India Health Policy & Systems Research Fellowship

Progress Update March 2021

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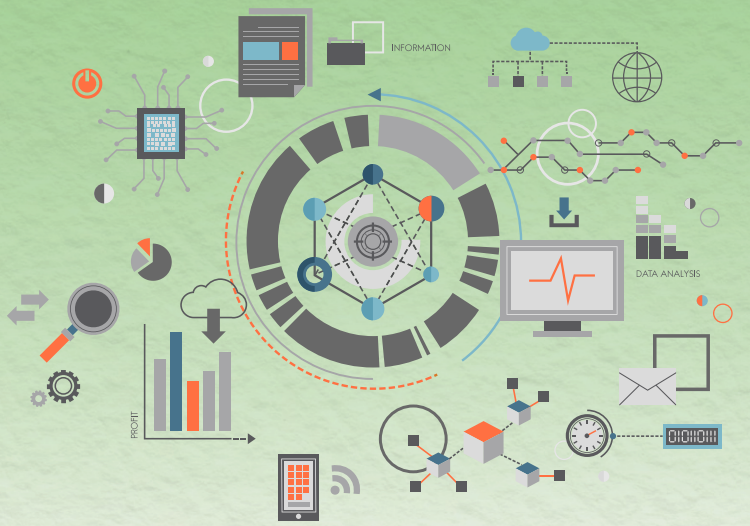

The fellowship aims to enhance capacity of mid-career public health professionals in health policy and systems research methods to strengthen evidence-based policymaking in health. This blended training program, spread over a period of 18 months, includes online, face-to-face modules & mentorship for conducting a HPSR study. Twenty fellows are part of Cohort 2021.
Know more here

An initiative of Health Systems Transformation Platform, the fellowship is organized in collaboration with eminent partners and is supported by Tata Trusts, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and ACCESS Health International.

We are pleased to share our progress with our stakeholders, friends & well-wishers. Reach out to us for sharing your opinions, queries and exploring collaborations or directing us to new avenues to strengthen our resolve for improving Indian health systems.

Completion of Module on Introduction to HPSR and framing HPSR questions

This month fellows were introduced to the origins and evolution of HPSR as a field. They engaged in vibrant discussions with faculty members on the fuzziness of HPSR's boundaries, and about how HPSR as an emerging field relates to health services research, health systems research, implementation research, and operational research. They were walked through the process of formulating HPSR research questions and identifying appropriate research designs to answer these questions. Emphasis was on using systems thinking, complexity, equity, and ethics lenses during the research process. In the face-to-face sessions that will follow, the fellows will be guided to reflect upon the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of their research.

Lectures and interactions included but were not limited to, recognizing the centrality of stakeholder inputs to formulating HPSR research questions, realizing that what questions get asked and answered is an intervention in itself, appreciating how HPSR draws on different disciplinary resources to answer research questions, and recognizing that the drafting and crafting of research questions is an active iterative process.

Discussions focussed on research designs to elicit learnings for policymaking, drawing examples from contemporary issues such as the Indian health system's response to COVID-19, ability of government initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana to effectively reach the poor, barriers to nursing practices in India, how social context shapes access to health and nutrition programs for tribal communities, policies related to elderly care & mental health.

"Working with Fellows from a wide range of background and experiences means that the class room and other discussions are very rich. As Fellows bring in their personal experiences to the class room the concepts we teach are enlivened. I think it contributes greatly to the learning process too."

Rakhal Gaitonde, Professor
Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology Trivandrum

"Understanding power dynamics and positionality in policy is an often underrated skill in health policy and systems research. Students unlocked their own potential and capabilities through very fruitful peer exchange and discussion."

Sara Van Belle, Senior Research Fellow & Lecturer
Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp

"The way this course directly and indirectly cultivates insight and necessary communication skills in the mentee appeals to me"

Akanksha Sonal | Fellow 2021
Assistant Professor, All India Institute of Medical Sciences Kalyani

"HPSR fellowship has sensitised me towards research that can be conducted in real time context capable of refining public health practice as it happens"

Anika Juneja | Fellow 2021
PhD fellow, Institute of Public Health Bengaluru

"HPSR fellowship format is well organised that makes learning easy and enabling. Peer engagement facilitates in learning complexities of HPSR"

Tanu Anand | Fellow 2021
Scientist D, Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi

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