

Dear Dr Martin,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the summary document of the GEH conference. My experience comes from work in Uganda, Zambia and most recently 6 years in a teaching hospital in Malawi. I am a trained pulmonologist and have helped to start the Pan African Thoracic Society.

Comments:

1. This initiative is very welcome.
2. The child health workshop seems to have been particularly successful.
3. My experience in Malawi would not lead me to support the priority given to asthma and allergy in the adult synopsis. Pulmonary health is a major issue in adults but infection is the major cause of presentation to hospital.
4. The contributions of tobacco smoke, biomass fuel exposure and poor nutrition to the incidence of repeated bacterial and viral infection as well as chronic lung disease are poorly described in most of Africa.
5. Tuberculosis is not listed as a priority in your summary; there are key environmental risks associated with tuberculosis and these include smoking, biomass exposure and occupational exposures and well as the immunological effect of early-life exposure to environmental mycobacteria.
6. The training offered by MECOR (Methods in Clinical, Epidemiologic and Operations Research) in Latin America and now PATS-MECOR in Africa (www.africanthoracic.org) may provide a useful starting platform for you to strategically increase the number of research-trained professionals in key resource-poor areas.

Best wishes

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