

The IHCOR-Africa newsletter is produced thrice a year with the aim of informing members, partners and collaborators about activities, events, and progress on the project. It is also used to disseminate new developments and findings in the field of hypertension in rural Africa.

Detecting, Treating, and Controlling Hypertension

The Health Systems Work Package (WP1) of the IHCOR-Africa project, with members in The Gambia, Kenya and the UK, is working to understand experiences, needs, and practices at the individual, organizational and system levels to detect, treat and control hypertension. To do this, they plan to:

- Map a typical patient journey of people with hypertension.
- Explore the experiences of people with hypertension.
- Assess health services delivery context, including policy and systems frameworks.
- Examine health system capacity and readiness for strengthening the management of hypertension.

To inform the above, the team is currently engaged in data collection soon to be followed by analysis. The group in conjunction with the Diagnosis and Risk Stratification in Hypertension Work Package (WP2) colleagues is slated to conduct a health system training in the coming weeks.

WP2 is currently involved in collecting blood pressure measurements from members of the community. This will be followed by collecting data on target organ damage at the IHCOR-Africa clinics in The Gambia and Kenya.



Members of WP1 and WP2 meeting with health managers from Kilifi County, Kenya, where they shared their implementation plans for proposed hypertension research work to be conducted across the county.



WP1 comprises 6 members above. From left to right – Benjamin Tsoga, Ellen Nolte, Brahim Diallo, Nancy Kagwanja, Syreen Hassan, and Robinson Oyando

Publications and News from IHCOR-Africa

Group Members

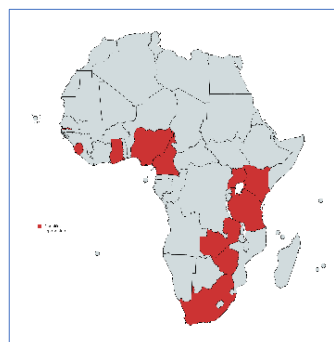
1. Professor Pablo Perel, Co-PI of IHCOR-Africa, led the successful inclusion of cardiovascular (CVD) 'polypills' in the [World Health Organization Model List of Essential Medicines List \(EML\)](#). This pivotal achievement marks a significant advancement in the worldwide battle against cardiovascular disease. The polypill, a fixed-dose combination of multiple CVD medications, has proven effective in simplifying treatment protocols, boosting medication adherence, effectively managing risk factors, and improving outcomes. Its presence on the EML aims to boost the accessibility and affordability of these vital drugs, offering promise for improved CVD outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa.
2. Dr Modou Jobe, WP2 lead of IHCOR-Africa, was the first author in an article entitled, "[Evaluating the hypertension care cascade in middle-aged and older adults in The Gambia: findings from a nationwide survey](#)". The article highlights areas where health resources should most efficiently target and assesses the hypertension care cascade i.e., loss and retention across the various stages of care in Gambian adults aged 35 years and above.
3. Professor Andrew Prentice, The Gambia PI of IHCOR-Africa, was an co-author in an article entitled "[Global Effect of Modifiable Risk Factors on Cardiovascular Disease and Mortality](#)". The article examined five modifiable risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease and death from any cause. Studies using individual-level data to evaluate the regional and sex-specific prevalence of the risk factors and their effect on these outcomes are lacking.

Training

IHCOR-Africa Online Training

The IHCOR-Africa Group continues to offer a portfolio of online training courses designed to strengthen hypertension research capacity across Africa. This is being done in collaboration with the Initiative to Develop African Research Leaders ([IDeAL](#)), the Pan African Society of Cardiology ([PASCAR](#)), the Kenyan Cardiac Society ([KCS](#)), and Science for Africa Foundation ([SFA Foundation](#)). So far, two courses have run: "*Introduction to hypertension research*" and "*Epidemiology for hypertension research*" and further courses will cover health systems and clinical trials.

The "*Epidemiology for hypertension research*" course ran from 14 June to 5 July covered study design, how to measure disease burden, basic statistics for epidemiology and literature review. It was attended by 24 participants from across sub-Saharan Africa, including Cameroon, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Attendees reported that the course was very useful in developing their skills.



Countries represented

The 3rd course is currently running and focuses on key concepts in health systems research. The course will cover what is meant by "health system", and the frameworks that can be used to describe and analyse them. Students will be taught the core functions of health systems and why they matter and apply the learning to examine and reflect critically on measuring and researching health systems.

For further information please contact the team at IHCOR_Africa_training@LSHTM.ac.uk and check the website: www.LSHTM.ac.uk/IHCOR-Africa.

IHCoR-Africa Community Engagement



Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) being trained on consenting and use of blood pressure machines. The CHVs are then deployed in the community to assist in carrying out IHCoR-Africa research activities.



Community engagement session in Matsangoni, Kilifi County, Kenya



Community engagement session in Kiang, The Gambia



Community engagement in Kilifi and the Gambia this quarter has focused on sensitizing county committees, health facility committees, Chiefs, village elders, CHVs and training of the CHVs.

IHCoR-Africa Activities

The IHCoR-Africa Kilifi Dialogues



The Improving Hypertension Control in Rural Africa (IHCoR-Africa) NIHR Global Health Research Group held a meeting from 10-11 July 2023 dubbed the Kilifi Dialogues. The meeting brought together more than 30 leading researchers from various parts of the African continent as well as Europe and the US. Attendees discussed the landscape of hypertension research in sub-Saharan Africa, covering different disciplines including Epidemiology, Clinical Trials, and Health Systems. The meeting also helped to highlight gaps in current knowledge while providing networking opportunities for potential future collaborations and partnerships.

Upcoming Activities

Facilitated workshops for supervisors and students

There will be NIHR Global Health Research Cohort Academic Development Award (GHR CADA) facilitated workshops for supervisors and students this month, October 2023. A personal development workshop for students will be held on the 19th of October in Kilifi and a workshop for supervisors on the 27th in Uganda. The workshops will be conducted by IHCOR-Africa in conjunction with the NIHR Global Health Research Group on Vaccines for Vulnerable people of Africa (Vanguard).

IHCOR-Africa Online Training

The fourth and final course of the first year will run in January 2024 and cover the fundamentals of clinical trials with a focus on hypertension. Following that course, all courses will be offered to a new cohort in 2024. Please look out for details on applications later this year. For further information please contact the team at ihcor_africa@lshtm.ac.uk; website: www.lshtm.ac.uk/IHCOR-Africa

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Collaborating institutions



This research was funded by the NIHR (NIHR134544) using UK aid from the UK Government to support global health research. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the UK government.