**An analysis of donor financing of human resources for health activities and health worker migration in Sub-Saharan African countries**

**Background**

In 2016, sub-Saharan Africa had 21% of the global burden of disease, yet only 5% of the global health workforce. One of the drivers of the global health workforce imbalance is the migration of health workers. Recognizing the challenges associated with the ethical recruitment of health professionals globally, the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel was instituted in 2010. The code encourages high-income countries to provide financial and technical assistance to low-income countries to mitigate the impact of health personnel emigration. Whereas the issue of emigration of health workers and its associated impact on the health system has been well described in the literature, there is limited evidence on the issue of emigration and the transfer of development assistance for health resources.

**Aims and objectives**

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the flow of development assistance for human resources for health (DAHRH) and the emigration of health workers.

**Methods**

The study uses data from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation’s 2017 Development Assistance for Health database. This data tracks development assistance for health from 1990 through 2017. DAHRH estimates is linked to data on physician migration to the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. We use regression analysis to assess the association between the change in the number of foreign trained physicians practicing in these four high-income countries and change in the amount of DAHRH received by sub-Saharan countries.

**Key findings**

Preliminary results suggest there is a positive association between the flow of development assistance for human resources for health and the emigration of health workers. A 10% increase in development assistance for human resources for health is associated with a 2.4% increase in the number of physicians migrating out of the country (0.24 – 95% CI 0.14 – 0.35). Additional analysis will explore alternative models to examine the robustness of the finding.

**Conclusion**

Health worker emigration presents significant challenges for health systems in sub-Saharan Africa. The preliminary results suggest that other interventions besides additional investment in training and other human resource activities may be necessary to stem the flow of health workers out of sub-Saharan Africa.