



ВСЕМИРНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ
ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЕ РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЕ БЮРО

Working Group on the Role of the Hospital
Laboratory in Public Health

Stockholm, 8-12 May 1978

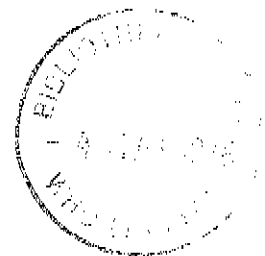
ICP/ATH/004/9
(ICP/LAB/006)
10 April 1978
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

INDEXED

*Lab. Med.
Res., Med.*

THE ROLE OF LABORATORIES ATTACHED TO NATIONAL INSTITUTES
AND UNIVERSITIES

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1. Their purpose

The chief purpose of such laboratories is twofold, comprising both teaching and research, as follows:

- teaching at undergraduate level (first and second stages) for the training of health practitioners and (third stage) for the training of research workers
- basic applied research.

2. Collaboration with other public health laboratories

The bases for collaboration between these laboratories, other public health laboratories, and hospital laboratories in particular, may be found in existing systems, always providing that these are substantially improved and that the twofold purpose of teaching and research is maintained.

Existing systems comprise one of the following:

- completely independent structures such as hospital laboratories, university laboratories and research centres
- various groupings of these three units
- university hospital centres and research centres
- any other potential combination.

None of these systems is entirely satisfactory, though the university hospital centre would appear to constitute an interesting and partially successful attempt to find a solution.

3. Possible improvements

To bring about an improvement in the role of laboratories attached to research centres and universities, certain principles could therefore be used as guidelines, notably:

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- university hospital centres, which are essential links between the centres of basic research and the places where the results obtained are applied, should either be created or strengthened
- the university laboratories and national centres should be brought more closely into line with the needs of hospitals and the requirements of public health, yet without causing them to lose sight of their chief purpose.

The practical solutions to reach these objectives vary according to the countries concerned and the possibilities available, but the following solutions might be considered:

- the development of national policy for health laboratories in conjunction with all existing structures (especially national research centres, and university hospital centres)
- the regional allocation of responsibilities, laboratories and teams
- national definition and regional distribution of major research programmes, needs and heavy equipment
- basic and continuing training of research workers in university hospital centres and national centres
- the creation of networks for the tele-processing of data and the tabulation of results, the establishment of statistical services, etc.
- the opening of laboratories in university hospital centres to non-university hospitals and even to the general public.