

## RESEARCH STRATEGIES FOR CONTROLLING NEGLECTED DISEASES: COLLABORATIVE NETWORK PROJECTS IN NURSING

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This decade is focused on achieving the Millennium Development Goals<sup>(1)</sup>, which include the reduction of child mortality and the reduction in the incidence of transmissible diseases, especially HIV/Aids, malaria and tuberculosis. All of these mechanisms share the characteristic of a specific focus, the goal of developing self-sustainable strategies, guaranteed funding mechanisms for intervention and research.

The tropical diseases that are considered "neglected" constitute a set of prevalent diseases in developing countries, which indistinctly affect the entire population, but have more strongly affected population groups in situations of social vulnerability, representing a severe obstacle to socioeconomic development and improved quality of life<sup>(2)</sup>.

Brazil represents the largest part of the neglected tropical disease burden in Latin America and the Caribbean. This means that many of the 40 million poorest Brazilians are infected by one or more neglected tropical diseases<sup>(3)</sup>. These diseases persist due to different causes or "flaws", classified in three types: *science flaws* (insufficient knowledge); *market flaws* (high drug or vaccine costs); *public health flaws* (deficient planning for diagnosis and treatment)<sup>(4)</sup>. Science flaws demand reorganization of the national research system, towards the construction of a bridge between knowledge production and its application in different sectors. Market flaws demand innovative funding mechanisms or negotiations. Public health flaws demand new intervention strategies<sup>(5)</sup>.

The Report by the Commission on Macroeconomics and health appointed the "90/10 disequilibrium", that is, 10% of investments in research and development (R&D) are directed at the health problems of 90% of the world population<sup>(6)</sup>.

In this context, the inter-institutional epidemiological-operational research group "GEOTB"/CNPq at the University of São Paulo at Ribeirão Preto College of Nursing, WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing Research Development, has taken the forefront in funding and research project development with a view to contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, by stimulating research practice that join efforts and favor integration between research groups and institutions in the development of multicenter research projects and human resources for the Unique Health System (SUS). In this sense, the development of research projects on Tuberculosis in a national network stands out, involving ten nursing schools and two medical school from universities in the North, Northeast, South and Southeast of Brazil. These activities are articulated with the Ministry of Health and REDE TB and receive national and international funding. Research results have contributed to knowledge production on primary care performance assessment methods in tuberculosis care<sup>(7-8)</sup>, with a view to supporting the formulation of public policies for the Unique Health Syem and establishing new research groups in areas that are strategic for the country.

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