Pan American Health Organization

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MEDICAL RESEARCH

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Item 3 of the Agenda

PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION

GRANTS PROGRAM FOR RESEARCH TRAINING IN CLINICAL MEDICINE

Ref: RD 8/4

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PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Pan American Sanitary Bureau, Regional Office of the

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Washington, D.C.
1. Introduction

A physician, male or female, from the Caribbean area, Middle America, or South America who wants to pursue a career in clinical research generally has two possibilities open to him after completing his residencies: he may obtain a grant to go abroad, usually to the United States, or he may get an appointment, almost invariably part-time, in his own medical school, and seek a grant from some outside source to cover his research expenses and the cost of equipment.

Neither of these courses is entirely satisfactory. The physician who goes straight into a part-time academic post will seldom have an adequate scientific background by modern standards. Training abroad (mainly in the United States) is, of course, extremely valuable, but it has disadvantages: the work may be quite unrelated to the problems with which he will be dealing later, and the facilities and general approach may be so different from those in his own country that it will be difficult for him to adapt when he returns. Indeed, the ensuing frustration may lead to his emigration.

2. Training Grants for Clinical Research

There are a number of institutes and clinical departments in the countries of the Caribbean, Middle America, and South America where excellent research is being done in various fields. The Pan American Health Organization, in cooperation with The Wellcome Trust, has developed a program for advanced training in clinical research to enable citizens of these countries to take advantage of the facilities of institutions in other countries within this region. The specific purpose of the program is to increase the research capability and output of individual workers in all areas of clinical medicine.

*Prepared by Dr. M. Martins da Silva, Chief, Department of Research Development and Coordination, on the basis of Dr. John C. Waterlow's "Outline of a Program for the Support of Research and Research Training in Clinical Medicine in Latin America" (Ref: RES 7/2, 24 April 1968).
The program offers the following advantages: (1) the trainee will be more closely oriented toward the problems and conditions he is likely to find in his own country when he returns; (2) there will usually be no language barrier, so that much loss of time will be avoided; and (3) the exchange of research workers generated by the program will help to promote an intellectual common market in the region. If the undertaking is successful, it will, in the long run, hopefully lead to three results: new contributions to knowledge; an improvement in general standards of medical practice and medical education; and a strengthening of the role of research as an important tradition in the life of the countries.

3. Scope and Organization of the Program

The research training grants are awarded by the Director of the Pan American Health Organization and administered by the Department of Research Development and Coordination at PAHO Headquarters. They are distinct from PAHO fellowships, whose recipients are selected by the national health authorities in consultation with the Organization. A candidate for a PAHO research training grant will be nominated by an individual scientist - whenever possible by a member of the PAHO Advisory Committee on Medical Research - and must be recommended by the director of his institution.

The prospective grantee's home institution or government department will be asked to give assurance that his absence will not adversely affect his status, seniority, salary both during as well as after the grant period, pension, or other rights and that he will have adequate facilities to continue his research work upon his return. For his part, the grantee pledges to go back to his country at the end of the training period and work there for at least three years.

Before any application is sent in, the candidate, possibly with the help of his sponsor, will have to have completed the basic arrangements with the host institution and established the broad outlines of his work program.
The grantee must participate in research for the greater part of his training period. Usually this will mean being a member of a research group, rather than doing completely independent research. A senior scientist in the host institution must agree to act as his adviser.

PAHO will provide travel and pay a stipend and certain other allowances to the grantee. The duration of the grants will be flexible, depending on the nature of the project and how well it progresses, but, in general, grants should not be for less than one year or extended for more than three. The amount of the stipend is also flexible and will vary according to circumstances such as living costs and, in some cases, the grantee's number of dependents (see Item 3.4).

Grants will not be awarded for attendance at meetings, matriculation in study courses or courses leading to degree examinations, language reviews, participation in lecture tours, activities involving consultation or advice to governments or institutions, or, in general, activities unrelated to the PAHO research program. Nor will they be awarded, normally, to supplement or extend grants from other agencies.

3.1 Eligibility

Grants are available to nationals of Member Governments and Participating Governments of PAHO from the Caribbean area, Middle America, or South America for study in any country within this region. In principle, applicants should be on the staff of a university or research institution and must be persons actively engaged in research in medical or allied sciences who need further study abroad to increase their experience. They must be in sufficiently good health to do whatever work and travel may be required, and they should be reasonably fluent in the language of the country in which they will study or in another language that can be used in their work in that country. Grantees will, in general, be selected from applicants with less than five years post-doctoral experience in medicine.
3.2 Application

Applications must be submitted on the official printed forms, which can be obtained from the Department of Research Development and Coordination, Pan American Health Organization, 525 Twenty-third Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., USA. The completed forms should then be returned to that department.

Applications will be reviewed at periodic intervals throughout the year by a panel of seven internationally recognized scientists in the field of clinical medicine who are not staff members of PAHO. In general, about three months should be allowed from the time of receipt at PAHO Headquarters until the final decision is made.

3.3 Award

When an application is approved by the Director, a letter of proposal, stating in detail the conditions of the grant - stipend, allowances, place of work, and so forth - is sent to the applicant. Upon receipt of his written acceptance, PAHO will confirm the grant in a letter of award and make arrangements for the purchase of travel tickets, payment of the stipend and allowances, and remittance of other sums that go directly to the training institutions.

The review of applications will be facilitated if the candidates, with the support of the directors of their institutions, will obtain government clearance, where this is necessary, before sending their applications to PAHO. Documentary evidence of such clearance should be attached to the completed application form that is returned to PAHO. If help is needed to obtain government clearance, PAHO will request the assistance of its Country Representative when the application is approved.

3.4 Entitlements and Limitations

PAHO will provide the following financial support to the grantee: round-trip jet economy air transportation between his place of residence and the place of study; an excess baggage allowance of up to 20 kilos in the case of grants for
twelve months or longer; a stipend to cover lodging, meals, and incidental expenses; an allowance for the purchase of books; special laboratory expenses, if required, to be paid directly to the host institution; and, in certain circumstances, if the grant exceeds twelve months, travel costs and an allowance for a limited number of dependents.

The stipend is a maintenance allowance paid during the grant period; it is not a substitute for any salary that the grantee may receive at home. The rate, ranging from US$3,600.00 to $6,000.00 a year, will vary depending on the cost of living in each country and the family circumstances of the grantee. It will be paid on a monthly basis, in advance, by the Washington headquarters office, in the currency of the country of study.

An allowance of up to US$100.00 will be paid, during the first year only, to enable the grantee to purchase books suitable for his study.

If needed, a sum for special laboratory expenses, not to exceed US$150.00 a year may be paid by PAHO to the institution in which the grantee will be working.

If the grant period exceeds twelve months, PAHO may, in certain circumstances, provide travel for a limited number of dependents who accompany the grantee for a period of at least eight months, under the same conditions as those for the grantee; annual family allowances may also be provided on the same basis as for regular PAHO staff members - namely US$400.00 for the spouse and $300.00 for each approved dependent child.

PAHO does not cover excess baggage charges, other than as provided above; fees for visas, passport photographs, and passports; expenses arising from avoidable delays in travel, late cancellations of travel reservations, use of alternative means of transport (for example, hired car), or travel on routes other than those specified in the letter of proposal; taxi or airport bus fares; tips; fees for packing, insurance, or handling of baggage; customs duties; airport charges; or local transportation expenses.
Grantees are required to obtain their own passports and all necessary visas before departure. PAHO will, if requested, support applications for visas. Grantees must also take care of any immunization required by international or national regulations or by the institutions of study and provide themselves with the relevant certificates. Hotel reservations, too, are the responsibility of the grantee.

PAHO does not undertake to pay medical or dental expenses arising from sickness or accident, or to compensate for death or disability resulting from sickness, accident, or other causes. The grantee should take out insurance against such risks at his own expense. However, the Director may authorize, at his discretion, the payment by PAHO of sickness and accident expenses incurred during the grant period or of insurance that cannot be met from the stipend.

The grantee may not receive payments from any other award or grant, or undertake any other work, paid or unpaid, during the grant period.

3.5 Reports

Grantees are required to submit to PAHO headquarters, to the attention of the Department of Research Development and Coordination, a brief report in triplicate, using the appropriate printed forms, at the end of each three months and also a final one within a month after the end of the grant period. The final report should consist of three parts: a summary of the studies; an analysis of the knowledge gained, with particular reference to the grantee's future work; and any comments on the experience itself, especially if difficulties were encountered.

Follow-up reports should be submitted in triplicate six months and again two years after the end of the grant period. In these, the grantee should describe the work he has been doing since and state what benefit he received from the studies carried out during the grant period. He should make any suggestions that might be of use to future recipients of research training grants. His director's comments should be attached to these reports.
In the appropriate cases, PAHO will forward a copy of each report to the grantee's director.

3.6 Publications

The grantee is free to publish the results of his work in any journal without previous review by PAHO, provided he has cleared the text with his research adviser and with the institution at which he studied. He is requested, however, to give PAHO the option of publishing the results of his findings in its Boletín. All publications should carry the following footnote: "This investigation received financial support from the Pan American Health Organization and The Wellcome Trust."

In the event of publication in another journal, six offprints or copies should be sent to PAHO, to the attention of the Department of Research Development and Coordination.