**Updates**

**Congratulations Dr. Salome Manyau!**

We are delighted to share that Salome Manyau has passed her PhD viva with only minor corrections at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. Salome’s thesis, titled “An ethnography of antibiotics and antimicrobial resistance in the lives of urban medicine providers, residents and sex workers in Harare, Zimbabwe,” provides important insights through her in-depth fieldwork conducted in Mbare, Harare. The study investigated how antibiotics and antimicrobial resistance were intertwined with informal systems in urban Zimbabwe. Through fieldwork in Mbare, it examined the role of antibiotics in navigating poor infrastructure, the informal drug market, and sex work. The research aimed to develop more equitable antimicrobial stewardship approaches addressing intersecting challenges around marginalization, poverty, and health faced by urban populations. We congratulate Salome on this outstanding achievement under the supervision of Drs. Justin Dixon and Clare Chandler. All of us at THRU ZIM are incredibly proud of Salome’s PhD success. Many congratulations, Salome!

**Spotlight on Neotree’s Dr. Marcia Mangiza**

At the Zimbabwe Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (ZSOG) and the Paediatric Association of Zimbabwe (PAZ) Annual Scientific Conference this year, Dr. Marcia Mangiza presented findings from Neotree on outcomes of low-birth-weight babies admitted to the neonatal unit at Sally Mugabe Central Hospital in Zimbabwe. Her analysis included over 6,500 newborns and found alarmingly high mortality rates among small and premature infants. Results presented by Dr Mangiza showed that 40% of admissions were low birth weight, and these babies had three times higher mortality than normal weight newborns. Shockingly, mortality reached 85% in extremely low birth weight babies. Dr. Mangiza’s presentation spurred much discussion amongst the paediatricians, obstetricians, and public health specialists present at the conference. It contributed to a plan to work together to develop a strategy to improve care in the ‘golden hour’ for these vulnerable neonates. We commend and recognise Dr. Mangiza’s outstanding scholarship and commitment to improving mother and child health, shedding light on this neglected area. Her findings and engagement at the conference demonstrate the importance of research to address healthcare challenges facing Zimbabwe’s most vulnerable populations.

**CREATE Fellow presents at ECRI Conference**

Mary Tumushime, a CREATE fellow, recently presented her PhD research at the CeSHHAR Zimbabwe Early Career Researcher and Innovator’s Conference (ECRI) from 24–27 October. Her presentation was titled “Co-developing youth-centered interventions to facilitate Sexually Transmitted Infection Control among young people in Zimbabwe”. The research abstract highlighted that young people face a high risk of STIs due to biological and behavioral factors, but have limited access to prevention and treatment services due to individual and sociocultural barriers. The aim of Mary’s study is to collaboratively develop new community-based STI control strategies with and for young people in Zimbabwe. This includes interventions to prevent reinfection and interrupt transmission chains. Through participatory research, she plans to work with youth to design practical solutions. We congratulate Mary on sharing this important research, which can enhance STI control and youth wellness nationwide.
Chipo Nyamayaro selected for AMARI Fellowship

We are pleased to announce that researcher Chipo Nyamayaro has been awarded a highly competitive AMARI Fellowship to pursue her Master’s degree in Public Mental Health at the University of Cape Town starting in January 2023. The AMARI-II programme is offering 2023/24 MPhil, PhD, and Postdoctoral fellowships to candidates from partner countries including Zimbabwe. AMARI-II is being implemented with funding support from the second phase of the Developing Excellence in Leadership, Training, and Science in Africa (DELTAS Africa) initiative, supported by the Science for Africa Foundation with funding from Wellcome and the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. Chipo was selected from a large pool of applicants for her outstanding academic background and commitment to mental health research. All of us at THRU ZIM congratulate Chipo on this momentous achievement as she embarks on this new phase of professional development.

Nyasha Buwu raises the Fractures E3 flag high!

Nyasha Buwu disseminated the findings of the Fractures E3 ethnographic study (Phase 1) at the Zimbabwe Orthopaedic Association (ZOA) on October 20, 2023, and at the University of Zimbabwe’s Annual Medical Research Day (AMRD) on October 21, 2023. The presentation was titled “Understanding patient and carer priorities in the treatment of hip fracture in Zimbabwe, a qualitative study.” To summarize the key findings from hip fracture patients (from public health facilities) and their carers’ priorities, they expressed the need for improved communication between them and their attending healthcare professionals. Most expressed that they had minimal to no communication with their attending doctors. Treatment (medication and implants) was expressed as being expensive, which had led to delays in treatment. The recommendation was to provide affordable treatment and prioritize the availability of pain relief medication. Patients expressed dissatisfaction with access to toileting in the wards, as bed pans were provided at specific times and most patients ended up soiling themselves. The recommendation is to increase nurse training on the importance of assisting immobile patients to minimize the risk of bed sores. The long stay in hospitals due to delays to surgery contributed to depressive moods in patients. The key recommendation from the study is to prioritize hip fracture patients and shift from elective to non-elective surgeries. At UZ-AMRD, Nyasha was awarded the Laurence Levy Award. The audience provided positive feedback about the study, as some expressed the importance of starting to conduct research on the ageing population.

Presentations at the Annual Medical Research Day

We are delighted to congratulate Nyasha Buwu, Tinashe Mwaturura, and Fadzaishe Mhino for their exceptional presentations at the Annual Medical Research Day. Held under the theme "New lens on old problems - lessons learnt from COVID-19 three years on," the event took place on October 21st at Rainbow Towers in Harare. Nyasha’s enlightening research focused on understanding patient priorities in the treatment of hip fractures in the aging population, emphasizing the importance of timely surgery and improved communication between patients and healthcare workers. Tinashe’s work centered on quality improvement in the pre-laboratory phase of blood culture processing, contributing to enhanced diagnostic accuracy in a tertiary hospital in Zimbabwe. Fadzaishe’s research highlighted the expressed need and interest in a maternal mental health intervention among pregnant women. Their presentations showcased their expertise and dedication to improving healthcare practices and patient outcomes. Congratulations to Nyasha, Tinashe, and Fadzaishe for their remarkable achievements and valuable contributions to the medical research field.
Presentations at the Zimbabwean Orthopaedic Association Conference

The Fractures-E3 study, represented by Celia Gregson, Tadios Manyanga, Nyasha Buwu and Rudo Chingono attended the Zimbabwean Orthopaedic Association Conference in Mutare on October 20th. At this event, the team managed to disseminate new findings on hip fracture care and costs. We congratulate Celia, Tadios, Nyasha and Rudo on sharing their research at this important orthopaedic gathering.

VAXEF study conducts successful immunology sub-study training

On October 6th, the VAXEF study conducted a comprehensive training session for its immunology sub-study. The VAXEF study, titled "Vaccine Effectiveness Amongst Adults Living with Co-morbidities (Diabetes, Hypertension & HIV) following Routine Introduction of COVID-19 Vaccine in Harare, Zimbabwe," aims to evaluate and compare the rate of virologically-confirmed symptomatic COVID-19 among vaccinated and unvaccinated adults with co-morbidities. Expanding on the main study, the immunology sub-study has specific objectives. It aims to characterize the T-cell immunity generated by infection and whole-cell vaccines in Zimbabwean adults with chronic conditions such as HIV, diabetes, and hypertension. Additionally, it aims to analyze the functional SARS-CoV-2 serum and mucosal antibody responses in Zimbabwean adults with HIV and other chronic conditions who have been infected or received whole-cell vaccines. Moreover, the sub-study seeks to establish scientific capacity for advanced immunology assays in Zimbabwe, including anti-viral T-cell, pseudo virus neutralization, and mucosal immunity to SARS-CoV-2. During the training session, the VAXEF team engaged in constructive discussions and delivered informative presentations on various aspects of the study. Topics covered included ensuring participant comprehension, phlebotomy techniques, nasosorption sampling methods, and effective data management strategies. We extend our best wishes to the VAXEF team as they continue to pursue this exciting study.

Academic success for PhD upgradings

We are thrilled to announce and commend the remarkable achievements of Dr. Farirai Nzvere and Michaela Takawira for successfully passing their PhD upgrading presentations.

Michaela Takawira’s PhD, titled "A look into well-being: through the eyes and lives of adolescents living in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe," aims to bridge the gap in understanding and measuring adolescent well-being, particularly among adolescents in low-income urban areas of Zimbabwe. By incorporating the perspectives and experiences of these adolescents, her study seeks to contribute to the development of a more universal definition and measurement of well-being. The objectives of her research are to explore daily routines, rituals, local understanding, and sociocultural factors that shape adolescent well-being. Data collection methods include time-use surveys, collaboration with adolescents through photovoice processes, and the development of a structural equation model. The findings will provide valuable insights into variables and indicators that explain adolescents’ capabilities and well-being, enabling a comprehensive assessment of well-being among the sample of adolescents.

Dr. Farirai Nzvere’s PhD presentation, "Patterns of morbidity and health behaviours among adolescents in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe," addresses the limited access to acceptable adolescent-responsive health services and the need for meaningful adolescent involvement in intervention development. The traditional siloed approach of single-disease programmes in low- and middle-income countries falls short in meeting the complex health needs of adolescents. Dr. Nzvere’s research aims to refine and adapt an adolescent school- and community-based health and well-being check-up, making it appropriate and acceptable to adolescent users. Additionally, the study aims to identify patterns of health risk and promotive behaviours, explore the association of individual characteristics with identified behaviour clusters, and understand patterns of morbidity and their association with well-being in the context of multimorbidity clusters.
Both Michaela and Dr. Nzvere have been actively involved in the Y-Check study, which aims to address the absence of routine health check-ups for adolescents in low- and middle-income countries. Y-Check offers screening and treatment for common health conditions during early and mid/late adolescence, contributing to improved health outcomes and overall well-being.

We extend our warmest congratulations to Dr. Farirai Nzvere and Michaela Takawira for their accomplishments and wish them continued success as they continue to make significant contributions to adolescent health.

**Menstrual health presentation at Global Forum for Adolescents**

We are pleased to share that Dr. Mandi Tembo recently participated in and delivered an impactful presentation at the Global Forum for Adolescents held from October 11-12. The Global Forum is an annual event that brings together young people worldwide to advance progress on adolescent health and development goals. It provides a platform for youth to engage with leaders, expand their skills, and collectively strengthen efforts to ensure their well-being and rights are respected. Dr. Tembo’s presentation was titled “Investigating the acceptability, uptake, and effectiveness of a menstrual health intervention among young women in Zimbabwe.” It was part of the session “Periods are bloody important: Learnings from menstrual health interventions in school and community settings in low- to middle-income countries.” The theme of the session was highlighting the importance of menstrual health and the human rights approach. Dr. Tembo touched on challenges faced in achieving menstrual health and provided an overview of Zimbabwe’s CHIEDZA trial for young people’s HIV and sexual/reproductive health. Key findings and lessons from the nested menstrual health study in CHIEDZA were shared. The session included a short message from CHIEDZA healthcare worker Nomatter Shamuyarira providing valuable on-the-ground perspectives. The session used interactive online polls to engage the audience on priorities like menstrual health and adolescent well-being.

Congratulations to Dr. Tembo for her excellent work raising awareness of these important issues through effective presentations at high-level global forums. Her contributions advance research and progress on menstrual health in Zimbabwe.

**Success at Zimbabwe National TB Research Day**

We are thrilled to share the exciting news that Karlos Madziva and Edson Marambire made notable contributions at the second Zimbabwe National TB Research Day, held on October 5th. The theme of the event, “Yes, we can end TB through research,” emphasized the importance of research in combating tuberculosis. The conference offered a valuable platform for researchers to showcase their protocols and research findings to policymakers, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the practical utilization of research outcomes. Edson presented on “Early risk assessment in pediatric and adult contacts of infectious tuberculosis cases for validations of novel diagnostics-ERASE-TB,” which garnered the first prize. Karlos presented his insightful study on “People affected by TB: socio-demographic characteristics and risk factors for TB disease in Southern Africa,” securing the well-deserved second prize. We extend our warm congratulations to both Karlos and Edson for their outstanding achievements. Their dedication to advancing TB research and their impressive presentations were recognized and celebrated by the conference organizers and attendees.

**IPSAZ study wraps up recruitment**

We are pleased to announce that the Investigating point-of-care diagnostics for Sexually Transmitted Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance in Primary Care in Zimbabwe (IPSAZ) study has successfully completed the enrolment of participants, with an impressive recruitment of over 1000 individuals. The study commenced participant enrolment at Mbare polyclinic on January 12, 2023, and later expanded its recruitment efforts to Kuwadzana polyclinic starting from June 20, 2023.

The enrolled participants consisted of pregnant women attending the clinic for their routine antenatal check-ups. As part of the study, these participants were offered comprehensive testing for chlamydia, gonorrhoea, trichomoniasis, and hepatitis B, in addition to routine HIV and syphilis testing. The testing procedures took place conveniently on-site at the clinic, ensuring that results and necessary treatment were promptly available on the same day. Participants received treatment according to the Zimbabwe STI management guidelines, and their partners were also provided with the appropriate treatment. Furthermore, participants diagnosed with hepatitis B were referred to see a liver specialist, and arrangements were made for birth dose vaccination for newborn babies born to mothers with hepatitis B. The IPSAZ teams will continue their work at both clinics until the end of the year to facilitate partners’ return for treatment and to ensure the ongoing collection of vital birth outcomes. Additionally, there are plans for further interviews with policymakers and clinical leaders to conduct an associated process evaluation.
MWEDZI Art Competition
The MWEDZI Art Competition is ending with a big bang! MWEDZI (a Shona term used to describe menstruation) is a public engagement project and menstrual health art and design competition looking to explore & understand the menstrual experiences of women across Zimbabwe. Through MWEDZI, we hope to challenge harmful myths and taboo around menstruation and gain a deeper understanding of women’s menstrual experiences.

The MWEDZI competition, open to girls and women of all ages, ran from September 1st 2023 to October 31st 2023. We asked girls and women to “Tell us about their menstrual health journeys” using art, graphic design, and/or photography. Specifically, we asked:

- What does menstruation mean to you?
- What have you experienced during menstruation?
- How have you managed challenges and made your menstrual experiences better?

Join us at the Pikicha Gallery on Friday November 3rd, 2023 find out what girls and women across Zimbabwe had to say as we showcase our top art, graphic design, and/or photography entries, hear about the experiences and stories that inspired the entries from the artists themselves, and award our competition winners. We will also be giving you, the event attendees, an opportunity to vote for your “Showcase Favourite”.

5 MINUTES WITH...
Tinashe Nhandi

What do you do and when did you start?
As a data assistant, my primary role is to assist with data-related tasks. This involves entering data into computer systems or databases, verifying the accuracy of entered data by cross-checking with source documents, resolving queries related to data discrepancies, and collaborating with study teams to resolve data-related issues. I also organize and categorize data for easy retrieval according to ethical standards and update and modify existing databases as needed. I joined BRTI in 2021 as a Youth Researcher through the Youth Researchers Academy. After completing the program, I had an opportunity to work as a Research Assistant for a number of projects including CHIEDZA and the Fractures E3 study. I started my current role in 2023 and it has been a wonderful experience working with the data team.

Where can we find you in the office?
At the office, you can find me at my workstation in the data office, next to the lab. Just look for an enthusiastic, ever smiling young man in the far-right corner ready to assist you.

What do you enjoy about your work?
There are several aspects of my work as a data assistant that I find enjoyable. Firstly, I love the process of working with data and tackling data challenges. I enjoy the problem-solving nature of my role. Additionally, I enjoy being part of a team and collaborating with others in managing data, as it allows me to learn from different perspectives and exchange ideas.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Develop your academic writing skills: an online resource
THRU ZIM researchers, take note - the recording from the recent AuthorAID/NIHR webinar “How to Write a Scientific Paper in Global Health Research” is now available online for your reference. This 90-minute session provides invaluable guidance on key manuscript components like the introduction, methods, results and discussion sections. We encourage watching it to boost your manuscript development and presentation abilities.

Link: AuthorAID NIHR Webinar - How to Write a Scientific Paper in Global Health Research - YouTube

Call for magazines and newspapers
Dr Mandi Tembo is asking for donations of old magazines and newspapers for participatory workshops with girls and women. Please drop off all donations at the office reception at 8 Ross Ave.
OPPORTUNITIES

Meade Collaboration Travel Grants in Epidemiology 2023

The Medical Research Foundation is currently inviting applications from mid-career researchers in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) who are working in the field of epidemiology and are in the process of transitioning to research independence. This initiative aims to support researchers in developing collaborations with their counterparts based at a UK research organization. The grants provided through this program will enable SSA epidemiology researchers to spend a duration of one to three months at a research organization in the UK.

During their time in the UK, successful applicants will have the opportunity to foster collaborations, acquire and share valuable skills, as well as undertake short research projects that may not be feasible to complete at their current employing organization in SSA.

Key Dates:
Deadline for Submission: Wednesday, December 6th, 2023 at 1300 (GMT)
Funding Decision: February 2024
Feedback on Funding Decision: February 2024

For more detailed information follow this link: https://www.medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk/grants/meade-collaboration-travel-grants-in-epidemiology-2022

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THANK YOU!