



NIHR Global Health Research Group on Stillbirth Prevention and Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

Newsletter

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The NIHR Global Health Research Group on Stillbirth Prevention and Management in Sub-Saharan Africa is a programme funded by the National Institute of Health Research (UK) implemented by the Centre for Childbirth, Women's and Newborn Health at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in partnership with LAMRN (www.lamrn.org), a network of six African countries (Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

The programme aims to promote knowledge sharing and capacity building in the area of stillbirth prevention and management in low resource setting. Through this work the research group will gain an understanding of the issues in improving stillbirth prevention, childbirth and bereavement care in low-income settings; develop culturally relevant studies for further investigation in this unexplored area and establish itself in the Global arena as a catalyst for change.

Celebrating the successes of the 3-years programme and move to LSTM

The second semester of 2020 has been characterised by celebration and change. In July, we completed the third year of the programme with a virtual Learning and Sharing Event. We celebrated successes and the impact of the Group's work in increasing awareness of stillbirth and improving care for bereaved families. During the meeting, the LAMRN Lifetime Achievements Award was given to **Mrs Enid Mwebaza** for her outstanding role in raising the profile of the midwifery profession in the region, for empowering midwives with knowledge and confidence, and supporting research in maternal and newborn care across LAMRN countries.



Mrs Enid Mwebaza

New research studies commenced in August as part of an 11-month extension to the programme. In Tanzania we are carrying out a Discrete Choice Experiment to identify women's preferences when attending antenatal care. In Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe we are conducting a quasi-experiment to pilot an educational intervention aiming to improve communication and care following stillbirth. In Kenya, Participatory Action Research will help in the development of a support package for women with obstetric fistula and stillbirth.



UK team at LSTM

In September 2020, core members of the UK team moved from the University of Manchester to the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, where a Centre for Childbirth, Women's, and Newborn Health (CWNH) was established. The move to LSTM, with a strong record of global health research, will enable the team to build on its previous work and establish new collaborations for novel research studies in maternal and newborn health. To ensure sustainability of research activities, the Group recently submitted several grant applications for funding.

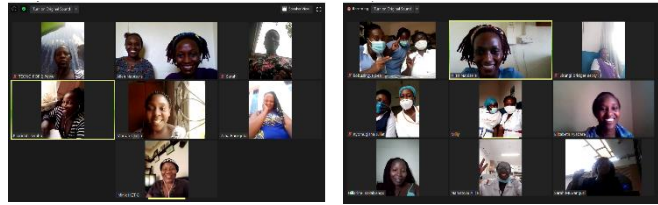
The Group has continued to disseminate results through [publications](#) in scientific journals, participation in online conferences and webinars and engaging with the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board has provided useful feedback on research outputs with members supporting dissemination of results to the wider community.

For the most recent updates please visit our [programme website](#) and follow us on twitter [@Lamrnstillbirth](#)

COUNTRY UPDATES

Uganda: restart of data collection, meeting stakeholders and dissemination

LAMRN Uganda re-started data collection activities following formal approval from local and UK Ethics committees. Between August and November, monthly online meetings were held with Peer Supporters and Care Champions for debriefing about services provided.



Zoom meetings with peer-supporters and care champions

The team disseminated findings of the [baseline study](#) to a wide stakeholder's audience of Kayunga district. This included the Assistant District Health Officer (ADHO), a member of the district Village Health Team, and health professionals from the involved facilities. They reiterated their support of LAMRN and emphasised the need for interventions to care for



Kayunga Stakeholders' group (in white: ADHO)

bereaved parents following stillbirth. Findings were also shared at the online Glow Conference held in September 2020, by research assistant Jonan Mweteise and the programme lead, Elizabeth Ayebare.

LAMRN Uganda has recently obtained ethics approval for the next study, testing an educational intervention to improve communication and care following stillbirth.

Zimbabwe: completion of the feasibility study

LAMRN Zimbabwe completed data collection with women who attended the Thembani clinic in July 2020, followed by data cleaning of quantitative data and the analysis of qualitative interviews.

Grace Danda and Sikhululekile Mremi developed an online survey for healthcare professionals involved in the feasibility study to explore their experience of running the clinic, assess costs implications and explore suggestions for improvement.



FGD with the CEI group, to explore the primary outcome.

The team organised a focus group discussion with the Community Engagement and Involvement Group to identify the Thembani clinic primary outcome, that will be measured in a definitive trial. The CEI primarily focused on the importance of providing women with information about ways to reduce stillbirth and to have a reduction in stillbirth numbers.

Tanzania: start of the Discrete Choice Experiment

LAMRN Tanzania commenced the Discrete Choice Experiment designed to identify factors influencing women's choices and priorities when deciding to attend antenatal care. Following online training sessions, Flora Kuzenza, Happyness Shayo and Deborah Kimaro commenced data collection at two sites, Mwanza and Manyara, in September 2020.



Happyness Shayo completing a booklet with a woman

The recruitment of women has reached more than 170 participants (target: 250). Qualitative data is collected using a Think Aloud technique and the team appreciate the importance of regular feedback to strengthen research capacity and obtain high quality data.

The team is also working toward sustainability with Dr Laisser and Dr Mdoe developing research grants to be submitted for funding. Monthly meetings with LAMRN peers and the UK team ensure mentoring and opportunities for specific feedback and discussion.

The choice sets
Which clinic would you prefer to attend?
Please mark **one** box to show which one you would prefer

Clinic A	Clinic B
You must get there by taxi or take your own car 	You must walk there
The clinic is clean enough 	The clinic is not clean enough
There is a shaded waiting area 	There are seats available
You have a conversation with a healthcare provider and a physical examination 	You have a conversation with a healthcare provider, a physical examination, and are taught about giving birth
Staff do not keep your details private and are harsh or rude (they do not provide respectful care) 	Staff are kind and friendly (they provide respectful care)

Example of a choice set used to identify women's preferences

Kenya: addressing stillbirth co-morbidities in a rural setting

LAMRN Kenya completed the data collection for the feasibility study and commenced new research at Kisii County Hospital in July 2020. This emerged from the need to address stillbirth co-morbidities (obstetric fistula) in a rural setting and resulted in a participatory action research study aiming to develop a support package for women with obstetric fistula and stillbirth.



Jerusha Omari conducting an interview with a woman

Following protocol approval in the UK and Kenya, LAMRN Kenya recruited research assistants - Julie Nyanchama and Jerusha Omari - to conduct the study.

Reactivation of fistula services at the target hospital, and community engagement activities (radio campaign and distribution of leaflets and posters), were held to raise awareness and identify participants. Recruitment and interviews with women, family members, policy makers, community leaders and health professionals are ongoing, and analysis of transcribed interviews has commenced.



RAs at the screening tent at Kisii County Hospital

Zambia: data analysis and identification of trainers

LAMRN Zambia completed data analysis of interview transcripts of the study on Communication following stillbirth. With mentoring from the UK team, Kutemba Lyangenda and Khuzuet Tuwele are now working towards a publication focusing on acceptability and perceptions of post-mortem investigations following stillbirth. The team has taken part in online events, including the Glow Conference 2020 and its webinars to develop knowledge and network with other researchers.

The team completed the post-tests for the Dignity Game study with midwives and student midwives. RAs are now reporting the post-game scores and developing skills in analysis of qualitative data (collected in April) using the framework approach.

LAMRN Zambia has obtained ethics approval and is now working with Mansa General hospital in the identification of key health professionals who will deliver the educational intervention on care and communication following stillbirth, planned for delivery in January 2021.



Staff of Mansa General Hospital involved in identification of trainers to deliver the educational intervention.

Malawi: restart of the Dignity Game study and showcasing LAMRN

Following the ease of COVID-19 restrictions, LAMRN Malawi has re-started the Dignity Game study, and conducted post-tests with 44 midwives, 54 student midwives, and 8 qualitative interviews. Analysis of the transcripts and of participants' scores is ongoing.

In November 2020, the team participated in the official celebrations of the Year of Nurse and Midwife and showcased LAMRN work in Malawi and across the region.



Participants completing the post-test



Chisomo Petross at the Celebration of the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife

Attended by the National President, various Ministers and Senior Government Officials, the event received nationwide media [coverage](#).

The team is in the process of receiving ethics approval for the extension research, aimed at piloting an educational intervention on communication and care following stillbirth, targeting healthcare workers.