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Background: In 2012, Madagascar scored in the bottom quarter of all countries in the Global Hunger Index. The majority of the population depends on subsistence agriculture to meet nutritional needs and infectious disease remains a major cause of morbidity and mortality in children under 5. This study describes the human—animal interface in villages surrounding the Ranomafana National Park in southeastern Madagascar, and discusses components of this interface that have potential to contribute to regional cycles of illness and food insecurity. The study was completed as part of a larger project titled "The ecology of infectious disease in Madagascar," funded by the Emory Global Health Institute (EGHI). EGHI was established with the goal of fostering scholarship in global health and provides funding for multidisciplinary student teams to conduct health research internationally.

Structure/Method/Design: A cross-sectional cluster sample survey was performed over an 8-week period from June 14 to August 9, 2013. Six villages bordering the Ranomafana National Park (RNP) were selected for the study. Ten households from each village were randomly selected and all household members were asked to participate. Collection methods included in-person surveys, as well as physical assessments to acquire anthropometric data. Livestock ownership, animal husbandry practices, frequency of animal protein intake, and nutritional indicators were assessed. Statistical analysis was conducted with SAS-callable SUDAAN 10.0.

Results (Scientific Abstract)/Collaborative Partners (Programmatic Abstract): Approximately 78% of people in the RNP region live in households that own livestock, however, less than 50% of the population includes animal protein in their diet more than once a month. Nutritional indicators for the population are consistent with reported overall indicators for the country. The majority of households owning poultry and pigs reported significant annual morbidity and mortality of their animals as barriers to increased animal production for household consumption. Husbandry practices associated with livestock, specifically the practices of housing and slaughter of poultry within the home, allowing pigs to roam freely, and using animal manure as fertilizer for improved rice production are identified as targets for future studies on zoonotic disease transmission.

Summary/Conclusion: The population within the RNP region is highly dependent on livestock for food, income, and agricultural production. Improvements in livestock management should be directed to improve food security and decrease the risk for endemic zoonotic disease transmission. Universities involved in research and program implementation in the areas of zoonotic disease and global food security will benefit from the participation of animal health professionals and others with interest in the human—animal interface.

The role of international partnerships in building the capacity of health professional programs in Kenyan and Tanzanian universities

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Background: International partnerships are a commonly applied approach to education and research capacity building of tertiary health institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. However, comprehensive, critical, and contextualized assessments of how such partnerships support the host universities to provide human capital for service, education, and research within the health systems of the countries are scarce.

The overall objective of this study is to analyze the means and extent to which international partnerships identified as important by selected universities in Kenya and Tanzania strengthen and/or weaken the universities' capacity to train health workers (service providers), educators, and researchers in three key health professions (medicine, nursing, and public health) for health systems.

Structure/Method/Design: This study includes two universities in Kenya (Moi University and the University of Nairobi) and two in Tanzania (Kilimanjaro Christian University Medical College and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences).

Review of documentation by universities, partners, and government ministries (published and grey literature). Key informant interviews, focus group discussion with students and faculty, and participant observation. Interviews and discussions were audiorecorded and transcribed. Transcriptions and observation notes were analyzed.

Results (Scientific Abstract)/Collaborative Partners (Programmatic Abstract): The characteristics of over 90 partnerships were mapped and analyzed. More than three-quarters of partnerships (>75%) linked the African universities with European and North American universities. These high-income to low-income partnerships were also the most highly prized. A small number of partnerships linked the African universities with universities in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Partnerships consisting of a consortium of universities were rare but often rated highly. The rated value (high, medium, or low) to the African university of each partnership varied greatly depending on an array of factors, including duration of partnership; extent to which PhD training was supported; integration of service delivery; and ability of a partnership to be reciprocal in practice.

Summary/Conclusion: The rated value (high, medium, or low) to the African university of each partnership varied greatly depending on an array of factors, including duration of partnership; extent to which PhD training was supported; integration of service delivery; and ability of a partnership to be reciprocal in practice. While long-term partnerships often yield the most significant results, short-term partnerships that are focused and well designed can be very high value to host institutions.