

AMBITION News

The AMBITION-cm Trial Newsletter
(Issue 24: November 2019)



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@ambitioncm2020

Please do encourage colleagues
to 'follow' us!



Kwana Lechiile, AMBITION's laboratory scientist, presents at the Lumbar Puncture Workshop on 2 November.

Greetings from Gaborone!



As we enter the final month of 2019, we continue to make good progress with participant recruitment, and are thrilled to share the news that we recruited our **500th participant** on **Monday 2 December**. Many congratulations to the team at **IDI Kampala** for enrolling this milestone participant! **Page 3** has all the details.

As always, we thank all colleagues across all recruiting sites who continue to work very hard on all aspects of the study.

Many congratulations to **Dr. Kenneth Ssebambulidde (Study Doctor, IDI Uganda)**, for receiving a **distinction** in his **MSc in Immunology of Infectious Diseases** at LSHTM.

Head over to **Page 3** for more details and further updates.

If you would like to know how the current MSc students, **Dr. Admire Hlupeni (Study Doctor, UoZ)**, and **Janet Zambezi (Lab Technician, UNC Project)**, are getting on at LSHTM, turn to **Page 3** and let them tell you themselves!

The **UCT team** kindly hosted **Dr. Nabila Youssouf** and **Dr. David Lawrence** for a **monitoring visit** at our **Cape Town** recruiting site from **19-20 November**. More details on **Page 4**.

We may still be in 2019, but plans are already underway for the teams in **Kampala** and **Mbarara** to receive Nabila and David for the **first monitoring visit of the New Year** from **20-29 January 2020**. Head to **Page 4** for further details.

Dr. David Lawrence presented at a stakeholder meeting at the **Centre for Youth of Hope (CEYHOH)** in **Gaborone** on **Friday 1 November**. **Page 4** has all the details.

The AMBITION team continues to grow! We have welcomed a few new faces in the past month. On **Page 5** you can learn more about **Hajiah Jabiri**, a **Laboratory Technician** at **UNC Project Malawi**, and **Ikanyeng Rulaganyang**, who joins the **BHP** team as a **Research Nurse**. We are not done yet, though—there are more colleagues to be introduced in the next Newsletter, so watch this space!

Dr. Nabila Youssouf and colleagues at **BHP**, including **Katlego Tsholo (Senior Research Nurse)**, headed up a public engagement **Lumbar Puncture Workshop** on **Saturday 2 November**. Flick through to **Page 6** for a full run down of the day's events.

Best Wishes,

Joe

Recruitment Update (as of 2 December 2019):

We are happy to share updates on participant recruitment numbers at each site:

Botswana-Harvard Partnership
(Gaborone)



0 5 5

The latest participant was recruited on **19 November 2019**

University of Cape Town:
Mitchells Plain Hospital and
Khayelitsha Hospital



0 4 7

The latest participant was recruited on **2 December 2019**

University of Zimbabwe
(Harare)



0 5 9

The latest participant was recruited on **4 October 2019**

UNC Project Malawi
(Lilongwe)



0 5 4

The latest participant in Lilongwe was recruited on **23 November 2019**

Malawi-Liverpool Wellcome Trust
Clinical Research Programme
(Blantyre)



0 7 3

The latest participant in Blantyre was recruited on **26 November 2019**

IDI Uganda (Kampala)

1 6 7

The latest participant in Kampala was recruited on **2 December 2019**

IDI Uganda (Mbarara)



0 4 5

The latest participant in Mbarara was recruited on **29 November 2019**



500th Participant Recruited!

We are incredibly excited to share the news that we have recruited our **500th AMBITION trial participant**. The site in **Kampala** had the honours of enrolling participant number 500 on **Monday 2 December**, so many congratulations to the **IDI Kampala** team! We are eager to achieve our next milestone!

MSc Alumnus Update: Dr. Kenneth Ssebambulidde



Dr. Kenneth Ssebambulidde proudly presents his MSc thesis poster in Benin

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate **Dr. Kenneth Ssebambulidde (Study Doctor, Uganda)**, our **LSHTM alumnus** from the class of **2018-19**, on receiving a **distinction** in his **MSc in Immunology of Infectious Diseases**. It will come as no surprise that Kenneth worked extremely hard whilst completing his MSc at LSHTM, and we are thrilled that all his efforts have paid off.

It seems that double congratulations are in order! Kenneth recently presented the results of his MSc thesis at the **International Union of Immunological Societies** training week in **Benin** in November 2019, and went on to win **first prize** in the poster competition!

We are delighted that Kenneth is doing so well. He recently took a few moments out from his busy schedule to record a video update of his return to IDI and the subsequent projects in which he has been involved since concluding his MSc studies in September. Check it out on the AMBITION website soon!

MSc Updates: Dr. Admire Hlupeni and Janet Zambezi



Dr. Admire Hlupeni (Study Doctor, UoZ) and **Janet Zambezi (Laboratory Technician, UNC Project)** have been braving the British weather since September as they undertake their respective MSc degrees in **Epidemiology and Immunology of Infectious Diseases** at LSHTM during the **2019-20 academic year**.

We are eager to share their progress during their time at LSHTM. Both Admire and Janet recently recorded short videos where they explain how they have managed to settle into London life, describe their initial experiences of their academic modules, and discuss what they hope to gain from their studies.

Please follow the links here to view [Admire](#) and [Janet's](#) first videos. To ensure that you are kept updated on their MSc journey, regular video updates will be posted on the AMBITION website over the next year, so watch this space!



Monitoring Visits: Cape Town (19-20 November) and Uganda (20-29 January 2020)

Prof. Graeme Meintjes and the study team at UCT received **Dr. Nabila Youssof** and **Dr. David Lawrence** from **19-20 November**. The scheduled visit provided an excellent opportunity to review participant files, recap trial procedures and undertake routine lab and pharmacy checks. The team have enrolled a number of participants since the second recruitment site opened at Khayelitsha District Hospital in July 2019, so there was plenty to do. As always, thanks go to UCT colleagues who ensured that everything ran smoothly.



Next, **Dr. David Meya**, **Dr. Conrad Muzoora** and fellow AMBITION team members at **IDI Uganda** (Kampala and Mbarara recruiting sites) will host **Dr. Nabila Youssof** and **Dr. David Lawrence** from **20-29 January 2020**, marking the first monitoring visit of the **New Year 2020**. The visit will allow a thorough review of participant files after the Christmas period, and will afford both the Kampala and Mbarara teams additional administrative and clinical support after all their hard work enrolling participants during 2019.



Centre for Youth of Hope (CEYHO) Meeting, Gaborone: Friday 1 November



Dr. David Lawrence presented at a stakeholder meeting at the **Centre for Youth of Hope (CEYHO)** in Gaborone on **Friday 1 November**.

CEYHO is an NGO that targets young people living with HIV in Botswana. Its exist to promote better quality of life for youth who are infected and affected by HIV, through the provision of prevention and support services.

Attendees on the day included HIV activists, researchers and government representatives. During his presentation, David took the opportunity to outline the **scientific background to U=U** and summarise the key studies that show how **undetectable=untransmittable**.

All in all, it was a successful meeting that provided very useful updates to all parties in attendance.



New AMBITION Colleagues

Hajirah Jabiri, Laboratory Technician (UNC Project Malawi)



Prior to joining UNC Project Malawi, I worked at Central Health Limited, a health clinic in Lilongwe.

I am currently employed as a Lab Technician for AMBITION in the Cell Processing lab department here at UNC Project. I have taken over some of Janet Zambezi's responsibilities whilst she is pursuing her MSc in London.

I play an active role in ensuring that AMBITION samples are processed and stored, both electronically in the Laboratory Data Management System (LDMS), and physically in the freezer.

I am very excited to be part of the AMBITION team!

Ikanyeng Rulaganyang, Research Nurse (BHP, Gaborone)



I hold a Bachelor of Nursing Science (BNSc) degree from the University of Botswana. I have joined the AMBITION team here at BHP for a few months to provide maternity leave cover for Nametso Lekwape, our Senior Study Nurse.

I worked as a Registered Nurse for the Ministry of Health for five years from 2010 to 2015, before embarking upon a career in research. Since then, I have been actively involved in Botswana-UPenn Partnership-led research programmes around infectious diseases, including the recent CDC-funded Cryptococcal Antigen Screening study.

I have extensive experience in both clinical care and research, and enjoy being a part of impactful health programmes.

Lumbar Puncture Workshop at BHP: Saturday 2 November



Dr. Nabila Youssouf and colleagues at BHP, including **Katlego Tsholo (Senior Research Nurse)**, headed up a public engagement **Lumbar Puncture Workshop** on **Saturday 2 November** as part of the **BHP Myth Buster Series**.

It provided a great opportunity to discuss the myths and mistruths surrounding the administration of lumbar punctures (LPs). It also provided a safe platform to address the concerns that many patients express prior to receiving an LP.



Workshop attendees included a chief, church leaders, teachers, expert patients, HIV advocates, researchers, medical professionals and community advisory board members. Attendees were even treated to a lab tour by one of BHP's laboratory scientists, Kwana Lechiile, who gave first-hand explanations of the lab tests that are conducted on the cerebrospinal fluid that is taken during an LP.



Nabila and the BHP team hope to capitalise upon the success of this event to organise additional public engagement workshops in the near future. Feedback from attendees indicated that further, similar events would be useful and well received by the local community. In the meantime, plans are underway to produce some information leaflets and videos for patients.

How do you perform a lumbar puncture?

Many thanks to Dr. Timothee Boyer-Chammard and colleagues at Institut Pasteur and Université de Paris for sharing [this fantastic video](#)!



A side by side comparison of the old LP kits previously used at Princess Marina Hospital (*left*), and the newer kits that are in use today (*right*).