Early Career Researchers’ club hosts a narrative workshop

On the 15th of June, the Early Career Researchers’ club hosted Prof. Ulrika Maude conducted a narrative workshop on the principles of narrative and narrative medicine. Premised on a published source that highlighted societal attitudes towards older people being viewed as 'needy', 'vulnerable' and 'vestiges of the past living in rural areas', the narrative workshop aimed to reframe and dispel those notions. The narrative workshop therefore achieved this through a close reading of the short story, 'The Voyage', by Katherine Mansfield which involved deconstructing the text to present a case of positive representation of ageing. Presently, research has shown that positive perceptions on ageing among the elderly can better their health and wellbeing. This calls for us to challenge negative ageing stereotypes to rethink overall perceptions around ageing.

Presentation on process evaluation at the Social Science Working Group

On June 21st, Faith Kandiye and Chipo Nyamayaro presented on observation as data collection method for their joint presentation titled ‘Process Evaluation: participant and non-participant observation in an intervention’. They shared how these research methods were utilized in the Y-Check study. Some important lessons that were drawn from this seminar are that both participant and non-participant observation data collection methods allow researchers to produce comprehensive data, non-participant observations offer an objective view of the intervention, while participant observations provide insights into the experiences and perspectives of both participants and researchers. Lastly, the combination of both of these data collection methods provides a holistic understanding of the Y-Check study’s effectiveness and the changes that occurred over time.

"Preparing for your PhD upgrading" seminar

This academic seminar was held on the 23rd of June and offered some important insights into what a PhD upgrading is. A PhD upgrade is regarded as a doctoral students’ first mile where they transfer from being a registered MPhil to the status of a PhD candidate. Prof. Rashida Ferrand spoke on the PhD upgrading process which involves drafting an upgrading report, the public seminar followed by a closed panel discussion and the upgrading outcome. Nyasha Dzavakwa presented on the components of and upgrading presentation and shared vital practice tips one can follow. Dr. Kevin Martin presented on the upgrading timeline with the seminar closing off with Tafadzwa Madanhire sharing his PhD upgrading experience for more learning tips.

Resources such as presentations and recordings of these workshops and seminars are available. For more information, send an email request to mufaronashe@gmail.com.
We would like to congratulate Prof. Celia Gregson and Prof. Katharina Kranzer for delivering inspiring inaugural lectures on June 24th and June 28th. Prof. Gregson gave a lecture on her highly diverse research portfolio on bone health, from studying extremes of bone mass to identify novel genes and mechanisms towards new treatments for osteoporosis, to tackling inequalities in fracture care for older people in the UK, and in sub-Saharan Africa. Prof. Kranzer’s lecture focused on her research on multiple pathogens such as tuberculosis, HIV, Gram-negative infections and antimicrobial resistance, sexual transmitted infections and SARS-CoV-2 in multiple settings.

**INAUGURAL LECTURES**

**GIFT STUDY BEGINS RECRUITMENT IN ZIMBABWE**

As of the 20th of June, The GIFT study has enrolled its first participant at the Spilhaus Family Planning Centre in Harare. The study aims to test the Genital Inflammation Test (GIFT) in a clinical trial setting among women from South Africa, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe. Prior to recruitment, the study held its training for key study procedures and held a study site visit with its research teams from Madagascar and South Africa (5-12th June). The study will be enrolling one participant a day and is expected to increase to 2-3 participants a day in the weeks to come. Well done to the study for a momentous start!

**YOUTH RESEARCHERS ACADEMY GOES GLOBAL!**

From June 19th – 23rd, Dr Mandi Tembo joined the MRC/UVRI and LSHTM Uganda Research Unit to facilitate the Disability Inclusive Youth (DIY) Research Programme 2023. Rooted in a firm belief that young with disabilities should be involved as partners in the development, implementation, and evaluation of youth-focused disability research, the DIY programme offers young people with a disability an opportunity to be active partners in conducting ethically and scientifically sound research. Teaching sessions, conducted during the one-week program, explored aspects of the research process including forming relevant research questions, planning and conducting data collection, data analysis, report writing and dissemination of research findings. Following the training, the youth researchers will be offered the opportunity to carry out supervised research, working with a dedicated and highly experienced mentor and research team.
Many congratulations to Dr. Felicity Fitzgerald who recently won the Simon Newall award for her work using data collected via the Neotree in Zimbabwe to improve recognition and outcomes of neonates with suspected sepsis.


Huge congratulations to Prof. Michelle Heys who received a prestigious NIHR Global Research Professorship award. Her research will extend and expand the Neotree application to support the delivery of newborn healthcare in low resource settings, while fostering community engagement and developing research leadership and capacity.


Congratulations also to Dr. Simbarashe Chimhuya (Principal Investigator for Neotree in Zimbabwe) who will soon be starting his PhD as part of the same NIHR Global Research Professorship award. His project is titled ‘Co-development and pilot acceptability, feasibility and usability study for a digital learning health system for perinatal care (Mummytree)’.

Neotree has also welcomed, Aditi Rao, who is the new programme manager and implementation specialist for the Neotree project based at University College London. The study also hopes she will visit Zimbabwe in the not-too-distant future!

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**5 MINUTES WITH...**

**VICKY SIMMS**

**What do you do and when did you start?**  
I am the lead statistician at THRU ZIM. I first started working with BRTI in 2015, when our office was a cottage in Rashida’s Garden. I moved from the UK to live in Zimbabwe in 2019. My job involves designing and analyzing trials and observational studies and helping other researchers with their analysis. I work mainly on CHIEDZA, STICH, VITALITY and Y-Check, but other projects too.

**Where can we find you in the office?**  
In the statistics office in the main building at Ross Road, with Steven, Tafadzwa, Farirayi and sometimes Cynthia.

**What do you enjoy about your work?**  
I like taming data - turning a mass of numbers into something that can give us real answers about the world. I also really enjoy helping other people to unlock their data and find out what it all means. I’m looking forward to the Principles of Epidemiology and Statistics course in September.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Social Science Research Group
The next seminar will be on the 30th of August at 11am-12pm. Nyasha Dzavakwa will present on ‘Design of a qualitative Process Evaluation for a trial on electronic pill boxes to improve treatment adherence amongst adolescents living with HIV’ in the Gazebo.

Zoom link: https://lshtm.zoom.us/j/94713267383?pwd=Rld0RXMxRWxQOURXY1VhWUNzckFMdz09 ; Meeting ID: 947 1326 7383; Password: 610536

Discovery Research funding webinar for global researchers
Here is an upcoming webinar outlining Wellcome Discovery Research funding opportunities for global researchers which is being aimed at researchers in Africa.

If you are interested in attending follow the link below to register:
https://wellcome-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-BZJ0s90TPmGYbP3a7IC6Q?utm_campaign=2340341_Research%20Update%20-%20June%202023&utm_source=dotdigital&utm_medium=email&dm_i=2PXJ1E5TH,6TALWZ,5HJAF,1#/registration

Call for abstracts for ICASA 2023
There is a call for abstracts for the 22nd International Conference on Aids & STIs in Africa (ICASA) 2023 specifically those of you that are involved in HIV/SRH/STI research.

ICASA is the largest HIV/AIDS conference in Africa with this year’s theme being ‘AIDS IS NOT OVER: Address inequalities, accelerate inclusion and innovation’. The objectives of the conference are as follows:

- Mainstream respect for equity, inclusion and diversity in the control and mitigation of the impact of diseases.
- Sustain and increase domestic financing and community response.
- Respond to HIV/AIDS, COVID-19, Monkey-pox, Ebola and any other emerging diseases.
- Mitigate the impact of hepatitis, tuberculosis and malaria through health systems strengthening.
- Generate and provide evidence-based data for policy formulation

There are 5 tracks for abstract submission:

- Basic Science
- Clinical Science, Treatment and Care
- Epidemiology and Prevention Science
- Law, Human Rights, Social Science, and Political Science
- Health Systems, Economics, and Implementation Science

More information about the conference can be found on its website: http://icasa2023.saafrica.org/index.php

If you are interested in submitting an abstract for this event, please contact Constance Mackworth-Young at Constance.Mackworth-Young1@lshtm.ac.uk who is coordinating submissions.

The deadline for abstract submission is the 31st of July.
PUBLICATIONS


OPPORTUNITIES

Principals of Epidemiology and Statistics Course
Here an opportunity to enroll into this course. Please take note of the following details:

Course duration is for 2 weeks full-time from the 18th – 29th of September in Harare. The course will consist of face-to-face seminars and practical sessions. A US$100 deposit is required to secure a place and will be refunded upon completion of course.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Vicky Simms at Victoria.simms@lshtm.ac.uk with the following documents:

- Detailed CV
- Summary as to why you want to partake in this course

Application deadline is on the 20th of July.

Call for Applications: Essential Grant Writing Skills Programme October/November 2023
The Africa Research Excellence Fund (AREF) works to strengthen the health research capacity of scientists in Africa who are engaged in tackling the continent’s significant health challenges. AREF is calling for applications from scientists who are active, emerging biomedical/health researchers in African countries to participate in in the forthcoming Essential Grant Writing Skills Programme.

This fully online programme will be held over eight 3-hour sessions during the weeks of the 9th of October and the 27th of November. There will be a six-week break in between the two sessions, where you will be expected to write a mini proposal. This is an intensive programme that is designed to produce tangible progress towards a grant proposal by the end of the workshop series. Your commitment to the entire series and to the additional work outside of sessions will be necessary to achieve these outcomes.

To fully benefit from this workshop series, you will be at a stage in your research career where you are actively seeking independent funding, or have won smaller grants, but have yet to secure that big grant necessary to support your research independence.

Follow this link for more information:
Imperial College Research Fellowship Scheme

This message is a pre-announcement of the 2023 Imperial College Research Fellowship scheme (for fellowships starting between August and December 2024), which is due to launch in late June 2023. It includes information on the timeline and process, which I am now sharing with the Department’s potential applicants, for their early consideration.

The Imperial College Research Fellowship scheme seeks to recruit the highest caliber of early career post-doctoral researchers from the UK and across the world, and support them to establish their independent research careers and become research leaders of the future. These fellowships offer four years of support, including a contribution toward research and travel costs (up to £45,000).

The scheme is intended to support recently qualified post-doctoral researchers transitioning towards research independence. Candidates should have no more than four years post-doctoral research experience, though extensions will be considered in certain circumstances (such as part-time working, parental leave, or delays in research due to the Covid-19 pandemic). Salary will be offered in the Research Associate salary band, to reflect the junior nature of the scheme.

The eligibility criteria and application process are expected to duplicate from previous years, and so interested applicants are welcome to review the 2022 Imperial College Research Fellowship website for background information but must ensure to refer to the 2023 information (which is being updated as part of the call launch preparation) prior to submitting an application.

Applicants will be required to identify a sponsor to support their application, and so candidates may wish to use this time to contact potential sponsors and discuss their interest in applying and their proposed fellowship project. They should of course confirm that their chosen Department is supporting Imperial College Research Fellowship 2023 applications before proceeding.

The expectation is that the Imperial College Research Fellowship call will be released in late June 2023, with an application deadline of Monday the 21st of August 2023. Decisions are expected to be announced in mid-late December 2023. The start date for fellowships will be between the 1st of August and the 1st of December 2024.

For further information, please contact Dr. Felicity Fitzgerald at felicity.fitzgerald@ucl.ac.uk.

NEW EMPLOYEES

We are pleased to welcome Modester Ngwerume who has joined THRU ZIM as a Research Assistant for the IMBA Hutano study. We wish her all the best in her new role!
Share your news, publications, pictures, announcements: publicengagement@thruzim.org. Follow us on Twitter: https://twitter.com/ThruZim

THANK YOU!