



Global Partnership for
Zero Leprosy



Photo Credit: The Leprosy Mission Trust India

A Prioritized Research Agenda for leprosy

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WHO Global Consultation Global Leprosy Programme
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Research agenda setting (GPZL)

Identification of research gaps (2018):

- Research Working Group Sub-group discussions to develop consensus on the overall research agenda

Prioritization:

- Expert panel (scoring against criteria; 2020)



Research agenda setting (LRI)

Identification of research gaps (2018):

- Enquiry panel, FGD and key informant interviews

Prioritization:

- e-survey: importance rating
- Delphi panel to reach consensus on the ranking (ranking over three consecutive rounds; 2018)

Output to date

EDITORIAL

Leprosy research is a necessity

DAVID SCOLLARD^a

^a*Wilbraham, Massachusetts, USA*

Lepr Rev (2019) **90**, 232–236

GPZL Reports on Research Priorities

GPZL, Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy,
Decatur, Georgia, USA

Lepr Rev (2019) **90**, 237–289

Reviewing Research Priorities of the Leprosy Research Initiative (LRI): a stakeholder's consultation

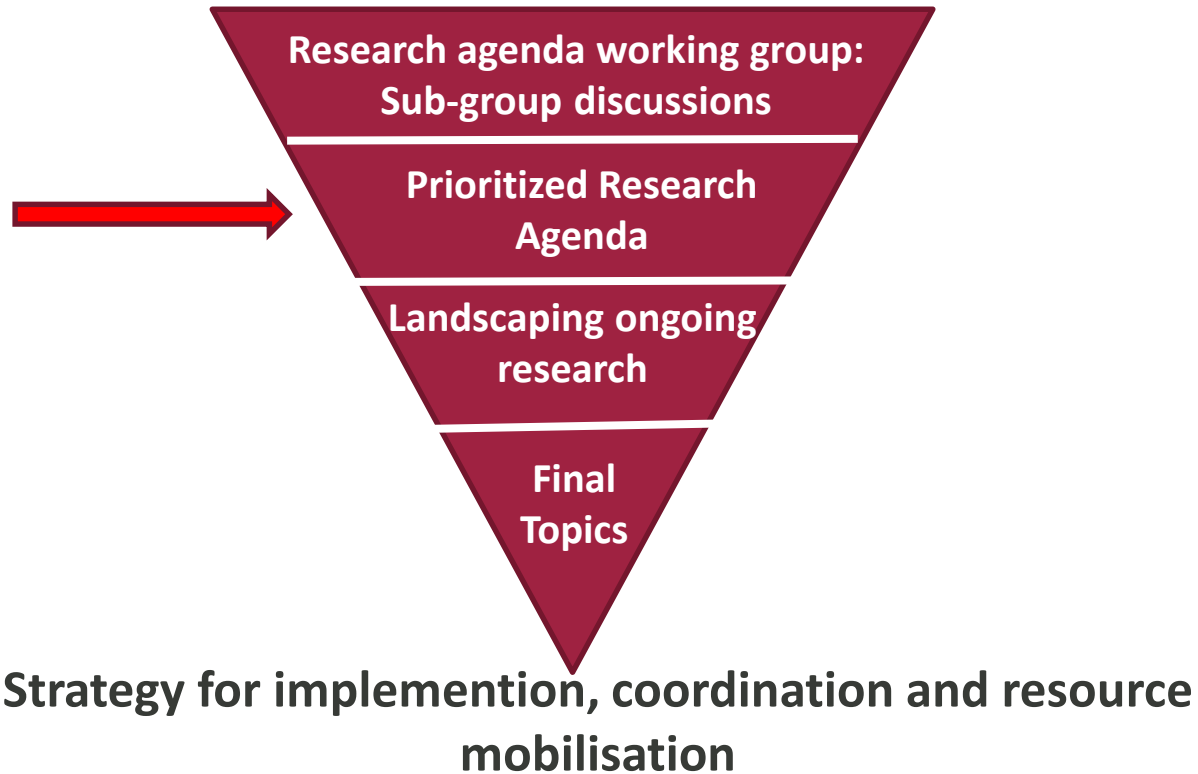
ZAHRA KHAZAI*

Lepr Rev (2019) **90**, 3–30



Photo Credit: Lepra

Process and Progress



Context and criteria

Context

- NTD Roadmap 2021-2030
- GPZL Action Framework

Criteria

- Should we do it?
 - Urgency, Impact, Translational potential
- Can we do it & what will it take?
 - Feasibility, Cost, Time, Novelty



Photo Credit: GPZL



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Expert panel

Individuals who by nature of their roles on specific committees have a cross-cutting view of leprosy research.

1. Former sub-group facilitators
2. ILEP ITC
3. LRI Steering Committee
4. ILA officers and advisors

Invitees: 39

Response rate: 67% (n=26)



Results

- 40 topics prioritized:
 - Operational research/health system research above basic science
- Triangulation with LRI priorities in:
 - Zero Transmission
 - Zero Stigma & Discrimination
 - Zero Disability
- Cross-cutting topics
 - health systems research, digital tools, data quality and modelling



ZERO TRANSMISSION

- 1 Determining cost-efficient active case finding strategies under different epidemiological settings and local contexts.
- 2 Determine the geospatial distribution of leprosy in countries and estimate the number of hidden cases.
- 3 Development and (cost)effectiveness testing of improved post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) interventions.
- 4 Further development and validation of lab or field-based (Point-of-care (POC)) assays for leprosy diagnosis.
- 5 Development of novel, improved diagnostic tools (next generation diagnostics).
- 6 Assessment of the efficacy of Mycobacterium indicus pranii (MIP) vaccine and LepVax vaccine through trials.
- 7 Further development and validation of tests for infection to identify individual at risk of progressing to disease (screening).
- 8 Research to improve the scientific understanding of M leprae transmission, including human-to-human transmission, non-human reservoirs and transmission networks.
- 9 Research on the feasibility, (cost-) effectiveness of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) under different epidemiological settings and implementation strategies.
- 10 Development of novel digital diagnostics and independent evaluation of digital interventions.

ZERO STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION

- 1 Develop and test interventions to reduce stigma as a barrier to zero leprosy.
- 2 Develop and test interventions to improve mental-wellbeing.
- 3 Documenting (and mapping) the level of stigma in communities and health services.
- 4 Documenting mental well-being of people affected by leprosy (prevalence and impact).
- 5 Validation of stigma and mental health assessment tools.
- 6 Studies of implementation of UN Human Rights Council principles and guidelines on discrimination.
- 7 Understanding perceptions of leprosy and reasons behind them.

ZERO DISABILITY

- 1 Assessing the impact of case finding/contact tracing strategies on the prevalence of leprosy-related disabilities among new cases.
- 2 Optimize the use of available treatment for reactions and nerve function impairment and identification of new treatment options.
- 3 Development and validation of diagnostic tools for the detection and monitoring of nerve function impairment and reactions.
- 4 Research on the feasibility, effectiveness, and impact of prevention of disability (POD) strategies, including self-care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and combined approaches.
- 5 Development of diagnostic and prognostic test/assay for reactions and relapses.
- 6 Estimating the burden of disability due to leprosy.
- 7 Development and assessment of the feasibility, effectiveness, and impact of rehabilitation services and community-based rehabilitation.
- 8 Research on the pathophysiology/immunological mechanisms of type 1 or type 2 reactions and nerve damage.

Cross-cutting topics

- Health system research
- Digital tools
- Data quality
- Modelling

Involvement of persons affected in research important

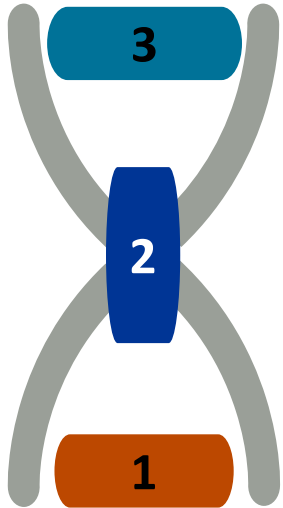


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Stakeholder engagement



1. Identification of research topics (*completed*)
 - Multistakeholder sub-group discussions (2018)
2. Prioritization (*current work*)
 - Expert panel
3. Broader engagement (*next step*)



Achievements

1. Robust multi-stakeholder derived Prioritized Research Agenda.
2. Aligns with 2021-2030 Global Leprosy Strategy long-term vision.
3. Cross-cutting topics in health systems research, digital tools, data quality and modelling.
4. While operational / health system research ranks high in long list – entire spectrum from fundamental to applied and social research is represented.

Next steps

1. Landscaping ongoing research to identify unaddressed priorities.
2. Planning for implementation, coordination and resource mobilisation
3. Liaise with GPZL working groups, LRI, ILEP ITC, WHO and persons affected by leprosy.





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Thank you



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