



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024



UPDATES

KOSHESAI study celebrates World Alzheimer's month

This September, the KOSHESAI study team marked World Alzheimer's month by engaging with older persons in Harare to raise awareness about dementia and combat the stigma surrounding it. The team wore purple ribbons and emphasized the importance of understanding dementia, a condition that affects memory, thinking, and behavior, while advocating for stronger support systems for individuals and their families.

The KOSHESAI team also participated in the Zimbabwe Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Association (ZARDA) awareness run, followed by a morning tea and interactive sing-along at the Dandaro community centre. Attendees appreciated the opportunity to engage with the music, which sparked joy and nostalgia among many older adults. The events aimed to promote awareness and provide a supportive space for community members to connect.

The KOSHESAI team received positive feedback from participants, who highlighted the value of interactive events in fostering understanding and empathy for those living with dementia.

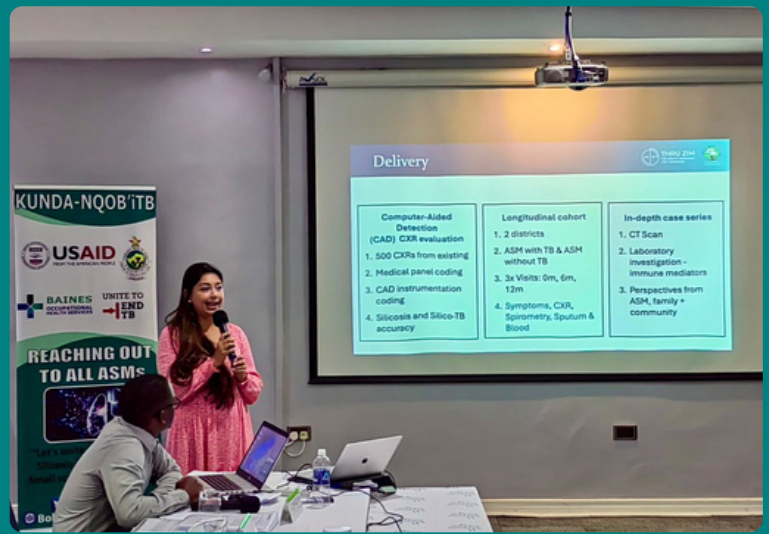


ERASE -TB team strengthens research collaborations to tackle TB and Silicosis

On 10 September, the ERASE TB study team visited Kadoma, Gweru, and Bulawayo to better understand the critical health challenges faced by artisanal and small-scale miners. In Gweru, discussions with healthcare providers revealed that 30–50% of miners treated at the provincial hospital suffer from silicosis, while 10–20% are diagnosed with TB. The hospital expressed a strong interest in partnering with THRU ZIM to conduct research aimed at improving health outcomes for these miners.

In Bulawayo, the team participated in a research dissemination meeting organized by the Knowledge, Network, and TB (KNTB) project. The event brought together stakeholders from the Ministry of Health and Child Care, Ministry of mines and mining development, and other organizations to discuss research and intervention strategies. Edson and Collins led focus group discussions to explore the community impact of these diseases and identify opportunities for research-based improvements in health services. Mimi shared insights from her study on abnormal spirometry among household contacts of confirmed tuberculosis (TB) cases in Zimbabwe.

Through these engagements, THRU ZIM remains committed to advancing research collaborations that enhance early detection and treatment of lung infections among artisanal miners.



ERASE -TB team engages with stakeholders

Kate Mattick presents at World Physiotherapy Africa Region Congress

Kate Mattick, presented findings from the Fractures-E3 study on disability prevalence and access to assistive devices at the World Physiotherapy Africa Region Congress, held from 12th to 15th September in Cape Town. Her presentation highlighted significant underreporting of disability and functional impairment among older adults in Harare, many of whom live without access to the assistive devices and care they need.

The congress covered a wide range of topics and innovations in rehabilitation across the continent, underscoring the stark disparities in access. While some rehabilitation professionals are advancing the use of Artificial Intelligence in private practices to maximize profit, others revealed the profound unmet need for rehabilitation among populations living in extreme poverty with limited access to healthcare.

Kate reflected on the importance of addressing these inequalities as part of WHO's universal health coverage plans.



Kate at the World Physiotherapy Africa region congress

Com-BP empowers Chiweshe communities with hypertension management skills

The Com-BP study team recently conducted training sessions in Chiweshe, focusing on individuals living with or at risk of developing hypertension.

The sessions covered a wide range of important topics, including how to diagnose hypertension, measure and interpret blood pressure, and dispel common myths and misconceptions surrounding the condition. Participants also learned about various hypertension management strategies and treatment options, emphasizing the critical role of adhering to prescribed medications.

A key highlight of the sessions was the introduction of community support groups, which are proving to be an essential resource for individuals managing hypertension. These groups provide members with regular access to health checks, making it easier for them to monitor their blood pressure consistently. The sessions also emphasized the value of peer support, with group members helping one another obtain necessary medications and encouraging adherence to treatment plans.

Additionally, the importance of regular hospital reviews was stressed, as these appointments allow patients to improve hypertension management and health outcomes



Com-BP participants go through training in Chiweshe

KWK presents study findings at a health care workers' nutrition training event

On 11 September the Kids with Kids study (Kwk) formerly Pregnancy in Minors (PIMS) presented crucial research findings on the nutritional needs of pregnant children at a specialized training session for healthcare workers based in Epworth.

The training underscored the need for enhanced collaboration among healthcare workers, guardians, and caregivers to ensure comprehensive support for pregnant children. It was noted that additional training sessions and the development of educational resources are necessary to better equip healthcare professionals with the knowledge required to address the nutritional needs of pregnant children effectively. Establishing support networks for healthcare workers to share best practices and challenges was also identified as crucial for ongoing improvement in care.

Furthermore, increased community engagement efforts were highlighted as essential for raising awareness about the nutritional needs of pregnant children and providing valuable information to local communities. Implementing a system for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the training will help ensure its effectiveness and inform future improvements. Additionally, there is a need to advocate for policies that support the nutritional needs of pregnant children, integrating these needs into public health strategies.

The presentation at this event marks an early step towards more community engagement efforts geared at addressing the unmet needs of pregnant children in Epworth



KWK presents study findings at a health care workers' nutrition training event

5 MINUTES WITH...

Mimi & Sam



Q: What do you do and when did you start?

Sam: Mimi and I moved to Zimbabwe and joined THRU-Zim in mid-July. A huge thank you to everyone for the warm welcome! I'm pursuing a CREATE PhD hosted by King's College London and BRTI, working with the Friendship Bench. My project looks at why some people improve with Friendship Bench talking therapy while others don't. Specifically, I'm investigating the role of therapeutic alliance in these outcomes. Before this, I was living in London, working as a psychiatrist, cycling around in a waterproof jacket, and trying my hand at tennis!

Mimi: Mhoroyi! I'm a respiratory doctor by background. I'm currently working on my Public Health MSc dissertation, focusing on spirometry data from ERASE-TB. Later this year, I'll be starting my PhD with BRTI and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, where I'll be studying the impact of TB and silica exposure on lung health among artisanal miners in Gweru and Kadoma. This builds on USAID-funded work from Baines Occupational Health over the last five years.

Q: Where can we find you in the office?

Mimi: My official desk is next to the Finance and Admin team (the TB crew!), but you'll probably find me soaking up the sunshine on a bench outside.

Sam: I'm based in the field management office, but I also tend to hang out by the benches near the entrance. Please feel free to come over and say hi!

Q: Who or what inspires you?

Mimi: Since moving to Harare, I've found inspiration everywhere – from the beautiful Jacaranda trees and the vibrant art scene to the fresh vegetables that have inspired new recipes! But most of all, the warmth and generosity of the THRU-Zim family has been truly inspiring. It's wonderful to work with so many talented, passionate people, all dedicated to improving lives.

Sam: I'm inspired by those who use their skills, talents, and energy to tackle injustice. I'm especially drawn to systemic approaches that look at issues from a broad perspective, whether in health, policy, or even sports! In the short time I've been here, I've been moved by the commitment within THRU-Zim to health equity and making real change.

Q: Why is your profession important, and what do you enjoy about it?

Mimi: Being a doctor and researcher in Respiratory Medicine, especially in the area of TB, is incredibly rewarding. Respiratory diseases affect people from all walks of life, and I enjoy working with such a diverse group of patients and health conditions. It's a privilege to meet patients, hear their stories, and work with them to improve their health.

Sam: I love working in mental health because it's about understanding people's circumstances and working together with them, their families, and their communities. Mental health can be complex, and there's often no one-size-fits-all solution. But that's part of what makes it so important – we can and should shape policies that improve mental health and well-being across the board.

WELCOME NEW TEAM MEMBERS

We are excited to welcome the following new team members to our projects:

- **Vimbai Sigudu** – Implementation Technical Lead, Neotree Project
- **Mutsa Motsi** – Implementation Technical Lead, Neotree Project
- **Agnes Ngirazi** – Finance and Grants Management Assistant, Neotree Study
- **Cyprian Masvikeni** – Quantitative Research Assistant, Neotree Project
- **Precious Dzingira** – Clinical Implementation Lead, Neotree Project
- **Michelle Mahora** – Research Assistant, Harabugs Project

We look forward to their contributions to our work!



Vimbai



Mutsa



Cyprian



Precious



Agnes



Michelle

PICTURE OF THE MONTH



Celia, Nyasha and Kate at the ZIMA conference in Harare

OPPORTUNITIES

Medical Research Foundation Collaboration Travel Grants in Epidemiology 2024

Travel funding opportunities for mid-career researchers based in Sub-Saharan Africa to conduct collaborative research and advance epidemiological skills.

Youth Researcher Academy - Call for Applications

Are you a CAMFED CAMA member aged 18-24 in Kwekwe, Umzingwane, or Wedza? Interested in research and evaluating CAMFED programs? Apply for the Youth Researcher Academy

What's involved?

- 1-week training in Mazowe
- Develop a research question
- 2 years of fieldwork evaluating CAMFED's livelihoods project
- Stipend provided

How to apply?

Send a 1-page CV and responses (max 200 words each) to these questions:

1. What experience do you have engaging young people?
2. What research experience do you have?
3. Why are you interested in research?
4. What is your interest and experience in women's livelihoods and enterprise?

Email your application to n.ndondo@outlook.com by 1st October 2024

PUBLICATIONS

Madanhire T, Ó Breasail M, Mukwasi-Kahari C, Kowo-Nyakoko F, Ebeling P, Ferrand R, Ward K, Gregson C. **Prevalence of HIV-associated osteoporosis and fracture risk in mid-life women: a cross-sectional study in Zimbabwe** *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research*, 2024; zjae138, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jbmr/zjae138>

Dzavakwa NV, Kranzer K, Khan P, Mackworth-Young CRS, Mujuru HA, Ferrand RA, Simms V. **Electronic monitoring device informed interventions for treatment adherence and clinical outcomes in children and adolescents: A systematic review.** *Int J Nurs Stud.* 2024 Sep 7;160:104903. doi: 10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2024.104903. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 39303643.

Martin K, Peh R, Tembo M, Mavodza C, Doyle A, Dziva Chikwari C, Dauya E, Bandason T, Azizi S, Simms V, Ferrand R. **Factors Associated With the Use of Digital Technology Among Youth in Zimbabwe: Findings From a Cross-Sectional Population-Based Survey** *J Med Internet Res* 2024;26:e52670 URL: <https://www.jmir.org/2024/1/e52670> DOI: 10.2196/52670

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THANK YOU!