



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

## Newsletter

April 2019 – Issue 4

**T**he 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 (UK) implemented by The University of Manchester in partnership with LAMRN ([www.lamrn.org](http://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.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual meeting of the NIHR Global Health Research Group on Stillbirth

The project team met for their second annual meeting from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019 in Kampala, Uganda. The meeting was attended by the Country Leads and Research Assistants of the 6 LAMRN countries, in addition to the UK project management team.

During the first day, each country presented the interim findings from their respective Work Streams with particular focus on the main issues identified in their settings. This learning and sharing session highlighted commonalities and cross-cutting themes across the region.

The second day, Dr Chris Sutton provided an overview about feasibility studies and complex interventions to facilitate the design of the next phase of the project. Using this knowledge each country identified potential interventions to address stillbirth in their local setting. Other relevant researcher training, provided by Prof Karina Lovell, included Patient and Public Involvement and Understanding and Responding to Emotion to aid in developing skills in managing emotions during the qualitative stillbirth interviews.

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On the last day, the Research Assistants met with Prof Tina Lavender, Dr Rebecca Smyth and Dr Sabina Wakasiaka for their individual performance and development reviews in order to help them in their career progression. Country Leads received mentoring in leadership skills. The workshop was considered a great success and provided lots of networking opportunities for all.



## COUNTRY UPDATES

### Zimbabwe: Cross sectional study on stillbirth

#### Validation completed and positive outcomes from the PPI group

Team Zimbabwe facilitated a two day workshop to train the validator on REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture), the web-based software used for data collection. Data validation, to ensure accuracy of study data, was then carried out and completed in March 2019.

The PPI group in Zimbabwe has helped establish a peer support group among its members to help them share their experiences. One of them, a woman with a previous history of stillbirth was initially afraid of being pregnant again. She recently expressed her appreciation to the group because this has given her the confidence to consider embarking on another pregnancy. The Zimbabwe team and the PPIs congratulated her for this achievement.



From left: Dr Cynthia Chaibva (validator); Kushupika Dube, Grace Danda, Sikhululekile Mremi

### Tanzania: Delays in effective intrapartum care

#### Completion of data collection and start of the analysis!

The Tanzania team completed data collection for work stream two, which included 1,000 case files, 83 qualitative interviews and 16 clinical observations. The case files were analysed at The University of Manchester, while the Research Assistants translated and transcribed the interviews.

In February, the team met with UK colleagues: Prof Dame Tina Lavender, Dr Carol Bedwell, Prof Maia Green, Valentina Actis Danna and the regional coordinator, Dr Sabina Wakasiaka in Dar es Salaam for a three-day workshop.

The meeting was organized to present the preliminary results of the case note review and to provide training to the Research Assistants on qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews with women, partners, health professionals and stakeholders.



From left: Valentina Actis Danna, Prof Maia Green, Dr Sabina Wakasiaka, Happiness Shayo, Dr Carol Bedwell, Dr Rose Laisser, Prof Tina Lavender, Debora Kimaro, Flora Kuzenza

## Zambia: Delays in effective intrapartum care

### National Stakeholder's meeting and completion of data collection

In this quarter the Zambia team held the National stakeholder's meeting with a wide participation from ministries and authorities, health professionals and NGOs (details in the box).

During the same period the Research Assistants completed data collection of



From left: Khuzuwet Tuwele, Chowa Tembo Kasengele, Kutemba Lyangenda (right).

1,000 case files, 83 qualitative interviews and 16 clinical observations. This provided the Country Lead, Chowa Tembo Kasengele, with the opportunity to visit the project site and congratulate them. She also reiterated the importance of this study to the obstetricians working in Mansa General Hospital and appreciated the work of the ward-in-charge in facilitating the recruitment of women and the access to case files during data collection.

#### Stakeholders

- Chairperson of the Committee of Health, Acting Permanent Secretary of Health services
- Director of Nursing and Midwifery Services
- Assistant Director of National health research authority
- Prof Vwalika – Obstetrician and member of NIHR Global Advisory Board
- General Nursing Council of Zambia
- Midwifery association of Zambia
- PPI representative
- NGOs / CSO

## Kenya: Respectful and Supportive Care after Stillbirth

### The start of qualitative data processing

The Kenyan team completed the in-depth interviews with women, partners and healthcare providers which were validated by the Research coordinator (Dr Sabina Wakasiaka). Guided by the Country Lead, the team read each script and identified categories and themes. The narratives pointed out an environment which is ill prepared for the care and support for parents with stillbirths. Moreover healthcare professionals emphasized the need for specific training to provide bereavement care to those parents. Team Kenya look forward to engaging with stakeholders to share these findings and identify possible interventions to improve respectful and supportive care after stillbirth.



From right: (back) Raheli Mukwana, (front) Prof Grace Omoni, (back) Anne Nendela, (front) Dr Sabina Wakasiaka

## Uganda: Respectful and Supportive Care after Stillbirth

### A new PPI group with men and provision of mental health support to participants

In the last three months the Ugandan team have focused on transcription, translation and analysis of qualitative data. Sixty-nine interview (49 conducted with parents and 20 with healthcare providers) transcripts were analysed thoroughly to identify categories and merge them into themes. These were used to identify potential interventions. In the same period the team facilitated the creation of a new PPI group with male partners. They will contribute to the development of the interventions in the area of bereavement care.

Using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scores collected during the interviews, the team referred five participants to the mental health nurse at Makerere University, Kampala. Individual action plans were made to improve their psychological and emotional wellbeing.



From left: Research Assistants, Jonan Mweteise and Allen Nabisere (right) merging categories into themes

## Malawi: Audit on Stillbirths

### Implementing the Audit action plan

Malawi is making good progress. Data analysis of the baseline data was completed in January 2019. The results were then shared with stakeholders of Bwaila Maternity Unit (Lilongwe) and Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital (Blantyre) and with the PPIs. The discussion lead to the identification of the main actions to be implemented to improve the quality of care delivered in both audit sites. The Action plan is now under implementation. During the same period, the Malawi team received a visit from the Regional Coordinator, Dr Sabina Wakasiaka, who contributed to the start of the activities.



Team briefing in Bwaila Maternity Unit (Lilongwe)



Training session about the use of the surgical checklist to monitor fetal heart rate before conducting a C-section, conducted in Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital (Blantyre)