

Perceptions and Governance of One Health in African Countries: A Workshop Report

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Abstract : There is strong evidence connecting epidemics with the disruption of the human-animal-environment interaction. Despite the fact that several cases of emerging and endemic zoonotic diseases indifferent parts of Africa have been documented, there is limited data regarding which specific interventions are effective in preventing and managing the associated risks using a One Health approach. The aim of this study is to better understand perceptions and ongoing research related to interventions in Africa through the implementation of suitable projects and policies. A bibliometric review of the scientific literature on one health studies with a focus on African countries was conducted, followed by a qualitative survey among stakeholders involved in fields related to One Health research or management in the Africa, including veterinary experts, public health professionals, environmentalists and policy makers, to learn about determinants of their perceptions, as well as barriers to and promoters of successful interventions and governance. The project was concluded with an international workshop in March 2023, where a broad range of topics relevant to One Health were discussed. 94% of the respondents were aware of the importance of the One Health approach and strongly endorse it within their respective countries. The top reported barriers to One Health development in Africa included paucity of data, weak linkages and institutional communication between the different departments and the lack of funding. Key areas of improvement identified were the impact evaluation of current initiatives, awareness raising campaigns among citizens targeted at behavioral changes, capacity building of relevant professionals and stakeholders, as well as the implementation of adequate policies and enforcement of national and continental regulations, allowing for better coordination on the African level. All One Health sectors in Africa require strong governance and leadership, as well as inter-ministerial, inter-sectoral, and interdisciplinary cooperation.

Keywords : one health, perceptions, governance, Africa

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