



hsr2022

SEVENTH GLOBAL
SYMPOSIUM ON
HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH

SÉPTIMO SIMPOSIO
MUNDIAL SOBRE
INVESTIGACIÓN EN
SISTEMAS DE SALUD

Executive Summary

The Seventh Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR 2022) took place in Bogota, Colombia from 31 October to 4 November 2022, both in-person and virtually. The event brought together more than 1,700 actors involved in health systems and policy research and practice from 115 countries; 72% delegates attended in-person and 28% virtually.

Objectives

The key objectives of HSR 2022 included, to:

- Assure inclusiveness and connect diverse stakeholders (researchers, policy makers, program managers, advocates, community organizations, media representatives) from different geographic regions, country income groups and language backgrounds;
- Facilitate equitable knowledge acquisition and dissemination around health policy and systems research;
- Disseminate health systems research methods including methods for knowledge translation;
- Support capacity-building for the conduct, translation and utilization of health policy and systems research.

An evaluation was conducted to assess success in achieving these objectives. The research conducted for the evaluation team included an online survey of delegates (363 responses - 21% response rate), an onsite visit to the HSR 2022 venue, interviews with 25 delegates and online discussion with six delegates.

This final report documents the Symposium and the findings and recommendations from the evaluation.

Theme and Scientific Program

The theme of the Symposium was *Health Systems Performance in the Political Agenda: Sharing Lessons for Current and Future Global Challenges*, with a particular focus on the following sub-themes: The politics and policies of health systems; Intersectoral collaboration and integrative governance on the road for health in all policies; The changing dynamics of health provision models to promote equity and the central role of human resources for health; and the role of comprehensive primary care in promoting sustainability and the contribution of new technologies

HSR 2022 hosted 4 plenary sessions; 61 organized panels and workshops; 39 oral sessions; 436 posters; 13 capacity strengthening sessions; 40 satellite sessions; and 20 other meetings. The Symposium provided an opportunity for more than 700 speakers to present their work.

1,764 abstracts and session proposals were received across all the submission streams in English, Spanish and French. These were reviewed by 217 scientific committee members from around the globe. While the strength of research on the African region is still well reflected in the proportion of accepted abstracts, in keeping with the symposia's commitment to equity and to ensure a truly global event with a balance in the program content, the Program Working Group increased the number of accepted abstracts focused on the Middle East region by 45%, the Western Pacific region by 35%, the Latin America and the Caribbean region by 25%, and South Asian region by 15%.

Plenary speakers and chairs were carefully selected to ensure that there was equity across regions (and subregions such as English-speaking Africa and Francophone Africa, North and Latin America, Western and Central-Eastern Europe), area of work (academia, civil society, public officials), and gender. For more details please visit: [Shaping the Symposium Scientific Program | Health Systems Global](#)

The majority (85%) of respondents to the evaluation were "very satisfied or satisfied" with the overall quality of the program. LMIC delegates rated knowledge acquisition and dissemination factors higher than HIC delegates.

Main Findings from the Evaluation

The evaluation team reported the following six main findings:

- **Finding 1 - Overall:** 90% of respondents felt that their expectations were met, similar to HSR 2020 (93%). However, the level of satisfaction was higher among in-person delegates than those who attended virtually.
- **Finding 2 - Promotion of inclusiveness and connectivity:** HSR 2022 was rated higher on inclusivity and connectivity by low-and-middle-income countries (LMIC) delegates than high-income countries (HIC) delegates, although almost all factors showed a decrease compared to HSR 2020. The only exception was in developing professional networks, which increased by over 10% from HSR 2020, possibly due to the online only format of the 2020 Symposium.
- **Finding 3 - Equitable knowledge acquisition and dissemination:** The majority of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of the scientific program. However, elements such as lack of a dedicated poster sessions, perceived dominant focus on COVID-19, perceived low representation from Colombia and the Americas, and technological issues impacted the perceived quality of program.
- **Finding 4 - Dissemination of health systems research methods including knowledge translation:** Most respondents (67%) identified gaining new knowledge on health systems research as the main value of attending HSR 2022, followed by making new connections for future collaboration (64%).
- **Finding 5 - Capacity-Strengthening for health policy and systems research:** HSR 2022 supported delegates in strengthening their capacity to work on health policy and systems research. The symposium provided them with many opportunities to network and disseminate research findings.
- **Finding 6 - Organization and communications of HSR 2022:** 79% of respondents were "satisfied or very satisfied" with the overall organization. Nonetheless, feedback received also reflected many of the challenges faced by the organizers, including the hybrid format,

which provided opportunities for delegates to attend virtually, but faced issues in its implementation. The intention to attend the next symposium was high at 88%.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Future Events

HSR 2022 was the first hybrid symposium. The move to a hybrid format provided access to a broad audience, however it also presented challenges for both in-person and online delegates. The following lessons learned and recommendations are drawn from the evaluation findings, delegates' feedback and HSG Secretariat staff experience organizing HSR 2022:

- **Hybrid format:** The hybrid format presented challenges as it effectively implied the management of two conferences; one in Bogota and one online. A hybrid format for future symposia has significant value in providing access to a broader range of participants. However, if a hybrid format were to be maintained for future symposia, it would need further improvements, including in selecting the online platform, maximizing networking opportunities both in-person and online, addressing technological challenges, and better supporting online delegates.
- **Symposium format:** There were parallel sessions with comparable themes and it was difficult for delegates to attend all sessions of interest. The absence of dedicated poster session(s) and sessions held in the marketplace was also pointed out by in-person delegates. Delegates also advocated for the use of more innovative and varied formats for future symposia. For future symposia, consider streamlining or reducing the number of sessions in the program; reintroducing dedicated poster session(s); reintroducing sessions and events within the marketplace; and exploring more innovative and varied formats.
- **Networking:** While networking can take place spontaneously, it would be greatly enhanced through a facilitated approach, with specific activities directly linked to the program and adapted to the venue design. If a hybrid format is maintained, a better approach in networking for online delegates should be established. For future symposia, consider reviewing networking mechanisms available to online delegates and purposely integrating more networking opportunities for in-person delegates.
- **Organization:** The organization of HSR 2022 faced many challenges, which distracted delegates from fully enjoying and benefiting from the symposium. For future symposia, explore areas for improvements such as adding more staff to ensure prompt communications from the organizers, facilitating processing of entry and transit visa, offering better food options, and supplementing the cost of attending by increasing sponsorship revenue and fundraising so that registration fees for LMIC participants and online delegates can be lowered.
- **Inclusion:** HSR 2022 was successful in including a diverse range of delegates. At the same time, while delegates appreciated the cultural moments offered during HSR 2022, they thought that its location - Colombia and the Americas – local language (Spanish) and stakeholders in participants were not sufficiently integrated within the Scientific Program and the event in general. For future symposia, integrate further the regional specificities and interests into the program; make a specific effort to include local health stakeholders; and consider reducing the registration fee for nationals of the hosting country, particularly when held in an LMIC country.

Budget Considerations

Reducing registration fees and/or implementing the logistical recommendations with regards to staffing, food and technology/online platform, and more, will result in a considerable increase in budget. It will be important to start exploring ways to increase sponsorships and revenue through fundraising. This effort should start now and involve all stakeholders in preparation of HSR 2024.