Experiences and challenges of collaborative Research

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What is collaborative research

• Most critically important scientific issues or innovative technologies can often be solved by working together of team of researchers from different backgrounds.
• The merging of different fields can make possible achieving of incredible goals.
• Collaborative research can be defined as research involving coordination between the researchers, institutions, organizations, and/or communities.
• This cooperation can bring distinct expertise to a project.
Classification of collaborations

Collaboration can be classified as voluntary, consortia, federation, affiliation, and merger and can occur at different levels:

- mentor–mentee
- within disciplinary, (team of researcher within the same department),
- interdisciplinary, (team of researcher of different departments but different background)
Classification of collaborations....

• multi-disciplinary, (team of researcher of different background)
• national vs international
Benefits of collaboration

• Exchanging of ideas across disciplines

• Bringing strengths for better funding opportunities e.g
  • Access to methodological and technical expertise
  • Access to populations of research interest
  • Increase sample size and reduce sampling bias; results may be more generalizable
  • Access to facilities
  • Higher quality of results

• Access to training/ learning new skills
Advantages of collaborative research ....

• Collaborative research acts to stimulate the dissemination of research information across the world.

• Access to valuable new data sources, as well as opportunities to increase both the academic and “real-world” impact of research findings.

• Individual academics can also gain “a sense of competence and confidence by interacting with international colleagues.
Advantages....

• It is encouraged more and more by funding bodies e.g EDCTP south-south; south-north. For the applications need different countries and institutions
Challenges of collaboration

• Collaborations can be a frequent source of problems.

• This takes away valuable time !!

• A number of challenges relate to equity.

• The inequitable nature of some research collaborations is not simply the result of oversights or bad habits; it is the product of entrenched structural factors that produce, and reproduce, imbalances of power
Challenges of collaboration...

• Disagreements on the sharing of credit including publications

• Disagreements on sharing resources and other benefits e.g. funds, training

• Difficult people
Challenges of collaboration...

Different expectations

• How important is the research?
• What are the professional benefits of this research for me in my career and/or my colleague’s career?
• What is the financial benefit to me, my team and institution?
• Do I and my colleague have sufficient time and energy to devote to the project?
• What is the long-term potential of this research to result in meaningful science?
Challenges of collaboration..

Expectations

• While it was believed there was clear and agreed commitment to the project across the researchers at the start
  • Priorities might be different and hence commitment
  • Some abandon, no communication
  • They don’t play their roles
Challenges of collaborations...

• Different cultures and regulations
• Long reviews, ethics, even publications depending on the country or institution
Some solutions

- Small collaborations: trust, fairness and transparency
- Agree on some rules or the nature of partnership from start e.g thru MOU
  - Define of roles and responsibilities
  - How to resolve and manage disagreements and tensions in the collaborative process
  - Include areas like authorships who will be lead author, senior author, but now co-lead authorship and co-senior authorships
Solutions

- Face-to-face meetings improve trust, openness of interpersonal communication, which is a core to successful collaborative research.
- Honour and respect each member's individual and organizational contribution.
- Collaboration requires ethical conduct, maintaining honesty, integrity, justice, transparency, and confidentiality.
Solutions....

• Build good/strong relationships among partnership members
• The aims of the partnership should have been specified and the collaborators should be committed to these and are ready to cooperate;
• Recognize that the capacities of collaborators complement each other;
• Collaborators should have reasonable expectations of the research process and its outcomes;
Solutions ...

• The key to successful collaboration is good interpersonal connections
THANK YOU