



2018 WHA Research Fellowship Proposal Instructions

Overview

The purpose of the proposal is to determine the focus and content of your policy paper which you will complete during the course of the program. We are looking for ideas that demonstrate imagination and provide innovative policy solutions. Your recommendations must relate to Australian foreign or domestic policy. You should also consider what can be achieved within the research timelines and with the available resources. Your proposal cannot exceed 500 words. Your final paper will be approximately 2500 words.

Context

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is responsible for managing global health policy and monitoring trends and data related to health, disease and development. The World Health Assembly (WHA) acts as the decision-making body of the organisation and takes place annually in Geneva. The assembly determines the policies of the organisation, appoints the Director-General, supervises financial policy and approves program budgets. We recommend you review the 2017 agenda and the priorities of the WHA on their website: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/2017/wha70/en/>

Research Prompts

We have split up each priority into a research area and provided prompts and questions for each. You do not need to address the prompts directly, but your proposal must address one of the research areas.

Access to Medicines and Assistive Technologies

- The price of new and old medicines is increasing globally (Access to Medicines Index <https://bit.ly/2EhBl29>). Discuss and develop policy measures to address the rising inequality of access to essential medicines.
- A global response is needed to combat antimicrobial resistance (WHO <https://bit.ly/2JgJ301>). Discuss and provide practical policy recommendations.
- “High-income countries services are often stand-alone and not integrated. People are forced to attend multiple appointments at different locations, which are costly and add to the burden on users as well as caregivers, and on health and welfare budgets.” (WHO <https://bit.ly/1VzJm8g>). What innovative strategies could be put in place to relieve these burdens in Australia?

Preparedness of Health, Environment and Climate Change

- “Climate change is one of the most pressing public health threats of our time. The health of future generations everywhere depends on all of us working together to take concrete action today.” (WHO Director General <https://bit.ly/2AHhFTZ>).
- Average temperatures across Australia have risen and as a result frequency and duration of heatwave related illnesses has increased (Doctors for the Environment Australia <https://bit.ly/2JIB4yW>). Consider possible solutions to ensure emergency preparedness and management in the face of increasing temperatures.
- Australia is neighbored by small island states who are most at risk of climate change due to storm surges and rising sea-levels ([Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and Patricia Espinosa](#)). These effects increase risk of food and water borne diseases. Develop a draft action plan to support Pacific Island states implement health resilience programs in response to climate change.
- A report by the [Director General](#) in 2017 has called for the development of a five-year global strategic plan to improve public health preparedness and responsiveness. Consider possible recommendations and Australia’s role in the development of the plan.

Non-communicable Diseases

- A [WHO global high-level commission](#) (<https://bit.ly/2GipQZM>) has been established to promote health and prevent and control non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Explore Australia’s national development plan and suggest practical recommendations for improvement or change.
- “The four main NCDs, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancers and chronic respiratory diseases are the largest contributors to death in most countries [...] NCDs can be preventable by means of public policies that tackle four risk factors for NCDs: tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets and physical inactivity” ([WHO](#)). Propose solutions aimed at reducing these high risk behaviours.
- A challenge in addressing NCDs is the implementation of a multi-sectorial approach. Patients can receive conflicting and confusing health advice or are forced to visit a variety of specialists and allied health professionals to treat or manage their disease. How could a more cohesive (and data sharing) approach achieve policy outcomes in Australia?

Women, children and adolescent health

- Children and adolescents who are exposed to violence are more likely to smoke, misuse alcohol and drugs, and engage in high-risk sexual behaviours. They are also more likely to attempt suicide and endure a range of illnesses later in their life ([Conversation](#) <https://bit.ly/2JmNq9V>). Discuss current and prospective strategies to minimise risk and assist children who have experienced violence.
- Women from poorer or marginalized households face multiple barriers to access appropriate health services. Health information systems usually do not collect and analyse information that is disaggregated by sex or other relevant social stratifiers. What could be done to reform health and data management systems to make them more responsive to women’s needs?
- Develop management tools and approaches to promote consistency in WHA programs aimed at improving maternal and infant nutrition.

Proposal Structure

Your proposal must include:

- An outline of the issues and your research aims.
- Questions your study will investigate or answer.
- Context and background.
- A topline review of the existing research and commentary.

Proposed Recommendations

- Provide initial or tentative policy recommendations.
- Recommendations should aim to be as practical as possible.
- Can relate to Australia but must consider global implications of policy.