

Communication with non-academics: Event organised in the Framework of a Doctoral Research on Zoonotic Diseases in Ghana

Summary of my research topic:

The rate of zoonotic disease¹ emergence has been increasing in the last decades. The view that emerging infections are multi-dimensional problems is highlighted in the literature where zoonosis emergence and transmission are portrayed as combinations of social, politico-economic and environmental processes for which the drivers and responses are still poorly understood. Global health actors at the international level make states accountable for managing infectious and zoonotic diseases for security purposes. Under this framing, the One Health policy narrative was developed jointly by international institutions in charge of animal and human health¹ and promote intensive collaboration between disciplines and governance levels. Unfortunately, our knowledge on how applying One Health to concrete policies to globally coordinate surveillance and research activities is limited to recommendations hardly integrated in national strategies. Vets in tropical developing countries seem to operate across scales and constitute key actors in zoonosis surveillance networks. This study examines the shaping of emerging zoonosis policies as well as practices on the ground in structures at three levels of governance: in Ghana at the local and national level and at the global level to see how vets influence national strategy for emerging zoonoses in the framework of global health. This research attempts to provide evidence to answer the following research question:

How have policy processes and practices around emerging zoonotic diseases been shaped over the last 20 years in Ghana and what roles do veterinarians play in influencing and implementing both national governance strategy and the global health governance framework?

Objectives of the event:

The initial idea came from the expression of a concern from a few participants that researchers from western countries usually come to Ghana but do not share their findings and lose contact with study participants as soon as they leave the country.

The event encompassed two meetings aiming at providing transparency on the research I had been carrying out in the last 7 months in Ghana as well as receiving feedback from study participants (as well as any other interested person). An additional objective was to promote the research beyond the fieldwork so that once the principal investigator (myself) I stands (c2yself16na

In both meetings, the money provided by the doctoral school was used to provide a lunch to the

Invite the audience to an open discussion

The study participants took active part in the discussion, from requesting more details concerning my methods to challenging some of the statements made in the presentation of my findings and supporting others. What was really interesting to me was also to observe and take note of the debates generated by my research findings between the participants themselves since I look at how perspectives can differ among people operating at different levels (during the first meeting, district vets would debate with the dean of the veterinary school and the regional director; and during the second meeting, district vets would show different opinions

Outcomes of the event

Both meetings were welcomed and successful since about 40 people attended the one in Kumasi and about 25 people attended the one in Accra.

It was also the occasion people who do not usually meet to exchange about common concerns (example of the dean of the veterinary school coming to the regional office and exchanging with district vets) and also for me to meet new key informants (example of Dr Adu with whom I scheduled an interview for the week after the meeting).

Both events created opportunities for other people to communicate information and research findings to the audience. The meeting taking place in Kumasi was also the occasion for the regional vet officers to update the district vets about news coming from the head office, give the vets striking figures concerning rabies cases in the region during the year 2014 and also incite people to be part of

Veterinary Officers step up anti-rabies campaign

Kumasi, Feb 3, GNA - Dr. Albert Kofi Kwansah-Filson, Ashanti Regional Director of the Veterinary Services, has called for the intensification of the anti-rabies campaign amidst a surge of reported cases of the disease.

There were 24 rabies cases in the region, last year, compared with the year 2013 figure of 13. At the same time dog bites rose from 400 to 690 during the period.

He described the figures as frightening, and asked that veterinary officers worked with zeal to vaccinate all pets.

He said it was completely unacceptable that anybody should die of rabies related-diseases, because they could be prevented.

Dr Kwansah-Filson was speaking at an end-of-year regional performance review meeting of the service in Kumasi.

He told the officers to show more visibility, and collaborate with the relevant organizations and institutions to promote animal health.

He announced the establishment of 30 district core committees, to run a