

One Health Hubs in Asia: building a sustainable platform for conducting interdisciplinary regional epidemiology activities

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The basis for 'One Health' activities is joint consideration of the human and animal health aspects of zoonoses, and implications for development of disease control programs. However, a challenge faced by national disease program managers who have embraced the One Health paradigm is maintaining their enthusiasm long enough to effectively institute change in their organisations. To meet this challenge, we have designed a two-phase One Health training program using a blended teaching model that incorporates web-based and face-to-face delivery modes. The program consists of two phases: phase one provides Masters level training in epidemiology, and phase two establishes interdisciplinary professional networks through an activity-based collaboration platform. Phase 1 has been completed in 7 South Asian countries with coordinated training of doctors and veterinarians that used shared learning resources. Approximately 65 health professionals have completed the training in English, with a second cohort from Central Asia starting in 2012 in Russian. Phase two of the One Health training is designed to actively reinforce skills learned by the graduates of phase one. 'Country groups' identify an important zoonosis that can be investigated through application of their newly acquired epidemiological skills. Projects are implemented to achieve tangible benefits in management of a zoonotic disease. For many of the zoonotic diseases (HPAI, brucellosis, rabies) cross-border and cross-discipline cooperation is essential for effective control. National 'One Health Hubs (OHHs)' are virtual entities operated by the country groups and have the endorsement of relevant health ministries. Underpinning all OHH activities is 'HubNet' – a regional professional network that provides powerful web-based tools for communication, collaboration and resource sharing, within and between the OHHs.