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News Release

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Lung diseases targeted by £7m global research initiative

Experts have received £7 million to launch a research initiative focused on reducing the impact of lung diseases worldwide.

The research aims to cut death rates from conditions that affect breathing and to reduce the impact these illnesses have on people's daily lives.

Teams will investigate infectious diseases – such as pneumonia – as well as long term illnesses including asthma, lung cancer and chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD).

Funding from the National Institute for Health Research will establish a new Global Health Research Unit on Respiratory Health at the University of Edinburgh, to be known as RESPIRE.

Researchers are working with groups in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, and Pakistan to identify key challenges in these areas and to ensure potential interventions are fit for purpose around the world.

They are also setting up training programmes to equip research teams in these four countries with the skills needed to carry out high quality research in respiratory illnesses.

The scheme will put in place safeguards to ensure research data can be used securely to find answers to the most pressing questions.

Respiratory diseases are responsible for one in five deaths in South Asia and experts say new approaches are urgently needed to tackle the problem.

RESPIRE will be based in the University of Edinburgh's Usher Institute of Population Health Sciences and Informatics.

Professor Aziz Sheikh, Co-Director of RESPIRE at the University of Edinburgh, said: "RESPIRE will enable us to accelerate and extend our work with low and middle income country partners around the world to tackle major respiratory health challenges faced by the world's most deprived populations."

Ranked among the top universities in the world

Professor Harry Campbell, Co-Director of RESPIRE at the University of Edinburgh, said: “We welcome the funding from NIHR to strengthen existing and create new research networks in Asia. Working with our RESPIRE partners, we will use this platform to raise awareness, build capacity and accelerate action to drive down the burden of disease from respiratory problems in Asia, and more widely around the world.”

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