date. The HeLLIS was inaugurated in 1979 at a consultative meeting of the WHO Regional Committee with an aim to fulfil the information needs of the health professionals in the South East Asian (SEA) region. HeLLIS is designed and operated as a library network both at national and at regional levels.

The WHO promotes, supports and provides funds for all activities of the HeLLIS to achieve its objectives. The SEARO library in New Delhi is the regional co-ordinator of the regional network. Sri Lanka had the membership from the inception of the regional network. HeLLIS Sri Lanka comprises 22 health libraries representing almost all the health related organizations in the country. Medical Faculty

Library of the University of Colombo act as the national focal point of the country network.

HeLLIS network members are committed to cater to anybody who requires health or health related information. National network bridges the gap between information and the user through its member libraries around the island by forming a well-established communication protocol. At present HeLLIS plays a significant role in providing access to health literature, specially to the research community in the country. The national network continue to enhance its members, to serve their user communities and make them ready to run Information Technology (IT) activities in several ways, such as :-

- Material support for development of library collection.
- Document delivery system and inter-library loan facilities.
- Training library personnel in IT skills.
- Sharing technical expertise in modern information management systems in the online environment.
- Establishment of new communication channels and necessary equipment to maintain an efficient information exchange within the country and the region.
- Compilation of bibliographic tools for locally generated information.

To keep up with the fast moving and ever changing health information sector in the world, HeLLIS is preparing ground work in order to move to online information exchange connecting our user to very current information with the support of the WHO.