

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

Quarterly BULLETIN

March 2018 – Issue n.1

WHO WE ARE: The NIHR Global Health Research Group on Stillbirth Prevention and Management in Sub-Saharan Africa at the University of Manchester is a three-year programme funded by the National Institute of Health Research.

The NIHR Stillbirth Group aims to reduce the number of stillbirth in Sub-Saharan Africa and discover the best way to support women following stillbirth, by undertaking high quality research. The programme focuses on three main areas of care: prevention of stillbirth, better childcare and ensuring respectful care for bereaved parents.

Launched in **August 2017**, the programme works in partnership with the Lugina Africa Midwives Research Network (LAMRN) a platform of six African countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi) promoting knowledge sharing and capacity building in evidence – based midwifery practice.

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH

Training week for Research

Assistants - 19th – 23rd March

The NIHR stillbirth project team has welcomed Research Assistants from LAMRN countries for a week of knowledge-sharing and capacity building, from 19th to 23rd March.



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Stillbirth pilot study in Kenya

Right from inception, the Stillbirth Study in Kenya read like a fiction! The excitement of Health Workers and Hospital administration was palpable. Health Care workers at Pumwani and Kenyatta Hospitals unanimously agreed that stillbirths are a common phenomenon at both facilities.

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PPI becomes a reality in Tanzania

The first **Patient and Public Involvement group** met in Mwanza, in February 2018. Led by Mrs Prisca Ringia the group involved midwives and women who have experienced stillbirth. The group provided valuable insight into some of the cultural aspects of stillbirth in Tanzania.

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TRAINING WEEK FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

at the University of Manchester

The UK team welcomed the newly appointed Research Assistants to the University of Manchester from 19th to 23rd March.

The meeting started with an overview of stillbirth in the Global agenda, before focusing on low income settings, particularly the partner countries. This enabled understanding of the context and challenges.

RA's were encouraged to contribute to the protocol development, during the meeting, providing practical advice on the execution of research. Importantly the RA's were able to inform the data collection tools, making them relevant to local settings.

To strengthen research skills, a training programme was compiled by the Groups Training Lead, Dr Tracey Mills. The training included refresher training on research methodologies: these included an overview of research methodologies by Prof Dame Tina Lavender, a review of quantitative methods and clinical audits with Dr Rebecca Smyth, an overview of qualitative methodologies and ethnography by Dr Christine Furber and Professor Maia Green and an introduction to the concept of Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) by Professor Karina Lovell.



The week was also marked by a visit to the Rainbow Clinic, at Saint Mary Hospital facilitated by Professor Alexander Heazell and Kylie Watson.

"It was great to meet everyone, to hear people's range of experiences and backgrounds. It was great to show everyone around the hospital and research centre and to reflect on how we all bring different talents to the NIHR Research Group." (Alex)

During the visit, RAs learnt about maternity care in the UK with more specific information about the care provided to mothers following stillbirth.

A social programme ran alongside the training to foster collegiality and promote south to south communication and peer-to-peer support whilst delivering the programme.

The training was characterised by enthusiasm and willingness to improve care in the area of stillbirth.





"It was great to see how enthusiastic all of the midwives were for this project and the difference that we are hoping to achieve in people's lives." (Jon)

I just returned home to Africa to start a new page in my Midwifery practice, a page where women and partners will find compassion and warmth at their most vulnerable moment" (Kenyan team)

"An action filled workshop which clarified a lot of research issues which I was taking for granted [...]. I also managed to have a practical view of the bereaved mothers care unit at St Mary's hospital details of how they are managed; this was a great eye opener for me since we do not have such in our country." (Grace, Zimbabwe)



Inception of the stillbirth project in Kenya

Right from inception, the Stillbirth Study in Kenya read like fiction! The excitement of Health Workers and Hospital administration was palpable. Health Care workers at Pumwani and Kenyatta Hospitals unanimously agreed that stillbirths are a common phenomenon at both facilities. Yet, Health Workers have never received any formal training on care and support of parents experiencing such a loss. Each time a stillbirth occurs, documentation is done routinely at the facility level but these records are not used for decision making. The silence in data management and use seems to shelve stillbirth to the archives. An observation echoed by most Midwives who took part in the pilot study.

The start-up of the pilot study in Kenya was uneventful. Prior to study enrolment permission to conduct the study was granted by both hospitals. The institutions made a passionate appeal to LAMRN to develop Standard Operating Procedures for stillbirth care and train a core team of service providers as a step towards standardizing appropriate care. A further request was made for dissemination of findings; which will serve as a baseline, they said.

Preparing Research assistants for the planned SB activities involved a series of trainings and a dry run.

First, training materials and skills building activities were developed jointly by the University of Manchester team and the Kenyan team.

A two day schedule was done and included sessions on protocol and study tools and a refresh on ethical issues: respect for persons, confidentiality and justice. Thereafter, a dry run was conducted giving RAs an opportunity to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of study concepts and mastery of interviewing skills.

The first five interviews were conducted by the team leads to set the pace for the study. After which, the team moved to Pumwani where research assistants conducted their first interviews under the guidance and supervision of the team leads. Having gained the desired skills, Research Assistants went separate ways to continue site specific interviews with continued support from team leads.

90 in-depth interviews were done between Kenyatta Hospital and Pumwani Hospital. Data collection and transcription is complete for both sites and plans are underway to analyse both quantitative and qualitative data.

From this initial phase, it is clear that the burden/ lack of support for women and partners with stillbirth is overwhelming. A lot needs to be done. The beautiful thing that Kenyan Midwives have resolved to improve the care and support for parents who have had a Stillbirth.

By Sabina Wakasiaka

Meeting the NIHR SB project team in Mwanza (TZ)

Dr Rose Mjawa Laisser

Dean of the AAM School of Nursing at the Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences (CUHAS)
Leader of NIHR Stillbirth project and the THET Audit project in Tz

She started her career in 1977 and moved to Muhimbili National Hospital (Dar Es Salaam) in 1978 where she worked until 2014. After her government service retirement, she moved to CUHAS where she holds a managerial position, give lectures and conduct research in health and midwifery related issues.



From left:
Deborah, Flora,
Happiness and
Rose



Deborah Samwel Kimaro

Nurse- midwife
Research Assistant NIHR SB project

She started her career in 2012 at Nkinga School of nursing. She then moved to Rubya Health Training Institute where she completed a Diploma in teaching and research methodology.

Deborah developed interest in stillbirth after realizing how frequent stillbirth is in the hospitals where she has worked.

Happiness Estomini Shayo

Nurse midwife
Research Assistant NIHR Stillbirth project

She started as a nurse-midwife at the Bio Health Centre in 2014. As research assistant she worked at Mama na Mtoto project dealing with prevention of maternal death in the district of Kwimba, Misungwi and Nyamagana. She then worked in a private hospital Kamanga Medics in Mwanza region for three years before joining NIHR Stillbirth project.

Flora Deusidedith Kuzenza

Nurse midwife / Public health specialist
Research Assistant NIHR Stillbirth project

Back in 2005, Flora started at the Bukumbi Mission Hospital. In 2007 she moved to Misungwi district hospital as a nurse office in labour ward and later was promoted as hospital matron for 10 years. Flora is interested in serving mothers and new born babies both at hospital and community level. She has also been involved in several research projects related to women's health.

PPI becomes true!

The first Patient and Public Involvement group met in Mwanza, in February 2018. Led by **Mrs Prisca Ringia** and facilitated by Professor Karina Lovell and Dr Carol Bedwell, the group involved midwives and women who have experienced a stillbirth.

The group provided valuable insight and understanding of stillbirth in the Tanzanian context. Members of the group were able to provide feedback on the study based on their experience. This is important in enabling development of the research study, with the PPI group agreeing to continue to provide feedback throughout the project.

The group were not familiar with the concept of PPI and Professor Lovell explained the difference between PPI and peer-support groups. She explained how in PPI users and the public get involved in research to provide input and feedback to the researchers. This will both inform the study and ultimately the development of services meeting their needs.



COMING SOON

April 2018

- UK team to visit Stillbirth project team in Malawi
- Training RAs in Uganda
- Training RAs in Tanzania

June 2018

LAMRN CONFERENCE Updates

Almost 100 abstract were received for the LAMRN triannual Conference 2018

The reviewing team had a hard time selecting the best abstracts for oral and poster presentation.

Many were included for oral and poster presentations!

Keynote speakers include **Anayda Portela** (WHO) and the President of the Association of Malawian Midwives.

The full programme will be soon available at www.larmn.org

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LAMRN CONFERENCE 2018

Umodzi Park, Lilongwe, Malawi

27th – 28th June 2018

Theme: **Evidence Based Practice: Innovations for Improving Reproductive Health**

Sub – themes

- 1) Strengthening reproductive health and midwifery practices
- 2) Strengthening health system in reproductive health
- 3) Innovation in reproductive, maternal, new-born, adolescent and public health

Registration fees

International delegates	300 USD
Delegates from African countries	200 USD
International students	150 USD
Students from African countries	100 USD

Among **keynote speakers:**

Dr Anayda Portela - Technical Officer - Health Promotion, Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (MCA) **World Health Organization**

Dr Anne Phoya President of the Association of Malawian Midwives (AMAMI)

Register for the conference! Don't miss this opportunity!

Final Programme coming soon!

For further information and enquire the following:

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Johnson & Johnson