UPDATES

CHIEDZA WRITING RETREAT

During the week of April 24th, the CHIEDZA study held a writing retreat for the CHIEDZA investigation team at Manna Resorts in Harare. This retreat offered the team an opportunity to collaborate on and draft and complete planned publications in a conducive environment that supports academic writing.

ART OF AGEING COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS HELD IN HARARE

On the 19th and 21st of April, community workshops, led by Dr. Mandi Tembo, were held in Harare for the Wellcome Healthy Ageing public engagement project. These community workshops, including men and women aged 60 and above from Highfield, were designed to capture and describe the ‘ageing journeys’ of older Zimbabweans through interactive activities and discussions around their experiences, attitudes, and feelings around ageing and ageing-well. We captured their shared experiences on film which will be used to inform the ‘Art of Ageing’ film. These workshops are also scheduled to take place in Bulawayo and The Gambia in May.
Y-CHECK TRAINS FOR FOLLOW UPS

Y-Check study trained its team for their 4-month follow-ups on adolescents who had previously screened positive for a range of health conditions. The study will re-screen adolescents for the conditions they previously tested positive for and were offered treatment services to assess if there was any clinical improvement for their conditions. In addition, to further assess the impact and effectiveness of the study, the study is set to reintroduce the evaluation questionnaire to reassess adolescents’ health knowledge, behaviors, risk factors, agency, intention to change behaviors and engagement with healthcare services. The study is also set to introduce a new screening measurement which is the waist circumference, to see if this will lead to better understanding of an adolescent’s nutritional status.

TAZ STUDY DISSEMINATION MEETING

The TAZ study held its dissemination meeting with Harare City health stakeholders on the 20th of April. The study was conducted between January 2018 and December 2022. It was a mixed methods study that aimed to: investigate the impact of the typhoid conjugate vaccine (TCV) on antimicrobial prescribing in children, to understand the local factors influencing healthcare worker antimicrobial prescribing practices and to explore the impact of the TCV on bacterial genomic markers of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and population structure. The study found that there was a high rate of antimicrobial prescribing in children presenting to primary care clinics in Harare. Those found with symptoms which may be compatible with a typhoid-like illness were common. Mass vaccination did not lead to a reduction in antimicrobial prescriptions in children. While the TCV campaign led to a reduction in the number of typhoid cases, the difficulties in establishing diagnoses based on clinical symptoms, the persisting challenges of poor water and sanitation infrastructure, and awareness of patients’ social circumstances concluded that antimicrobials continued to be widely prescribed for typhoid and other presumed bacterial infections. Findings also highlighted that there was a decrease in fluoroquinolone resistance over time and reassuringly, there was no evidence of selection of Vi negative isolates, but an increase in previously rarely observed S. Paratyphi A (Vi-) cases. Furthermore, while vaccination resulted in a reduced number of typhoid cases, it needed to be combined with health system strengthening (with a special focus on laboratory networks and infrastructure) and improved water and sanitation hygiene infrastructure to present an impact on antimicrobial use and AMR. In conclusion, there is an urgent need to also intensify laboratory surveillance of S. Typhi and S. Paratyphi in areas where the vaccine is deployed.

ART OF AGEING COMPETITION TAKES OFF!

As of April 24th, we are proud to announce that the Art of Ageing Competition has officially launched. The competition is part of the wider Wellcome Trust funded public engagement project that aims to give older people a voice to express their opinions and experiences about ageing. Utilizing the creative arts, participants aged 60 and over have been asked to submit entries that should address the following questions: ‘As an older person, what has been your health experience as you have grown older?’ and ‘How have you accepted, enjoyed, celebrated ageing and managed any challenges?’ Participants can submit entries in one of the following categories: music/dance, poetry/spoke word/creative writing, art/graphic design/photography and mixed media.

For more information please visit the Art of Ageing website: https://t.co/fXfLxRNUIL
Two of our PhD research fellows Tafadzwa Madanhire and Cynthia Kahari attended the Bone Research Society Annual Meeting held in Liverpool, England from the 13-15th of April. Tafadzwa presented on how HIV is associated with delayed childhood height growth but with potential for catch up growth, while Cynthia presented on how impaired linear growth in children growing up with HIV in part explains deficits in bone architecture and strength. We would also like to congratulate them for being awarded New Investigator Awards, with Tafadzwa receiving the best oral presentation prize.

DR. MANDI TEMBO SPEAKS ON PERIOD POVERTY FOR OPEN UNIVERSITY’S REPRODUCTIVE, SEXUALITIES AND SEXUAL HEALTH SERIES

On April 18th, Dr Mandi Tembo spoke on period poverty in the OU’s Reproductive, Sexualities and Sexual Health series titled Period poverty: pathways to equitable and stigma-free menstrual health. Dr Mandi Tembo was joined by Rachel Grocott and Dr Camilla Mørk Røstvik. Speakers discussed their activism and research with and for people affected by period poverty. This was live event on 18 April with up to 100 viewers. You can listen to the podcast via The RSSH Podcast Series on Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts.

MARTHA CHIPINDURO ACCEPTED FOR A PhD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MUNICH

We would like to congratulate, Martha Chipinduro, for being offered a place at the Center for International Health, University of Munich (LMU) in Germany to pursue a PhD in International Health and Medical Research. Martha’s research work is embedded within the ERASE-TB study where she will describe the molecular epidemiology of Mycobacterium tuberculosis, transmission linkages and the prevalence of isoniazid resistance among people affected with tuberculosis. Wishing you the best luck, Martha!

Find out more about Martha here: https://www.erase-tb.co.uk/post/erase-tb-student-offered-a-phd-at-lmu
**DR. CONSTANCE MACKWORTH-YOUNG PRESENTS AT EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS’ MEETING**

At this month’s Early Career Researchers’ meeting, Dr. Constance Mackworth-Young, presented her proposal for a Wellcome Early Career Award, an Anthropological Study of Adolescent Wellbeing. She received wide-ranging support and constructive feedback from the group.

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**PROF. MARVELLOUS MHLOYI PRESENTS AT THE SOCIAL SCIENCE WORKING GROUP SEMINAR**

At this month’s Social Science Research Group Seminar, Prof. Marvellous Mhloyi, gave a hugely impactful presentation on community engagement in research. Prof. Mhloyi challenged traditional research practice of data extraction, reminded the group that communities existed before and after researchers come, and provided examples of methodologies to meaningfully engage communities, through a ‘Research Community Laboratory’.
PRESENTATIONS AT WHO ARO-MOVE WORKSHOP

Prof. Katharina Kranzer and Dr. Trevor Chivandire attended the WHO AFRO-MOVE Workshop organized by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Capetown, South Africa. This workshop was focused on vaccine effectiveness studies and Dr. Chivandire delivered a presentation sharing some important data from the VAXEF study whose primary objective is to investigate whether 2/3 Sinopharm or Sinovac doses are protective against severe COVID-19. The study managed to enroll over 4000 participants in 7 months.

BIOFIRE SYMPOSIUM IN KENYA

On the week of the 24th of March, BioMérieux, an organization that produces BioFire technologies with specialty in syndromic infectious disease diagnostics hosted a symposium in Kenya where they invited users of their technologies from multiple African nations to speak on their experiences. The AVAPAR study answered to the call and presented key findings from the study, in light of being the first intervention to validate the Biofire system in a low-to-middle income country (LMIC) hospital setting. Future plans were also shared such as plans to develop an application that produces Biofire system workflows in LMICs. Results from the Harare Meningitis Study led by Dr. George Tavengwa were also presented.

ERASE-TB CELEBRATES WORLD TB DAY

World TB Day on the 24th March was an important day for the ERASE-TB team – not only was it a day to raise awareness about ending TB, but it also marked the end of recruitment to IMBA Hutano (one of the ERASE-TB nested sub-studies) and the start of the end of study visits where they will be saying goodbye and thanking the participants they have been following up on, over the past two years. The study also had to say goodbye to one of its team mates, Sibusiwe Sibanda, who has since left to fulfil an exciting new role. Sibusiwe had been an integral part of the team, in particular with her work on liaising with participants about their study visits and making sure that people who are found to have a health condition as part of the study were linked to care. To commemorate the occasion, the study held its regular Friday morning meeting and did some training on the end of study procedures. They also had a team lunch in celebration of its achievements over the past year and took time to look ahead to another busy year of which they anticipate to see some important results of the ERASE-TB study.
What do you do and when did you start?
I rejoined THRU ZIM in April 2023 as a social scientist, working across multiple studies: AVAPAR, VAXEF, IPSAZ and GIFT. I must say, I am excited to be back here, as I previously began my journey with THRU ZIM working with the social science teams on Y-CHECK, MaCOCO AND STICH studies from January 2020-March 2021. My area of expertise revolves around conducting extensive qualitative research work; focusing on coordination of fieldwork activities, data collection, analyzing qualitative data, presentation of research findings at different platforms and contributions to publications.

Where can we find you in the office?
You can find me in the field management office, right across the entrance.

What do you enjoy about your work?
I am passionate about conducting qualitative research work especially in the health context. I enjoy building relationships, interacting with people from different social institutions and spheres, listening to their narratives and being able to provide evidence-based data to inform different interventions and programs. My work always gives me an opportunity to keep learning and growing my skill-set and competencies as well as giving back to others through mentorship.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Social Science Working Group Session – 21st of June 2023
The next Social Science Research Group Seminar will be held on the 21st of June 2023 at 11am-12pm, with food provided afterwards. At this seminar, Faith Kandiye and Chipo Nyamayaro (THRU ZIM), will speak about 'Participant or non-participant observation: experiences from process evaluation within a complex intervention'. Please note that this is a date change from the previous date, which was previously scheduled for the 31st May.

Zoom link: https://lshtm.zoom.us/j/91903997874?pwd=WGVFNTg0VExyTDhNO1UyZjJiQ3Bwdz09. Meeting ID: 919 0399 7874. Password: 418238

'R' WhatsApp Group
Individuals using the ‘R’ statistical programme, please feel free to join the WhatsApp platform to be kept up to date on all ‘R’ related opportunities and announcements.

Link: https://chat.whatsapp.com/LpxX6UdAS3K8NamfY7eZs3

THRU ZIM study registrations and updates
To all study leads, please take note of the study registrations and updates spreadsheet which contains information pertaining to study ethical approvals. Information highlights ethical approval expiry dates that need to be noted. You are all also required to update the spreadsheet with missing information pertaining to your ethical approvals as well.

Link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1jyRcoKbCHn6H2PVQ2VbWC5nmlhnpICLtktNoNS1p7mE/edit#gid=0

THRU ZIM MSc project list
To those that have an agreement with MSc students, the THRU ZIM MSc project list needs to be updated with their information. This is a working document that needs to be updated as you reach agreements with students over the coming months.

Link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15WWhSrHDSYB2PR7N1FNYYUanMANsGd-1i/edit#gid=1747447857

PUBLICATIONS


NEW EMPLOYEES

We would like to welcome Stanley Kudzaishe Mugani who has joined us as an IT Support Officer. We wish him the best of luck in his new role.

![Stanley Kudzaishe Mugani - IT Support Officer](image)

PICTURE OF THE MONTH

![PhD students and postdoctoral researchers enjoying a lighter moment at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine](image)
Epidemiology online courses

Here are some free online training resources in Epidemiology that may be of interest:

Edx (Harvard School of Public Health)
- Quantitative methods in clinical and public health research; this course is broader than just epidemiology and covers some aspects of biostatistics too.

Coursera
- Epidemiology: the Basic Science of Public Health
- Clinical Epidemiology
- Epidemiology in public health practice

Society for Epidemiologic Research
- Expert talks

Funding available for LMIC participants at Cochrane Colloquium

Application deadline: 22nd of May 2023

Registration is open for the Cochrane Colloquium, which will take place in London from the 4th-6th of September 2023, with satellite events on 3 September. The Colloquium will provide an opportunity for individuals to network with other like-minded professionals, share knowledge and expertise, and engage in discussions around evidence-based healthcare. TDR is offering a limited number of bursaries for applications from researchers wishing to participate in the Cochrane Colloquium, to help cover registration, travel, accommodation, and/or other expenses associated with attending the 2023 London Colloquium.

Criteria for eligibility for bursaries are:

- Living and working in a low- or middle-income country (LMIC)
- Attached to a university or public health institute
- Contribution to the Colloquium programme by presenting a session or a poster, but those wishing to participate should also apply

Details of how to apply are here: https://www.cochrane.org/news/funding-available-lmic-participants-cochrane-colloquium