

Sonar-Global SEA Regional Hub Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand

Meeting summary

Date & time:

The meeting took place the 11th and 12th of February 2020 at the Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Attendees (online & present):

- **Thailand:** Marco Liverani (LSHTM), Luechai Sringernyuang (Mahidol), Wirun Limsawart (MoPH), Suparat Phuanukoonnoon (Mahidol), Ravikanya Praphasavat (MORU), Phaik Yeong Cheah (MORU), Tassawan Poomchaichote (MORU), Phakha Whanpunch (Mahidol) and Kwansuda Rachkaew (Mahidol)
- **Vietnam:** Mary Chambers, Jennifer Ilo Van Nuil, My Nguyen Le Thao, Sonia Lewycka, Do Thi Thuy Nga and Vu Thi Quynh Giao (OUCRU Vietnam)
- **Nepal:** Summita Udas Shakya (OUCRU Nepal), Sunil Pokharel and Bipin Adhikari (University of Oxford)
- **Indonesia:** Raph Hamers and Ralalicia Limato (OUCRU Indonesia)
- **Malaysia:** Sasheela Sri La Sri Ponnampalavanar (University of Malaya)
- **The Netherlands:** Christopher Pell and Danny de Vries (AIGHD)

Background and aim:

SoNAR Global, a project funded by the European Commission to develop a global network of social scientists working on infectious threats, is creating a regional hub in South East Asia. One focal area for the hub will be antibiotic use and antibiotic resistance in the human and/or animal domains. We are particularly keen to facilitate interdisciplinary research that addresses the use of antibiotics (and development of resistance) in multiple sectors and contexts across the region.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) – and antibiotic resistance, specifically – is a priority public health issue across South East Asia. It is widely recognized that the social and cultural context plays a key role in driving antibiotic use and the development of resistance. Social scientists are already working across the region to these processes in diverse settings. This hub allows us to harness this varied work to elicit key comparative insights, which are relevant for stewardship and social science theory.

For this first 2.5-day meeting researchers working in the field are invited to present their work and participate in brainstorm sessions to identify potential ways to collaborate and develop research questions for future proposals.

Agenda

Tuesday, 11 th February 2020	
09.00 – 09.30 a.m.	Registration
09.30 – 09.40 a.m.	Welcome: Nicholas PJ Day (Director of MORU)
09.40 – 09.50 a.m.	Introduction Sonar-Global project and MORU: Tamara Giles-Vernick & Phaik Yeong Cheah
09.50 – 10.10 a.m.	Aims of meeting: Christopher Pell
10.10 – 10.40 a.m.	Interventions to tackle inappropriate antibiotic use in northern Vietnam: Sonia Lewycka & Nga Do Thi Thuy
10.40 – 11.10 a.m.	<i>Coffee/tea break</i>
11.10 – 11.40 a.m.	Myths and facts about farm antibiotic use in Vietnam: Giao Vu Thi Quynh
11.40 – 12.00 a.m.	Discussion
12.00 – 1.00 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>
01.00 – 1.30 p.m.	Qualitative study on over-the-counter medication among health care workers, drug dispensers and patients in eastern, central and western region of Nepal: Bipin Adhikari & Sunil Pokharel
01.30 - 02.00 p.m.	Exploration of antimicrobial consumption to identify targets for quality improvement in Indonesian hospitals: a mixed-method study: Raph L. Hamers and Ralalicia Limato
02.00 – 02.30 p.m.	An ethnographic inquiry of AMR in society to address drug-resistant tuberculosis in the Thai-Myanmar borderland: Wirun Limsawat
02.30 – 03.00 p.m.	AMR dictionary: Ravikanya Praphasavat
03.30 – 04.00 p.m.	<i>Coffee/tea break</i>
04.00 - 05.00 p.m.	An overview of the sonar-global AMR curriculum for social scientists: Danny de Vries
05.00 p.m.	Closing
06.00 p.m.	<i>Dinner at Rosabieng (Samsen) restaurant</i>

Wednesday, 12 th February 2020	
09.00 – 09.30 a.m.	Recapitulation
09.30 – 10.00 a.m.	Appropriateness of antimicrobial prescribing at a tertiary hospital in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Sasheela Sri La Sri Ponnampalavanar
10.00 – 10.30 a.m.	Antimicrobial resistance and the private health sector in Southeast Asia: Marco Liverani
10.30 – 11.00 a.m.	<i>Coffee/tea break</i>
11.00 – 11.30 a.m.	AMR- Science theater and community engagement: Summitta Udas Shakya
11.30 – 12.00 p.m.	Discussion
12.00 – 1.00 p.m.	<i>Joint lunch with viral hepatitis meeting group</i>
01.00 - 02.00 p.m.	Break out discussions
02.00– 03.30 p.m.	Discussion
03.30 p.m.	Closing

Outcome break out discussions:

Two brainstorming sessions took place: one discussing how Sonar-global can support the regional hub and the other possible activities to encourage social scientists joining Sonar-global network. Below are the summaries of the discussed items of each group.

Sonar-global regional hub support:

- **What should be the regional hub focus/foci?**
- **How can Sonar provide this support?**
 - Scoping of social science actors in the region -- template methodology for grant writing, identify knowledge gaps, identify people to do the engagement, finding opportunities to do further research
 - Capacity building -- grant writing workshop
 - Information sharing -- create platform
 - Policy engagement -- briefs and organizing meeting with policymakers
 - Community -- national, local and grant
 - Mapping social scientists working on Antibiotic use in animals
 - Special issues

Activities to bind social scientists to Sonar-global network:

- **Activities for capacity building in research and manpower:**
 - Methodology -- mixed quantitative, qualitative research
 - Statistics
 - Writing grants
 - Writing papers
 - Mentorship program
 - Network (expanding)
- **Activities for capacity building in analysis:**
 - Rapid response protocol
 - Working retreat
 - British Academy -- writing grants
 - Analysis workshops
 - Comparative papers
 - Special issue on AMR in South East Asia
- **Activities to highlight social science contribution to policymakers:**
 - Policy engagement case studies -- collect case studies
 - Wellcome open
 - Global health action
 - International health
 - Global Ethic
 - Potential grants
 - Developing communication materials for lay public engagement, writing for lay audience or media
 - White papers, policy brief about AMR

Priority activities:

From the brainstorming session, the group identified several priority activities for the (Sonar-Global support of the) regional hub:

1. Follow-up writing workshop

- **September 2020 Bangkok** alongside OPERATE-SOC curriculum and ICTMM conference: There was consensus among participants that at the next workshop, they would work on writing up study findings of the research data they are currently analyzing. The duration of the writing workshop is to be decided, but likely to be one to two days around the meeting and conference in September. Funds are available from Sonar Global to support travel and accommodation for approximately 10 participants from outside of Bangkok.
- **Buddy approach** (junior and senior authors paired up): Invited participants will be linked to create senior-junior pairs, with one more- and one less-experienced writing partner. Participants will submit a first draft to the writing buddy prior to the workshop and receive feedback. At the meeting they will have time to present their article and receive additional feedback from the rest of the group.
- **Potential manuscripts**
Four potential manuscripts about AMR in engagement, AMR in ethics, AMR in social science and any AMR related topic were identified from those present. We will contact the rest of the researchers involved to enquire about their plans to write up their current or recent study findings.

2. Special issues or thematic series

The aim is to combine the articles into a thematic series in one particular journal. The participants identified three potential options: 1. Global health action, 2. International Health and 3. Wellcome Open. We will contact the journals to assess their interest in publishing such a series.

3. Capacity building workshop

Holding a regional capacity building workshop was proposed to harness the extensive experience of the Thailand-based groups, particularly regarding methodologies of studying antibiotic use. The workshop would be hosted by Mahidol, potentially in collaboration with their AMIS and One Health project. The Wellcome Trust offers small grants to UK and LMIC-based institutions.

4. Information sharing tool online -- regional hub page

The WP2 team will develop a regional hub page on the Sonar website and publish relevant articles, focusing on the social science of antibiotic use/resistance in South East Asia.

- **Repository of published and unpublished research**
- **Showcase Sonar member articles**

5. Scoping of actors in the field

Participants described the importance of scoping actors in the field. This would assist in strengthening the hub, designing studies, engaging with stakeholders and formulating future research questions. Giao (OUCRU) agreed to identify social scientists who are working on the use of antibiotics in the animal sector in the region. We will investigate the possibility of recruiting an

intern to help conduct such a scoping exercise amongst all other stakeholders (including NGO's, policy actors, etc.) and to identify research gaps.

6. Policy and community engagement

Engaging with the policy process and having an impact on the health system were viewed as priorities. Sonar can assist this by seeking grants for holding meetings with policy stakeholders in the region (identified through the scoping). Sonar could also seek funds to assist members in compiling policy briefs based on their research. This could be in the form of writing support from a professional writer or through training to self-author policy briefs

- **Stakeholder engagement meetings** -- small grant needed
- **Policy-briefs** -- grant for capacity building to self-author and for a writer needed

Research questions:

During the meeting participants were asked to write down relevant research questions. The outcomes are summarized below:

- **Research questions -- public engagement:**
 - How to build capacity for engagement?
 - How to design communication materials for community people (effective in rural setting)?
 - What do the general public want to know about antibiotics?
 - How to engage patients/community in the antimicrobial stewardship strategies?
 - What are effective strategies (e.g. means of communicating about AMR behavior change with different stakeholder groups)?
 - What engagement activities are effective in AMR?
 - How do we engage with health providers?
- **Research questions -- policy:**
 - How to best train decision makers on social science of AMR?
 - What evidence do policy makers want?
 - What can social science add to policy discussions?
 - How can social science AMR studies contribute to country's AMR policy or regulations?
 - What are drivers of antibiotic use in private or public sectors (financial included)?
 - How can we translate social science (AMR) finding to policy and implementation?
- **Research questions -- other issues:**
 - What is the historical background of the popularity of antimicrobials in South East Asia?
 - What are the drivers of non-compliance?
 - What are the physical characteristics of "popular" antibiotics?
 - How do you tell if antibiotics in your country are not falsified?
 - Should we have AMR warriors? (like STEM ambassadors)
 - What guidelines for 'formative research' should be included in clinical or lab research studies?
 - How to increase ownership of AMR stewardship amongst hospital stakeholder including prescribers?
 - How to build capacity for social science in the region? Link with local universities etc.?
 - How do we bring social scientists and non-social scientists the same framing to tackle AMR?
 - How do we share the training and communication package related to AMR if we come from different cultural backgrounds?