



History/Background

Tropical and infectious diseases remain the most important health problems in developing countries. In children, measles, diarrhoea, malaria and acute respiratory infections kill millions worldwide whereas in adults, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, parasitic and other protozoal infections, tuberculosis and malignancies associated with viral infections are major causes of morbidity and mortality.

The impediments to the control of these diseases in developing countries are many. For many immunizeable diseases, solutions exist but have not been implemented for financial or logistical reasons; for others such as waterborne diseases, we have solutions but do not yet know how best to apply them; and for a third category such as HIV/AIDS, solutions remain a hope for the future.

The ultimate control can be achieved through further research on identifying novel strategies for control of these diseases in developing countries and on implementing effective intervention programmes fully integrated with other health programmes.

The Faculty of Medicine of the University of Nairobi (UoN) has been involved in research in various areas of tropical and infectious diseases since its inception in 1967. Diseases such as malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases, sexually transmitted infections, various malignancies such as cervical cancer, malnutrition etc. are just but a few. Many of the research activities have been through efforts made by various departments in collaboration with foreign institutions and although the faculty had been training in tropical and infectious diseases, there had been no focus in the respective disciplines.

The University of Nairobi Institute for Tropical and Infectious Diseases (UNITID) was established in 2003 with the mandate of harnessing research activities within the College of Health Sciences in general and the Faculty of Medicine in particular; and initiate training programmes geared towards management and control of infectious diseases. The establishment of the institute in a tropical setting is meant to attract scholars and researchers from diaspora who are interested in studying these conditions in their natural environment. The institute through pooling of the expertise in areas of epidemiology and biostatistics, laboratory, medical and social sciences, should improve on the quality of research and training.

Objectives:

- To develop and continue research in tropical and infectious diseases.
- To establish models for clinical management, prevention, and control of infectious and tropical diseases.
- To develop and initiate relevant courses in tropical and infectious diseases at post basic and postgraduate levels.
- To establish core staff to implement the activities of the institute.
- To develop physical facilities for learning and research in the institute.
- To generate income for self- sustenance in the institute.

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