

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (PDS): MEASURING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR RESEARCHERS (WWW.GLOBALHEALTHTRAININGCENTRE.ORG/PDS)

Rapa E.¹, Furtado T.¹, Julé A.¹, Segrt A.,¹ Boggs L.,¹ Bilardi D.^{1,2} & Lang T.¹

¹The Global Health Network, University of Oxford, Centre for Tropical Medicine and Global Health, Oxford, United Kingdom. ²Fondazione PENTA - Onlus, Padua, Italy

Introduction: Health researchers need a reliable and globally recognized mechanism to record their skillset, track career development and identify gaps in knowledge. Teams, sponsors and organisations also require ways to monitor and report capacity development over time. The Global Health Network, a knowledge sharing platform aiming to support more and better research, is now able to provide researchers with such tools.

Aim: Development of a tool to measure changes in capacity development.

Methods: The Global Health Network compared diverse data types and user feedback to create The Professional Development Scheme (PDS). In conjunction with The Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) a framework was developed and a list of the core competencies that a research team need to demonstrate in order to carry out a successful study was generated. Users assess their research competencies, are awarded a membership level and are required every year to review and update their profiles. In addition a multi-functional dashboard was designed for research coordinators, funders and sponsors to assess the capacity development of individuals, groups and organisations.

Results: The Professional Development Scheme (PDS) provides researchers with a step by step process for recording their career and core competencies. The core competency framework can be applied to any research study, regardless of the size of the team, place, disease focus and type of research. Research coordinators, funders and sponsors can gain access to data of large networks, individual sites or specific staff roles. Study managers and consortia can quickly and easily produce reports of a specific programme or team. These visual records show the strengths and weaknesses in research competencies, such as GCP or laboratory quality management, allowing the implementation of strategies to address any gaps. Together with the supporting tools in the PDS, teams can plan staffing requirements, carry out appraisals and guide the career development and training of staff.

Conclusion: The Global Health Network has created a multi-functional method and set of tools called The Professional Development Scheme (PDS) to support researchers, teams and organisations to identify and track capacity development; an essential requirement for conducting effective health research.

Reference(s):

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2. Furtado T., Julé A., Boggs L., van Loggerenberg F., Ewing V & Lang T. Developing a global core competency framework for clinical research. *Trials* 2015; 16(Suppl 2)