Abstract

The highest burden of diseases worldwide is in low- and middle-income countries, but due to lack of capacity and inadequate infrastructure, research output from these countries is unable to address existing and emerging challenges in health care. Oral health research has particularly been hampered by low prioritization, resulting in insufficient development of this sector. There is an urgent need for research correlating oral health to upstream social and environmental determinants and promoting the common risk factor approach for prevention of noncommunicable diseases. Population-wide preventive measures for oral health care are more effective than purely curative approaches, especially for vulnerable groups who have limited access to information and appropriate health care. This article identifies priorities and proposes strategies for researchers, stakeholders, and policy makers for the initiation and sustenance of appropriate oral health care research. The proposed interventions are intended to promote collaboration, capacity building, and health advocacy. Local ownership in multinational research projects in low- and middle-income countries, complemented by skills transfer from high-income countries, is encouraged to ensure that regional health needs are addressed. Emphasis is placed on a shift toward translational research that has a direct impact on oral health care systems.