

Helping to Achieve Millennium Development Goals Through Research in Logistics

In 2000, the world made an historic commitment to eradicate extreme poverty and improve the health of poor people within 15 years. The commitment was set forth by the United Nations as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, based on our current trajectory, these goals will not be met for a long period of time. We are now at a time when there is significant political resolve from world leaders and sufficient money from large private and public and donors to buy drugs and improve health systems, but failures in logistical systems are preventing higher access to these drugs by end users in low-income countries.

Acknowledging this need for more efficient supply chain systems in the delivery of drugs to low income countries, researchers at the Zaragoza Logistics Center now have a sense of purpose and commitment towards this cause. Dr. Prashant Yadav and his colleagues at the Zaragoza Logistics Center are working closely in this field with organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Clinton HIV/AIDS Initiative, the World Bank, the Center for Global Development, the UK Department of International Aid and the Medicines for Malaria Venture.

Dr. Yadav has made field visits to Zambia and Uganda recently to assess the structure of these supply chains and has organized workshops and meetings in Geneva, London, and Washington DC to engage with the various stake holders involved in ensuring delivery of drugs to end patients.

The ZLC research group believes that one of the key problems that leads to poor end patient access to drugs for HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB is that the systems for planning, forecasting and procurement of drugs by the ministries of health of low income countries are weak. This results in higher prices, frequent stock outs and often expired products. Also, the large number of donors (US, Europe, Global Fund, Private donors) each with a different set of requirements and objectives unnecessarily fragment the drugs supply chain leading to higher complexities and poor visibility of information. Dr. Yadav and his colleagues have recommended the establishment of a new entity called a “global health infomedary” to help alleviate some of the issues around forecasting and procurement. Many donors and governments of large countries are now following up with Dr. Yadav on how to go forward with this idea.

When availability of drugs is poor in the public health facilities, people use the private pharmacies to purchase drugs. The prices for good quality drugs are extremely high at the private pharmacies and people often end up buying antiquated and ineffective treatments. To address this issue, Dr. Yadav and his team have been supporting the creation of a new facility called AMFm (Affordable Medicines Facility for malaria) that will subsidize the input cost of anti-malarial drugs in the private pharmacy sector up to 90% of the cost. They have been focusing on supply chain interventions that can ensure a better pass through of the cost subsidy.

Zaragoza Logistics Center is truly becoming a center of logistics excellence with its expertise reaching parts as remote as sub Saharan Africa!

Research team at ZLC

Prashant Yadav (research line lead)

Jarrold Goentzel

Santiago Kraiselburd

May Ongola

Kirsten Curtis

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