



Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome  
Clinical Research Programme



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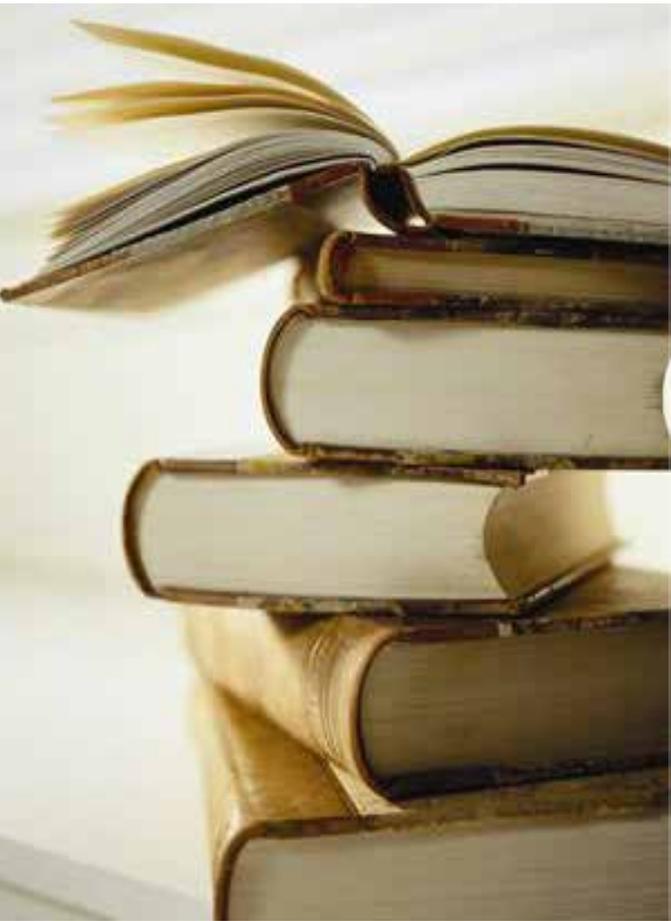
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# Editorial Team

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# Deputy Director's Remarks

**D**ear All

Welcome to the December edition of MLW's newsletter! I congratulate the Communications team for putting together a newsletter packed with exciting reports of recent events and developments at MLW. In particular, I would like to congratulate you all for your participation in the major events that MLW hosted during the month of November. ISAB, MSAB, the joint MLW/COM Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) and Research Dissemination Conference (RDC) and Gala dinner were hugely successful. I am grateful for the commitment and contribution that each one of you made to these events.

There is no harm in bragging about personal success stories that happened in November too. Congratulations to Dr Kondwani Jambo, Head of the Viral Immunology Group, who has been awarded the African Research Leader Award by the UK MRC/DfID. This is a highly prestigious award which recognises research leaders on the African continent. I am proud that in the last 4 years, two MLW scientists have received this award, Prof Henry Mwandumba and Dr Kondwani Jambo, attesting to MLW's enormous contribution to research leadership in Africa. I would also like to congratulate Drs Peter Macpherson and Jamie Rylance for delivering informative and exciting promotion celebration lectures. MLW researchers also made significant contributions to the scientific community through several publications which are listed in this newsletter. Well done!

The newsletter also features articles that underscore MLW's commitment to engaging communities and policymakers in its research. I am particularly pleased that the featured articles clearly show that this commitment transcends study size or the seniority of the lead researcher. I urge you all to maintain this practice which is a key component of MLW's research culture.

As 2019 comes to a close, we should all be proud of the many successes we achieved during the last 12 months and reflect critically on areas where we did not do so well so we can do better going forward. Let us also fondly remember and pray for the souls of our colleagues and members of the larger MLW community that passed on in 2019. We should approach the New Year with hope and determination to do even better than we did in 2019 and I do hope the festive season and break will give you the much-needed rest so you will return to work energized. I wish you all a Merry and Blessed Christmas and look forward to a Productive and Prosperous 2020! Enjoy the break, have fun, happy holidays!

Very best wishes,

Henry



MLW Deputy Director - Professor  
Henry Mwandumba

## Kondwani Jambo Awarded MRC Research Leader Award

By Pauline H. Mlogeni



The award is to start developing a skill base within my group focusing on systems immunology - Jambo

MLW's Viral Immunology group lead Dr Kondwani Jambo will receive funding for four years to pursue research which is designed to address priority health problems of people in Sub-Saharan Africa under the prestigious Medical Research Council (MRC)/DFID African Research Leader (ARL) Award.

Under this scheme, Dr Jambo aims to contribute to the development of new vaccines to maximise the health benefits of pneumococcal disease control in Low- and Medium-Income Countries, where current vaccines have not had the expected impact.

"My immediate-term plan after this award is to start developing a skill base within my group focusing on systems immunology, as a way to understand how the body controls pneumococcal carriage in high transmission settings. Systems immunology is a new and rapidly developing field of research providing a more integrated perspective of the immune system."

"We will soon be advertising a PhD studentship under the ARL award for a highly talented African student to work in this exciting area. The long-term plan is to lead vaccine trials focusing on shortening duration and reducing density of pneumococcal carriage in HIV-infected adults on antiretroviral therapy," said Jambo.

LSTM's Director Professor David Lalloo said: "These awards highlight LSTM's commitment to strengthen research excellence in sub-Saharan Africa by supporting and encouraging talented individuals. I am delighted for Kondwani that he has been recognised as the research leader that he is, and I am confident that we will see even greater achievements in the future."

Congratulations, Dr. Jambo.

# Dr Peter MacPherson Celebrates his Promotion with a Lecture

By Agness Kapalamula



**My research focuses on improving case detection and access to treatment for HIV and TB in Malawi - MacPherson**

Public Health Group Lead Dr Peter MacPherson recently celebrated his promotion to Reader by sharing a lecture with MLW staff titled "Population Health Research".

Dr Peter Macpherson shared his experiences and working in research within the Malawian setting. He explained that his research will undertake an individually-randomised three-arm trial of optimised HIV and tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment initiation.

"I am currently conducting two researches that are focusing on the development and evaluation of interventions to improve case detection and access to treatment for HIV and TB in Malawi and other sub-Saharan countries in Africa," explained MacPherson.

Before joining Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust, he worked as an Acting Consultant in Communicable Disease Control at Public Health England, and Academic Clinical Lecturer at the University of Liverpool.

# SRG Tips Policymakers on Typhoid Vaccine

By Agness Kapalamula



Encourage communities to ensure proper hygiene – Misiri

The Salmonella Research Group (SRG) recently organised a typhoid vaccine research sensitisation meeting with Members of Parliament and Councillors within the Blantyre City Council.

SRG Programme Manager Theresa Misiri explained during the meeting that Ndirande and Zingwangwa townships were chosen, among others, because previous studies found that there was high burden of typhoid in the two townships.

Misiri urged Members of Parliament and Councillors at the meeting to encourage communities to ensure proper hygiene is practiced in households and public areas to reduce the burden of typhoid.

MLW began conducting the typhoid vaccine study on 21st February 2018. Full results of the research are expected to be out in 2020.

## Participants Pleased with BASH-FLU Study Findings

By Storian James

Communicating research findings to study participants has emerged as a valuable way of acknowledging the ethical principle of respect for persons and avoiding treating research participants solely as a means to an end.

It came as no surprise then that BASH-FLU study participants were excited and listened attentively to the Clinical Senior Lecturer at the MRC-University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research, Dr Antonia Ho, who is also the Principal Investigator of the BASH-FLU study as she presented the study findings at the Queens Elizabeth Central Hospital (QECH).

At the onset of results dissemination, Ho acknowledged the study participants for the great role that they have played in the BASH-FLU study which took place between 2013 and 2015, hence the need to share the results with them. The study comprised two observational studies to investigate the impact of HIV infection on the burden and severity of influenza illness in Malawian adults.

Disclosing study findings to the participants, Antonia said that HIV infected adults are more vulnerable to symptomatic influenza than HIV-negative adults.



**Sharing of study findings calls for intervention to prevent future harm - Ho**

“608 adults (59% HIV-infected) were recruited from the QECH ART and VCT clinics. In the two-year follow-up period, HIV-infected adults were found to have a three-fold increased risk of laboratory-confirmed influenza illness, compared to HIV-negative adults”. Antonia said.

“even when these findings do not impact on the health of individuals as this help the participants to have a feeling of self-worth and pleasure that one has contributed to an overall enrichment of scientific knowledge.

In the second study that recruited patients with serious and mild influenza, HIV-infected adults had a five-times higher risk of severe disease than HIV-negative adults. Antonia further pointed out that severe risk of influenza illness in Malawi is attributed to multiple factors such as household overcrowding, poor sanitation facility and food insecurity.

“Sharing study results to the participants signals not only the openness and accessibility of researchers but also raising a positive profile of research in general and highlighting the need for interventions that may decrease the risk of future harm”. Antonia concurred with study participant.

Commenting on the study results dissemination, one of the participants Esther Ungapembe said sharing research findings with relevant stakeholders, including study participants, is considered good practice,

BASH-FLU study results have been communicated to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and are due to be presented to the Ministry of Health of Malawi to help inform national influenza policy.

# Samala Moyo Exhibition Project Inspires Students in Blantyre

By Storian James

MLW recently had a visit from Soche Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Private Secondary School students under its Samala Moyo Exhibition Project.

During the visit, the students showed interest to learn from the practical exhibits, focusing on building skeletons from dissembled parts, analysing the cardiovascular system, the life cycle of a mosquito and how malaria parasites function when they get into the body of a person.



**We all have the same capacity to pursue science careers – Phiri**

MLW's Research Associate and Wellcome Trust Master's Fellow in Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Dr Mphatso Phiri had a chat with the students and urged them to pursue science careers irrespective of demographic factors.

Phiri said that most of the students choose to shun sciences because of the society's negative perceptions to which he said, it is high time people realised that anyone can pursue a career in health science.

The students' teacher Alice Menyere observed that apart from the career talk and exhibits, some of the topics that were discussed during the exhibition were directly linked to the students' syllabus.

## **EID Hold a Study Brief Meeting in Blantyre**

**By Agness Kapalamula**



**There are significant gaps in HIV testing of HIV Exposed Infants - Suwedi**

Early Infant Diagnosis Study (EID) recently held a briefing at Madziabango and Zingwangwa in Blantyre. The study briefing is aimed at orienting and engaging EID study to the facility and the community members.

The study's principal investigator Leticia Suwedi Kapesa explained that Blantyre is one of the districts that is characterised by high prevalence of HIV infection at 18.2% and low EID testing rates ranging of 43 to 63% between 2016 and 2018, which she said, are below the recommended infant testing national target of 85%.

“There are significant gaps in HIV testing of HIV Exposed Infants (HEIs) – babies whose mothers have HIV infection and who are at risk of HIV transmission

Following the study briefing, community representatives showed appreciation for the knowledge that was shared and pledged support to the EID Study.

Similarly, Blantyre District PMTCT Manager Jenifer Zimba highlighted that they are in support of EID Study because of Blantyre's challenge with low uptake of EID services. Zimba mentioned that the District Health Office has been consulted in the process of choosing the EID Study sites and they supported selection of the sites to ensure that the district learns the best practices of improving its EID services and data.

## Kuno ku Malawi

### Proverb of the Month/ Mwambi wa Mwezi Uno



**Proverb:** Ntchentche ya dyera idanka ndi maliro kumanda.

**Literal translation:** The greedy fly went with the corpse to the grave.

**Meaning:** Do not jump at things. Be sober minded and take it easy.

### Did you Know?/ Kodi Mukudziwa?



Chibangili- Bracelet. Derived from the English word 'Bangle'

# Latest Publications

1. Screening heroin smokers attending community drug clinics for change in lung function: A cohort study: Lung function decline in inhaled drug users. Nightingale R, Mortimer K, Giorgi E, Walker PP, Stolbrink M, Byrne T, Marwood K, Morrison-Griffiths S, Renwick S, Rylance J, Burhan H. *Chest*. 2019 Nov 21. pii: S0012-3692(19)34224-2. doi: 10.1016/j.chest.2019.11.006. [Epub ahead of print]
2. Prevalence and outcome of bloodstream infections due to third-generation cephalosporin-resistant Enterobacteriaceae in sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review. Lester R, Musicha P, van Ginneken N, Dramowski A, Hamer DH, Garner P, Feasey NA. *J Antimicrob Chemother*. 2019 Nov 19. pii: dkz464. doi: 10.1093/jac/dkz464. [Epub ahead of print]
3. Pneumococcal pneumonia and carriage in Africa before and after introduction of pneumococcal conjugate vaccines, 2000-2019: protocol for systematic review. Kalata NL, Nyazika TK, Swarthout TD, Everett D, French N, Heyderman RS, Gordon SB, Jambo KC. *BMJ Open*. 2019 Nov 13;9(11):e030981. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2019-030981.
4. Compensation of subjects for participation in biomedical research in resource - limited settings: a discussion of practices in Malawi. Nyangulu W, Mungwira R, Nampota N, Nyirenda O, Tsirizani L, Mwinjiwa E, Divala T. *BMC Med Ethics*. 2019 Nov 14;20(1):82. doi: 10.1186/s12910-019-0422-6.
5. Development of the FAST-M maternal sepsis care bundle for use in low resource settings: a modified Delphi process. Lissauer D, Cheshire J, Dunlop C, Taki F, Wilson A, Smith JM, Daniels R, Kissoon N, Malata A, Chirwa T, Lweshya VM, Mhango C, Mhango E, Makwenda C, Banda L, Munthali L, Nambiar B, Hussein J, Williams HM, Devall AJ, Gallos I, Merriel A, Bonet M, Souza JP, Coomarasamy A. *BJOG*. 2019 Nov 2. doi: 10.1111/1471-0528.16005. [Epub ahead of print]
6. HIV self-testing services for female sex workers, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Napierala S, Desmond NA, Kumwenda MK, Tumushime M, Sibanda EL, Indravudh P, Hatzold K, Johnson CC, Baggaley RC, Corbett L, Cowan FM. *Bull World Health Organ*. 2019 Nov 1;97(11):764-776. doi: 10.2471/BLT.18.223560. Epub 2019 Sep 3.
7. A clinical trial of enteral Levetiracetam for acute seizures in pediatric cerebral malaria. Birbeck GL, Herman ST, Capparelli EV, Dzinjalama FK, Abdel Baki SG, Mallewa M, Toto NM, Postels DG, Gardiner JC, Taylor TE, Seydel KB. *BMC Pediatr*. 2019 Nov 1;19(1):399. doi: 10.1186/s12887-019-1766-2.
8. Genetic diversity of Mycobacterium tuberculosis clinical isolates in Blantyre, Malawi. Ndhlovu V, Kiran A, Sloan D, M'andala W, Kontogianni K, Kamdolozi M, Caws M, Davies G. *Heliyon*. 2019 Oct 10;5(10):e02638. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e02638. eCollection 2019 Oct.
9. Impact of Maternal HIV Infection and Placental Malaria on the Transplacental Transfer of Influenza Antibodies in Mother-Infant Pairs in Malawi, 2013-2014. Ho A, Mapurisa G, Madanitsa M, Kalilani-Phiri L, Kamiza S, Makanani B, Ter Kuile FO, Buys A, Treurnicht F, Everett D, Mwapasa V, Widdowson MA, McMorrow M, Heyderman RS. *Open Forum Infect Dis*. 2019 Aug 28;6(10):ofz383. doi: 10.1093/ofid/ofz383. eCollection 2019 Oct.
10. Arox W. Kamng'ona, Rebecca Young, Charles D. Arnold, Emma Kortekangas, Noel Patson, Josh M. Jorgensen, Elizabeth L. Prado, David Chaima, Chikondi Malamba, Ulla Ashorn, Yue Mei Fan, Yin B. Cheung, Per Ashorn, Kenneth Maleta, Kathryn G. Dewey. The association of gut microbiota characteristics in Malawian infants with growth and inflammation. 2019. *Scientific Reports*, 9(1) 12893.
11. Emma Kortekangas, Rebecca Young, Yin B. Cheung, Yue-Mei Fan, Josh M. Jorgensen, Arox W. Kamng'ona, David Chaima, Ulla Ashorn, Kathryn G. Dewey, Kenneth Maleta, Per Ashorn. A Prospective Study on Child Morbidity and Gut Microbiota in Rural Malawi. 2019. *Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition*. 69(4) 431-437.
12. tuberculosis in hospitalised patients with HIV: clinical characteristics, mortality, and implications from the STAMP trial. Gupta-Wright A, Fielding K, Wilson D, van Oosterhout JJ, Grint D, Mwandumba HC, Alufandika-Moyo M, Peters JA, Chiume L, Lawn SD, Corbett EL. *Clin Infect Dis*. 2019 Nov 29. pii: ciz1133. doi: 10.1093/cid/ciz1133. [Epub ahead of print]
13. Screening heroin smokers attending community drug clinics for change in lung function: A cohort study: Lung function decline in inhaled drug users. Nightingale R, Mortimer K, Giorgi E, Walker PP, Stolbrink M, Byrne T, Marwood K, Morrison-Griffiths S, Renwick S, Rylance J, Burhan H. *Chest*. 2019 Nov 21. pii: S0012-3692(19)34224-2. doi: 10.1016/j.chest.2019.11.006. [Epub ahead of print]



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