THRU ZIM HOSTS TRANSFORMATIVE EPIDEMIOLOGY AND STATISTICS COURSE

In keeping with our commitment to building capacity and providing academic support to our staff, we conducted a comprehensive two-week foundation course in Epidemiology and Statistics. The course, which took place from September 18th to September 29th, set the stage for a transformative learning experience for the 20 students that were enrolled. We would like to thank the prestigious University of Zimbabwe Clinical Trials Research Centre (UZ-CTRC) for providing a conducive environment for the students to engage in face-to-face seminars and practical sessions. Dr. Vicky Simms, the lead trainer, crafted a curriculum with a wide range of topics to ensure a holistic understanding of statistical fundamentals, techniques and analysis. Congratulations to THRU ZIM and the students involved for their commitment to advancing scientific understanding and their unwavering dedication to the pursuit of excellence!

RUMBI GUMBIE TRIUMPHS IN PhD UPGRADING PRESENTATION!

We are thrilled to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Rumbidzai “Rumbi” Gumbie on the successful completion of her PhD upgrading presentation. Rumbi, a dedicated global health clinical fellow and pioneer in the CREATE PhD programme, delivered an exceptional practice PhD upgrading presentation titled “Integrating Sexual and Reproductive Health into Clinic-based HIV Services in Zimbabwe: Co-design with Healthcare Providers and Process Evaluation (TSIME)” at the Early Career Researchers’ Meeting on September 20th as part of her preparation. Building upon her outstanding groundwork, Rumbi recently presented her comprehensive study, "TSIME," during the official upgrading presentation held on September 26th. This study employs a mixed-methods approach to co-design, implement, and conduct a process evaluation of an innovative clinic-based integrated package of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and HIV services in collaboration with healthcare providers in Zimbabwe. Rumbi’s presentation captivated the audience with its depth and excellence, showcasing her expertise and dedication to improving healthcare services for individuals facing the challenges of HIV and SRH.
CONGRATULATIONS NYASHA BUWU!

We would like to extended the warmest congratulations to Nyasha Buwu, who has graduated with an MSc from the University of Zimbabwe. Nyasha's MSc thesis was titled 'Exploring the Rise in Depression among HIV Positive Women in Menopause: A Case of Parirenyatwa OI Clinic: Towards the Development of a Depression Alleviation Model'. Through rigorous research and meticulous analysis, Nyasha managed to shed light on a crucial topic that affects a vulnerable group of women, aiming to pave the way for the development of effective strategies to alleviate depression in this context.

INTRODUCING PIMS: A NEW SUB-STUDY ON PREGNANCY IN MINORS

We are excited to announce the launch of a groundbreaking sub-study within the Investigating Point-of-care diagnostics for Sexually transmitted infections and antimicrobial resistance in primary care in Zimbabwe (IPSAZ) study. Known as the Pregnancy in Minors Study (PIMS), this initiative aims to shed light on the unique challenges faced by pregnant teenagers in community settings.

Since its inception on August 3, 2023, PIMS has enrolled 14 participants from Epworth. These pregnant teenagers, referred by our on-site research team in the community, have not yet accessed routine antenatal care services and are considered particularly vulnerable.

Building upon the comprehensive approach of the IPSAZ study, PIMS offers participants testing for a range of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including chlamydia, gonorrhea, trichomoniasis, hepatitis B, HIV, and syphilis. Our dedicated team provides necessary treatments, partner notifications, onward referrals, and birth dose vaccinations for hepatitis B, ensuring the well-being of both mother and child.

Recognizing that antenatal care is crucial, PIMS goes beyond medical testing by offering a holistic assessment to these participants. This includes mental health evaluations and counseling, blood pressure checks, blood sugar monitoring, nutritional assessments, and more. PIMS is committed to addressing the comprehensive needs of these young mothers. Furthermore, all PIMS participants will be seamlessly connected to appropriate antenatal care services, ensuring continuous support throughout their pregnancy journey. As a gesture of care and assistance, each participant will receive a food hamper and a birth pack, providing essential resources for a healthy start.

The primary goal of the PIMS sub-study is to investigate the prevalence of STIs, maternal mental health, and other indicators of physical health and vulnerability that impact pregnancy outcomes among pregnant teenagers in community settings. Additionally, PIMS aims to closely examine the birth and post-pregnancy outcomes for these individuals, shedding light on areas that require further attention and support. We are thrilled for PIMS for beginning this vital research endeavor and hope for every success in their journey.

GIFT ABSTRACT SECURES SPOT AT ICASA 2023 FOR POSTER PRESENTATION!

We are pleased to announce that the abstract for the Genital InFlammation Test (GIFT) qualitative study has been accepted for poster presentation at the esteemed International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA 2023), scheduled for December 2023. The study focused on assessing the prospective acceptability of the GIFT device as a screening tool for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among women in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Through in-depth interviews with women, healthcare professionals, and policy makers, the study explored key domains of acceptability, shedding light on the attitudes, perceptions, and challenges associated with implementing the GIFT device in STI management. We look forward to the study's poster presentation and engaging with the global community at ICASA 2023.
MENSTRUAL HEALTH ABSTRACT SECURES ORAL PRESENTATION AT ICASA 2023!

We are pleased to announce that the abstract for the menstrual health (MH) study led by Dr Mandi Tembo and nested within the CHIEDZA trial has been accepted as an oral presentation at the upcoming International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA 2023), scheduled for December 2023. The study examined HIV services (testing, treatment, and adherence support) and MH services uptake (including information, analgesics, and a choice of MH products - the menstrual cup and reusable pads) among women aged 16 – 24 years old within an integrated SRH intervention for young people in Zimbabwe.

VITALITY TRIAL UNVEILS STUDY FILMS

The VITALITY trial has released two study films, the first providing an overview of the trial’s structure and the second, highlighting the procedures undergone by participants. The trial focuses on addressing musculoskeletal health challenges in peripubertal children with HIV (CWH) in Harare and Lusaka. While antiretroviral therapy has improved survival rates, the burden of comorbidities associated with childhood HIV infection has received limited attention. Growth failure, linked to impaired skeletal development, is a common issue among CWH. The trial aims to assess the benefits of vitamin D and calcium supplementation during the critical growth phase of puberty. By optimizing musculoskeletal health, the trial aims to reduce future fracture risks, improve overall physical and mental well-being, and enhance growth, muscle strength, immune function, and social inclusion for CWH.

Main study film link: https://youtu.be/VPAjwQ8FEsA
Participants’ journey film link: https://youtu.be/408yp8Pt7cM

5 MINUTES WITH...

IVAN CHIGONDE

What do you do and when did you start?

“I joined the Biomedical Research and Training Institute in 2001 and have since become one of the organization’s most enduring member. My role involves diverse responsibilities to ensure smooth financial operations. I prepare quarterly, monthly, and half-yearly financial reports for various projects, meeting donor agency requirements and submitting them on time. I review and verify payment requests, ensuring reasonable costs with proper documentation. Managing a reporting schedule for grant-funded programs, I submit accurate and complete financial reports throughout the grant life cycle. I also review all project payments, ensuring compliance with financial policies and the project budget.

I conduct routine compliance reviews and maintain organized files for tracking and reporting. Assisting in budget preparation, I monitor adherence and manage the organization’s cash flow efficiently. Maintaining accurate financial records, I ensure compliance with regulations. My tasks include reconciliations, cashbook maintenance, and bank reconciliations. I authorize cash disbursements and oversee data entry. I manage the organization’s cash flow and handle correspondence with donors regarding outstanding funds and finance-related matters. I contribute to audit preparation, reconcile ledgers, and control expenditures. Upholding professional accounting principles and standards, I ensure compliance with policies. My role encompasses reporting, payment verification, budgeting, cash flow management, compliance reviews, and general accounting duties.

In summary, I am a dedicated member of the Biomedical Research and Training Institute, contributing to its financial stability and success. I prepare financial reports, review payments, maintain compliance, manage budgets, and ensure efficient cash flow. With meticulous record-keeping and adherence to regulations, I support the organization’s financial operations.”
Where can we find you in the office?

“You can typically find me in the office during our regular business hours, which are from 8 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday. I work in the Finance and Administration office, which is located right next to my Principal Investigator’s (PI) office. I am committed to being present during these hours to ensure I am available for any immediate accounting needs, collaboration with my colleagues, and meeting any deadlines. However, I also understand the importance of flexibility, so I am open to adjusting my schedule as needed to accommodate special projects or meetings outside of our regular hours when necessary.”

What do you enjoy about your work?

“I genuinely enjoy the multifaceted nature of my work as a finance professional. It provides me with the opportunity to exercise my analytical skills on a daily basis, solving complex financial puzzles and ensuring the accuracy and integrity of financial records. What I find particularly rewarding is the role I play in helping organizations make informed financial decisions. Whether it’s finding ways to optimize financial processes, identifying cost-saving opportunities, or providing strategic insights, I take pride in contributing to the financial health and success of the company. Additionally, the ever-evolving field of accounting keeps me engaged and motivated to stay up-to-date with the latest industry trends and technologies, which I find intellectually stimulating. Overall, I find fulfillment in knowing that my work not only supports the organization but also helps individuals and teams achieve their financial goals.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Invitation to Improving Informed Consent for Adolescents and Young Adults in HIV Research Webinar

Join us for an engaging webinar titled “Improving Informed Consent for Adolescents and Young Adults in HIV Research”

Date: Thursday, October 26, 2023
Time: 0900-1100hrs (ET)

The objective of this webinar is to foster knowledge exchange and gather insights on effective strategies for ethically involving adolescents and young adults in HIV research. We are delighted to feature presentations by the VOICE Working Group, followed by interactive discussions.

To participate in the webinar, kindly register using the following link:

https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJApdeigrTksGtUNnKcVxfVMxebB4JGVNI71#/registration

Call for attendance: Global Forum for Adolescents Programme

Please be sure to calendar this exciting and free online conference which will feature 33 sessions over the course of 2 days from 0830-1800hrs (GMT) on Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th of October. The Global Forum is a space for young people to come together and take stock of the progress they have made towards sustainable development goals (SDGs) and to figure out what they can do better in the future. Dr Mandi Tembo, has a session lined up for the 12th of October at 3pm (CAT) titled ‘Periods are bloody important: Learnings from menstrual health interventions’.

Be sure to tune in!

To learn more about the forum, visit the website: https://www.1point8b.org/global-forum-for-adolescents

More about the : https://www.1point8b.org/_files/ugd/c1e164_5fb0843a80ae445993fc6912663c584a.pdf
Invitation to CeSHHAR's ECRI2023: Strengthening Research Collaboration and Innovation

To all academic staff, you have been extended an invitation to the annual CeSHHAR Early Career Researchers and Innovators’ Conference, 2023 (ECRI2023), themed “Strengthening Collaboration and Skills for Research and Innovation.”

The event is scheduled to take place on October 24-25, 2023, at the Cresta Lodge Hotel in Harare, and it is made possible through funding support from CeSHHAR and the UK National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) IMPALA program at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM). The conference serves as a valuable platform for CeSHHAR Zimbabwe, KEMRI Kenya, Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Programme, LSTM, and CeSHHAR's collaborating partner organizations to exchange information and engage in mutual learning. You are required to submit abstracts of your PhD work regardless of the stage you are currently.

You are highly encouraged to apply and costs (if any) will be covered by THRU ZIM.

Send your abstract by Friday the 6th of October 2023 to annualresearchday@ceshhar.org with the subject line “ECRIs2023 Conference,” for any inquiries about potential submissions.

Email mufaronashe@gmail.com for the detailed programme document.

PICTURE OF THE MONTH

Rumbi Gumbie and Constance Mackworth-Young enjoying a lighter moment in Mazowe

Share your news, publications, pictures, announcements: publicengagement@thruzim.org. Follow us on Twitter: https://twitter.com/ThruZim

THANK YOU!