‘DELIVERABILITY OF INTERVENTIONS’ AS A CRITERION IN PRIORITY SETTING FOR HEALTH RESEARCH: THE CASE OF H3AFRICA AND GENE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

JOHN BARUGAHARE, PH.D.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, KAMPALA – UGANDA

GLOBAL FORUM ON BIOETHICS IN RESEARCH (GFBR)

MONTREUX, SWITZERLAND, 28 – 29 NOVEMBER, 2023

THE CRITERION

'All things being equal, the higher the likelihood that a proposed intervention will be widely delivered to those who need it, and the sooner it will be delivered, the higher the priority it should be assigned'

CONTEXT

- Low/fewer health opportunities in sub-Saharan Africa & LMICs (Rutherford, Mulholland, Hill 2010)

&

- The vision of optimizing health outcomes & reducing disparities through research (Pratt, 2021)

- Some criteria priority setting in research exist --- (Pierson & Millum 2022; Millum 2022)

- However, there is a need for complementary criterion ….

THE CRITERION

- **The claim:** The social value of research is better realized the easier it is to wide deliver the researched and developed interventions to those who need them in a timely manner

- **Hence,**

'All things being equal, the higher the likelihood that a proposed intervention will be widely delivered to those who need it, and the sooner it will be delivered, the higher the priority it should be assigned'

DELIVERABILITY OF INTERVENTIONS

- **Illustration: The concept of Conversion Factors (CFs)**
  - **Meaning of CFs: C**onditions that determine the possibility/feasibility and ease of deriving utility from a good
    - They are *necessary* conditions …
  - Example: A bicycle …
    - The riding skill
    - Favorable build environment
    - Favorable Cultures (e.g. not forbidding riding for women)

CONVERSION FACTORS

- CFs & Health Interventions

3 Examples of CFs:

- Medical technological infrastructure
- Physical infrastructure, e.g. special storage conditions
- Skill sets

THE CASE – THE H3AFRICA

- **Towards Gene-Based Interventions for Africa**
- **Concern about gene-based interventions –**
  - The risk of deepening health inequities (Long & Yang, 2023)
  - The problem of "… ensuring that these stunning medical advances can be fairly and equitably delivered to desperate patients and families" (Harrison and Friedman, 2023)
  - Likelihood to remain inaccessible for majority of people in LMICs in the long run (Wang, Scuffham, Byrnes, Downes, 2022.)

GENE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

❑ Example: The GeneXpert machine in Uganda

- **Implication from its features:** In principle the GeneXpert is ideal for LICs like Uganda

❑ However, deliverability challenges were reported –

- Access to electricity in Uganda is currently estimated at 67% in urban areas, and 11% in rural areas
- No refrigeration facilities in rural area

LESSON FOR H3AFRICA …

- Innovation and product development using H3 Africa Consortium data

  - **Guiding QN:** How easy to deliver will interventions from H3Africa consortium data be in Africa?

DISCUSSION

- Deliverability as a complementary criterion
- An ideal illustration?

- The essence of the case: To illustrate the value of ---
  - The deliverability criterion for optimal social value and health equity
  - The concept of CFs in implementing the deliverability criterion

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- In absence of appropriate conversion factors, health interventions remain potential health opportunities
- From the point of view of equity, it matters how long certain groups of people wait to access an intervention which already being accessed elsewhere

- **RECOMMENDATION**
- Adopt the deliverability criterion, and study its current impact on health equity

THANK YOU