



MALAWI-LIVERPOOL
WELLCOME TRUST



KAMUZU
UNIVERSITY
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

NIHR Global Health Research Group on Vaccines to Control Respiratory Pathogens and AMR across Africa (VacAMR)

Global Health Research PhD Studentship in Immunology

The NIHR Global Health Group on Vaccines to Control Respiratory Pathogens and AMR across Africa (VacAMR) is an exciting new Africa-led interdisciplinary partnership that will transform the approach to controlling antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Funded by the UK National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), VacAMR will award a Global Health Research PhD studentship to an outstanding candidate from an African LMIC. The PhD project will be focused on the development and evaluation of new tools for assessing vaccine-induced protective immunity. The successful student will be registered at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in the United Kingdom and be based at the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Programme (MLW). The Malawi Liverpool Wellcome (MLW) Programme (<https://www.mlw.mw>) is an internationally recognised centre for research and research training, funded by Wellcome in collaboration with the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences.

Overview

There is an under-recognised pandemic of antimicrobial resistant (AMR) infection, with around 1.3 million bacterial AMR-attributable deaths in 2019, most commonly due to lower respiratory infections (LRI). Co-directed by Professor Robert Heyderman and Dr. Brenda Kwambana-Adams, VacAMR sets out to improve AMR control, particularly in relation to respiratory pathogens, by focusing on preventing disease syndromes (e.g. fever & pneumonia), as part of a multimodal approach that includes vaccine and non-vaccine interventions.

VacAMR will tackle AMR through new strategic South-South partnerships between KEMRI Wellcome Trust Research Programme, MLW, Navrongo Health Research Centre, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research. Partnerships with the Liverpool School of Tropical medicine (LSTM), UCL, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), The Africa CDC, WHO and Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques among others will enhance the transformative approach taken by VacAMR. Our equitable Africa-led partnership of epidemiologists, public health policy, and diagnostics specialists, social scientists, economists, clinicians, trialists, microbiologists and immunologists will co-develop multimodal interventions to control AMR that can be tested with the potential to influence policy.

The successful candidate will have the opportunity to work with a range of UK and LMIC-based senior researchers to develop a project proposal and then undertake their research in a structured and mentored training environment. **The project will focus on the development and evaluation of new tools for assessing vaccine-induced protective immunity.** MLW hosts state-of-the-art laboratories, with the appropriate expertise and equipment to support a large ongoing programme of vaccine evaluation research.

The award of an NIHR VacAMR Global Health studentship will be made through international competition to candidates from African LMICs. The ability to contribute substantially to the development of a research project is also essential. The successful candidate will be based at the MLW Programme and registered at LSTM, working across the partnership.



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Eligibility

Suitable applicants should be a citizen or resident of an African LMIC, and possess one or more of the following qualifications:

1. A bachelor's degree in clinical or veterinary medicine.
2. A bachelor's degree with at least a 2:1 (credit or equivalent) in basic or applied sciences, including immunology, microbiology and biomedical sciences.

The following are not essential but are desired:

- A master's degree with at least a credit (or equivalent experience) in a relevant discipline.
- Prior experience in health research, particularly in a laboratory environment.
- A track record of scientific writing and publishing.

Scope of support

This is a three-year PhD studentship to be based at the MLW Programme. VacAMR will assist selected candidates to apply and register for a PhD at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. The candidate will be supervised by Dr. Brenda Anna Kwambana-Adams, Associate Professor Kondwani Jambo and Professor Robert Heyderman. VacAMR will also provide the selected candidates with a stipend of £18,622 annually and financial support to cover tuition, academic-related fees, travel expenses and research expenses. The candidate and their mentors may seek additional research funds from elsewhere to support the project.

Method of application

Interested applicants are required to submit the following;

- I. One-page application letter.
- II. An updated curriculum vitae with a contact email address and telephone number.
- III. A copy of the highest degree and a certified copy of an academic transcript.
- IV. One-page personal statement stating the preferred area of research, reasons for selecting the area and future career ambitions.
- V. A recommendation letter from an academic referee stating the potential of the candidate to succeed in a research career.
- VI. Send applications to training@mlw.mw

Selection process

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview either in person or by videoconferencing. The successful candidate in the interview will be offered PhD training support.

The PhD studentship will commence in September 2024.

The closing date for completed applications is the **1st of July 2024**.

The Interview Date is expected to be on the 26th of July 2024



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