



## UPDATES

### TSIME study launch

On March 27, 2024, the “Integrating sexual and reproductive health into clinic-based HIV services using experience-based co-Design in Zimbabwe” study (TSIME) was officially launched in the Mazowe District. The study team hosted an interdisciplinary stakeholder meeting at the Mazowe Rural District Council Headquarters in Concession. The meeting included heads of departments, health leaders and practitioners, community leaders such as Chiefs and Church leaders, and community members. Principal Investigator Rumbi Gumbie and Assistant Study Coordinator Onismo Mufare presented the study, with visiting Fellow Lu Niu from LSHTM also in attendance.

Stakeholders engaged in insightful discussions, sharing their perspectives on integrating sexual and reproductive health (SRH) into HIV care. They raised various issues, including the selection of clinics for research, factors influencing the delivery and access to HIV care in the district, and their views on research being conducted in their communities. The presentation covered TSIME’s aims and objectives, research methods, and research activities, which include conducting observations and in-depth interviews in selected clinics, participatory action research through co-design workshops, and a pilot implementation of an integrated SRH and HIV package of services for people living with HIV.

The overarching aim of TSIME is to develop and pilot an integrated SRH and HIV package of services as a proof of concept for a larger-scale implementation of integrated services. The project launch marks the first step in the evidence-based Experience-Based Co-Design (EBCD) method adapted for this study, using the Medical Research Council (MRC) and National Institute for Health Research’s new framework for developing and evaluating complex interventions. Through this co-design approach, TSIME aims to significantly impact the sustainable integrated services offered to people living with HIV in clinical settings in Zimbabwe.



*Stakeholder meeting at the Mazowe rural district council headquarters*

## Neotree shortlisted for the Foundation Pierre Fabre Award

We are thrilled to announce that Neotree, has been shortlisted for a prestigious award by the Foundation Pierre Fabre. This recognition comes as a result of the ground breaking project that entered the competition with the title, "Catalysing data-driven solutions to eradicate preventable newborn mortality in Zimbabwe and Malawi." Neotree aims to leverage the power of data to improve maternal and newborn health outcomes in these two African nations. By implementing data-driven solutions, Neotree hopes to significantly reduce preventable newborn deaths and improve the overall well-being of mothers and their babies.

The Foundation Pierre Fabre, impressed by Neotree's innovative approach, sent an independent consultant, Soukeyna Ouedraogo, from Senegal to visit the project sites in Zimbabwe from the 6th to the 9th of May 2024. Ms. Ouedraogo conducted a thorough assessment, visiting both Sally Mugabe Central Hospital and Chinhoyi Provincial Hospital. During her visit, she met with the dedicated clinical implementation team and interacted with a group of mothers who are actively involved in the community engagement aspect of the project.

This recognition is a testament to the team's hard work, dedication, and innovative spirit. Neotree is incredibly proud of this accomplishment and are confident that they will continue to make a significant impact in the fight against preventable newborn mortality!



*Foundation Pierre Fabre consultant, Ms Soukeyna Ouedraogo, meets the Neotree team in Harare Zimbabwe*



## Y-Check shines Bold Ideas for Brighter Future, Mental Health Conference!

Chipo Nyamayaro and Dr Farrie Nzvere delivered excellent oral presentations of Y-Check findings at the Bold Ideas for Brighter Future Conference in Stockholm, May 15-16 2024. The conference, jointly run by Karolinska Institutet and UNICEF, discussed cutting-edge research and novel approaches to promote and protect mental health of children and adolescents globally.

Y-Check presentations highlighted the high prevalence of common mental health disorders and suicide risk among adolescents in Chitungwiza, and insights into the barriers to accessing mental health services. Chipo will continue to explore access to mental health services through her MPhil in Public Mental Health at the University of Cape Town.



## Maternal Mental Health Month Focus on the Pregnancy in Minors (PIMS) Sub-Study

May is Maternal Mental Health Month. In this issue, we highlight the response to the urgent need for comprehensive support in mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and maternal care for pregnant and parenting adolescents, as seen in the Pregnancy in Minors Sub-Study (PIMS) conducted in Epworth, and embedded within the IPSAZ study.

Through collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Health and the Department of Social Welfare, THRU ZIM has made significant strides in ensuring that pregnant adolescents enrolled in the program receive essential services.

Dr Kevin Martin, lead researcher of the IPSAZ study, says early observations indicate the multifaceted challenges faced by pregnant adolescents. “Pregnancy in adolescence is typically not a “one-off” random event, but rather the culmination of a set of very challenging life circumstances. Our participants are typically not in education or employment before the pregnancy, are economically disenfranchised, and are highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. As a result, alongside addressing physical health needs, providing mental health support is an essential component of the PIMS study, in order to provide comprehensive care.”

Recognizing the need for a holistic approach, Research nurse sister Joice emphasized the importance of channeling efforts towards mental health support at the facility level. “Equipping these young mothers with the necessary tools and resources is crucial for their journey into motherhood. We are linking the girls to antenatal care, facilitating access to HIV and STI testing, and providing necessary treatments.

The primary objective of the PIMS sub-study is to investigate the prevalence of challenges faced by pregnant adolescents and to assess birth and post-pregnancy outcomes. By addressing these critical issues, THRU ZIM aims to make meaningful contributions towards improving the overall well-being of pregnant and parenting adolescents in the community.

# 5 MINUTES WITH...

## Onisemo Mufare

### ***What do you do and when do you start?***

I am an Assistant Study Coordinator working under the TSIME study. The TSIME study is co-designing a service package to integrate sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services into clinic-based HIV services in Mazowe district. Prior to this role, I started working at THRU ZIM in June 2019 as a Research Nurse under the CHIEDZA Trial in Bulawayo. I then joined the Y-Check Study in 2022. In addition to my work, I am also a part-time student at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), where I started an MSc in Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy and Programming in September 2023.

### ***Where can we find you in the office?***

My desk is in the social sciences office, next to Dr. Salome. However, I spend more time out in the field in Mazowe, so if I'm not in the office, the best way to reach me is by phone.

### ***Who and/or what inspires you?***

My constant source of inspiration comes from engaging directly with diverse stakeholders such as health workers, community leaders (Chiefs, Pastors), politicians, PLWHIV. Hearing their cultural reflections, personal experiences, and varied perspectives deepens my understanding of the complex factors affecting sexual and reproductive health service delivery. This shapes my work in a grounded and impactful way.



**Onisemo Mufare**

## PICTURE OF THE MONTH



**Sister Joice Muzangwa**

On **International Nurses Day**, we celebrate the incredible work of research nurses! They are at the forefront of recruiting volunteers for health research, ensuring clinical trials run smoothly and ethically. Their dedication drives medical advancements and improves patient care. #ThankYouNurses.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **Join a Hybrid public lecture: Ageing and Geriatric Medicine**

Date: Wednesday 29th May

Time :15:00-16:00 CAT

Venue: THRU ZIM Gazebo 8 Rosal Avenue Harare

Zoom : <https://bristol-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/95348702251>

Keynote Speaker: Dr Grace Pearson

## **Join the Webinar “How can we make research disability inclusive?”**

Date: Tuesday 4th June

Time: 3pm Ugandan

In this webinar youth researchers with disabilities will be sharing their training and research experiences at the MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Uganda Research Unit and Makerere University. Please register in advance using the following Zoom link: [https://lshtm.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_fN6xdggQSAuGJOPpbMzWpA](https://lshtm.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fN6xdggQSAuGJOPpbMzWpA) and do share this information with others who may be interested.

## **Join the Webinar: Improving menstrual health – a silver bullet or a human rights crisis?**

Date: Wednesday June 5th

Time 1-2pm

Location: London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine - Room LG24 or via Zoom

( <https://lshtm.zoom.us/j/92813204389> )

Menstrual health is a public health and human rights issue, and can affect multiple dimensions of health, education, and well-being. In this seminar, LSHTM researchers will present findings from recent research evaluating strategies to improve menstrual health in schools in The Gambia, Tanzania, and Uganda, among women & girls with intellectual disabilities in Vanuatu, and among women & healthcare workers in Zimbabwe.

The webinar is open to all and will be chaired by Dr Emily Wilson (Founding CEO Irise International ).

Speakers will include Jane Wilbur, Mandikudza Tembo, Belen Torondel, Kate Nelson and Kathy Thomas, from LSHTM.

A short film of the MENISCUS trial design, findings and participant perceptions is available here: The MENISCUS trial: Findings from a menstrual health intervention trial in Ugandan secondary schools on Vimeo.

# OPPORTUNITIES

## **The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) is pleased to announce two new programmes in the Global Health Research (GHR) portfolio.**

These programmes, GHR Researcher-led and GHR Health Policy and Systems, represent a refreshed GHR funding offer which is

- streamlined;
- clear, regular and predictable; and
- offers more opportunities for LMIC research leadership.

### **New annual cycle of funding opportunities**

#### **Open now**

- [Global Health Policy and Systems Research \(HPSR\) Projects](#) – closes 19 June 2024
- [Global Advanced Fellowships](#) – closes 11 July 2024

#### **Coming soon**

- [GHR Researcher-led](#) – opens 17 July 2024
- [RIGHT](#) – opens 17 July 2024
- [Global Research Professorships](#) – opens September 2024
- [GHR Health Policy and Systems](#) – opens February 2025
- [GHR Development Awards](#) – opens Spring 2025

Find out more about these programmes on the NIHR website ([Global health research | NIHR](#)).

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# THANK YOU!