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“One Health is the collaborative efforts of multiple disciplines working locally, nationally, and globally to attain optimal health for people, animals, plants and our environment.”

“One Health implementation will help protect and/or save untold millions of lives in our generation and for those to come.”

“Between animal and human medicine there are no dividing lines--nor should there be.”

Rudolf Virchow, MD (the father of cellular pathology)

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One Health approaches can lead to better preparedness in prevention and control of zoonoses

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A group of research experts associated with the [Dynamic Drivers of Disease in Africa Consortium](http://steps-centre.org/project/drivers_of_disease/) http://steps-centre.org/project/drivers_of_disease/ have called for a system-based ‘One Health’ approach to help catalyze better preparedness and surveillance that are informed by cross-disciplinary approaches.

One Health is a globally recognised approach established to promote the collaborative effort of multiple disciplines, working locally, nationally and globally, to attain optimal health for people, animals and the environment.

Writing in an Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Rapid Response Briefing titled *Zoonoses – From Panic to Planning* (January 2013), the researchers also note that One Health could help “accelerate research discoveries, enhance the efficacy of response and prevention efforts, and improve education and care”.

However, realigning policy to embrace One Health requires a shift in focus from the current disease-centred approach to one that considers the whole system and takes into account human health, animal health and ecosystems.

“Over two-thirds of all human infectious diseases have their origins in animals. The rate at which these zoonotic diseases have appeared in people has increased over the past 40 years, with at least 43 newly identified outbreaks since 2004. In 2012, outbreaks included Ebola in Uganda, yellow fever in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rift Valley fever in Mauritania.

Zoonotic diseases have a huge impact – and a disproportionate one on the poorest people in the poorest countries. In low-income countries, 20% of human sickness and death is due to zoonoses. Poor people suffer further when development implications are not factored into disease planning and response strategies.

A new, integrated ‘One Health’ approach to zoonoses that moves away from top-down disease-focused intervention is urgently needed. With this, we can put people first by factoring development implications into disease preparation and response strategies – and so move from panic to planning.”

The IDS briefing (<http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/ZoonosesRapidResponseBriefingFinal.pdf>) is lead authored by Dr. Delia Grace, veterinary epidemiologist and food safety expert at the International Livestock Research Institute ([ILRI](http://www.ilri.org)). Scientists in ILRI are using One Health to improve understanding of the emergence of zoonotic diseases in developing countries and test the appropriateness of responses towards preventing and controlling these new threats.

ILRI is among 19 institutions in Africa, Europe and America that form the Dynamic Drivers of Disease in Africa consortium. In addition to Dr. Grace, other ILRI scientists involved in the consortium are Dr. Bernard Bett, a veterinary epidemiologist, and Dr. Steve Kemp, a molecular geneticist.

The consortium conducts a major program to advance understanding of the connections between disease and environment in Africa. Attention is on the following four zoonotic diseases and their impacts on ecosystems, human and animal health, livelihoods and wellbeing:

- Henipavirus infection in Ghana
- Rift Valley fever in Kenya
- Lassa fever in Sierra Leone
- Trypanosomiasis in Zambia and Zimbabwe

The focus of the consortium is animal-to-human disease transmission and its objective is to help move people out of poverty and promote social justice.

***NOTE: Drs. Grace, Bett and Kemp** are One Health Supporter/Advocates
<http://www.onehealthinitiative.com/supporters.php>.