



News | June 2024

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.

Developing and evaluating the feasibility of a community-centered programme to improve the management of hypertension in rural SSA

The third work package (WP3) of IHCOR-Africa triangulates findings from the first two work packages. The first work package provides key information about the lived experience of people with hypertension and their engagement (or lack thereof) with the health service; the experience of health care workers delivering hypertension management and of decision-makers overseeing health service and hypertension control, along with the health system context in Kiang West and Kilifi. The second work package establishes the validity and cost-effectiveness of different diagnostic and risk stratification approaches that can be used to initiate pharmacological treatment and follow up individuals with hypertension.

Building on these insights, the specific objectives of WP3 are the following:

- i. Co-create a prototype intervention for the community management of hypertension in Kilifi and Kiang West.
- ii. Understand the feasibility of the prototype intervention and test future study-specific procedures to inform the design of a full-scale trial.

Currently the team has conducted the first of two stakeholder workshops in Kenya and The Gambia aimed to inform the co-design of a community-based intervention model to be implemented to improve the diagnosis and management of hypertension.



Selected Publications and News from IHCoR- Africa Group Members

1. Agarwal A, Tromp J, Almahmeed W, Angermann C, Chandramouli C, Cho H, Choi DJ, Damasceno A, Filippatos G, Fonarow GC, Harikrishnan S, Lund L, Masoudi F, Mensah G A, Pathan A, Perel P, Pinto F, Ribeiro AL, Rich S, Sakata Y, Sliwa K, Sundstrom J, Wong R, Yancy C, Yiu K, Zhang J, Zhang Y, Lam CSP, Roth GA; **Global Heart Failure Roundtable Group. Toward a Universal Definition of Etiologies in Heart Failure: Categorizing Causes and Advancing Registry Science.** *Circ Heart Fail.* 2024 Apr;17(4):e011095



1. Prof Anthony Etyang and Dr Ruth Lucinde attended the **33rd European Meeting on Hypertension and Cardiovascular Protection in Berlin, Germany**. Other IHCoR collaborators in attendance were Prof. Elijah Ogola from University of Nairobi and Prof. Alta Schutte from University of New South Wales. Dr. Ruth presented two oral posters with preliminary results from IHCoR's WP2 on Community Health Worker-led attended and unattended BP measurement and home BP measurement.



2. The WP2 Kenyan team hosted a team from **Roche** in Kilifi and **discussed potential collaboration in hypertension genomics work** in improving care for patients with hypertension.



3. Prof. Pablo Perel co-hosted the third episode of the **Global Heart Podcast** [Link]



4. Dr Anoop Shah and Prof. Pablo Perel were co-authors of the **2024 World Heart Report** [Link]

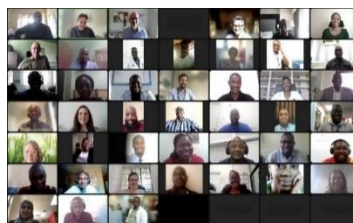


5. Robinson Oyando submitted two abstracts to the **8th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research** that will be held in Nagasaki, Japan in 2024 on 18-22 November 2024. The abstracts are, **"Assessing sub-national health system's capacity to deliver primary care services for hypertension in rural coastal Kenya"** and **"No one has called you and you feel worried": Patient experiences in accessing primary care services for hypertension in rural coastal Kenya"**.

Training

IHCoR-Africa Online Training

IHCoR-Africa's online courses continue to provide hypertension research and methods training for researchers in sub-Saharan Africa. This training covers an introduction to hypertension research and the fundamentals of epidemiology, biostatistics, health systems, and clinical trials. In January, 67 applications from 190 were selected to participate in the 2024 training cohort. This group represents 17 countries across sub-Saharan Africa.



Participants at a previous IHCoR-Africa Online Training

The first course, Introduction to Hypertension Research, completed in late March 2024 with excellent engagement across the sessions and training materials, and very positive evaluations from students. Completion certificates were awarded to 62 of the 67 participants.

Following the Introductory course, 29 students were selected for the focussed course epidemiology and biostatistics. The initial live session featured a brainstorming discussion on a research question suggested by students on "economic factors affecting dietary choices and hypertension risk in rural areas", with a lively debate on study design, key measures, logistics, and ethics. Student engagement has been excellent, enriching weekly lectures with insightful questions. Another 25-30 will be selected (from those who apply from the original 67) for the 'Fundamentals of Health Systems' course later in the year. This will be followed by the final course on clinical trials at the end of 2024.

The online training programme is scheduled to repeat once more with a 2025 cohort. Please look out for details in the IHCoR-Africa newsletter and on the project website: www.lshtm.ac.uk/ihtcor-africa. For more information on the NIHR IHCoR-Africa Group training portfolio and how to apply for the 2025 cohort, please get in touch through IHCoR_Africa_training@LSHTM.ac.uk.

IHCoR-Africa Stakeholders Meetings

The Gambia



The IHCoR-Africa team in The Gambia held a stakeholders' workshop on the 29th and 30th of April 2024.

The first day included national and regional level decision-makers, NCD partners, health facility managers, health care providers, and community health nurses and the second day brought together community members (people living with hypertension, family carers, and village health workers). The workshop aimed to establish an intervention stakeholder group; discuss preliminary findings from work packages 1 and 2 with participants; and develop an action plan for the co-design of the community-based intervention.

Developing community-based intervention led by village health workers already embedded in the local health system was perceived as a timely and useful strategy to improve the current diagnosis and management of hypertension, especially in rural areas. Participants emphasised the importance of building the capacity of Community Health Nurses (CHNs) and advocated for incentives to encourage participation and ensure the success of the community-based intervention. Participants raised concerns about the exclusion of certain stakeholders such as community birth companions, traditional medicine practitioners, councillors of areas, and Village Development Committees (VDCs) and suggested they be involved in future project activities.



In Kenya



IHCoR-Africa team in Kenya held their stakeholder workshop on 21 May 2024 in Kilifi, Kenya. The workshop brought together stakeholders in hypertension service delivery to develop a community-centered intervention for hypertension care and treatment. During the workshop, preliminary findings from ongoing hypertension research in Kilifi that focuses on examining health system capacity and readiness for early detection and management of hypertension at the primary care level were presented. Ways to better identify people with hypertension and related health complications, including those most at risk were highlighted.

With preliminary research findings and drawing on the knowledge and experiences of stakeholders at the workshop, the team hopes to investigate how an intervention at the community and primary care level for hypertension management should look while considering ways for its implementation.

In attendance were - Patients and Carers, Community Health Promoters, Community Health Assistants, Facility managers/frontline providers, Sub-county health managers, Physicians (Level 4 facilities), Nutritionists, County health managers, and National level managers/decision-makers.



3rd IHCOR-Africa Advisory Committee Meeting

In May 2024, the IHCOR-Africa team held its third meeting with the IHCOR-Africa Advisory Committee in which activities undertaken so far, progress realized as well as challenges faced by the various work packages were discussed. During the meeting, the following points were highlighted:

- Address of sustainability issues.
- Role clarity for village health workers & Community Health Promoters (CHPs)
- Government and policy support needed and matrix for success.
- Use of AI and language models to reduce work on transcription and synthesis.
- Engagement of trusted community voices such as pastors, imams, and traditional healers for broader acceptability of project activities.

Those in attendance were:

Advisory Committee: Professor Dorairaj Prabhakaran-Chair (Public Health Foundation of India, India), Associate Professor Sassy Molyneux (Oxford University, United Kingdom), Dr George Mensah- Observer- (National Institute of Health Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, United States); Dr Ruth Griffiths, (University of Technology Sydney, Australia)

IHCOR Team: Prof. Pablo Perel (Co-PI), Dr Anthony Etyang (Co-PI), Ms Noni Mumba (CEI Rep), Prof Benjamin Tsofa (WP1 Rep), Ms Mavis Foster-Nyarko (Project Coordinator)

NIHR Observer: Ms Abigail Francisco, Research Programme Manager

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