



SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER

April 2020



An open letter to the MicroResearch Community:

April 1st, 2020

To members of the MicroResearch Community,

We are reaching out to you today, fully acknowledging the many challenges you face during the COVID-19 pandemic. What we do today may impact pandemic planning in the future. The time to act is now.

We know you care deeply about your patients, your families, and your communities. As health care providers it is crucial that we serve our communities for current and future needs. During the MicroResearch workshop we spoke about our duties to society. At this crucial time, we must do our jobs to the best of our abilities, and, as MicroResearchers, we must consider how to make a real difference. We encourage you to do what you can to help.

What can you do? Here are a few ideas:

- Document how prepared you are for the pandemic. How prepared is your workplace, your community? And later, analyse the effectiveness of these measures.
- Evaluate the ways to motivate people to prepare and deal with the pandemic.
- Document the challenges people face in your community during these times.
- Think of other FINER questions that are innovative and unanswered.

During World War II, Winston Churchill said "Never was so much owed by so many to so few". When this pandemic ends, may the same words be said about your role in this war.

Be safe, wash your hands and follow your health ministry's advice!

Sincerely,

Bob Bortolussi

Noni MacDonald

Some useful sources of information for researchers:

- <https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/COVID-19>
- https://www.hopkinsguides.com/hopkins/view/Johns_Hopkins_ABX_Guide/540747/all/Coronavirus_COVID_19_SARS_CoV_2_#5Dr
- <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>
- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Thank you teachers, coaches, organizers, and reviewers this past year

Amy Grant
Audrey Steenbeek*
Bahati Ronald
Beth Taylor
Bob Bortolussi*
Brett Taylor
Catherine Abaasa
Catherine Morley
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Cristina Mattison
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Mary Vanderwal
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Stephen Ayosanmi
Susan Nakubulwa
Teddy Kyomuhangi
Tumuhimbise Manasseh
Victoria Nakimbugwe

* Academics Without Borders
Volunteers

IMPORTANT DEADLINES!

MicroResearch International
grant applications due: May 1st, 2020

MicroResearch Nova Scotia
grant applications due: June 15th, 2020

In light of these unprecedented times, we understand if some applications are sent in a few days late. Please contact us if you require an extension.

For more information, visit:
<http://www.microresearch.ca/apply-for-a-grant>

Connect with us!

www.microresearch-international.ca



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2020

RECENT WORKSHOPS

Team 1: · Caregiver experiences for children (6 months-14 years) with Cerebral Palsy attending Ruharo Mission Hospital in Mbarara, Uganda

Team 2: · Factors influencing ART adherence levels among adolescents from Sheema attending boarding secondary school

Team 3: · What are the factors affecting uptake of DPT3 among children of 16 weeks-12 months of age at Rugazi HCIV Rubirizi District?

Team 4: · What factors are associated with early discharge of preterm babies attending MRRH and HICH?

"There was a lot to learn. It made research appear [...] simpler than it has ever been. I feel inspired and empowered to take off!"

-MR Participant, MUST 2020

MUST, Uganda February, 2020



MUST Writing Workshop, Uganda February, 2020

Fifteen MicroResearch graduates and other professionals took part in a compressed, two-day writing workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to provide hands-on experience for MicroResearch workshop graduates and others professionals involved in research to enhance their technical writing skills using their project and data.

"This research has motivated me to the point I cannot explain. Thanks a lot to all mentors for the excellent teaching!"

-MR Writing Workshop Participant

Some of our planned workshops for MR International and MR Nova Scotia have been postponed to a later date, including workshops in Georgetown, Guyana; Bridgewater, Nova Scotia; and Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

MicroResearch International Forum, Fall 2020

Do you want the opportunity to connect and network with other MicroResearch graduates and share your research progress? We hope to hold the next MicroResearch Forum in the fall of 2020 (depending on when the COVID-19 pandemic resolves) at Kabarak University, Kenya. Forum participants will include past MicroResearch graduates from East Africa who have completed a project or are currently conducting research.

The first two MR forums held in 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya and Kampala, Uganda, were considered major successes, with presentations by MR graduates, as well as educational components



MicroResearch Forum in Nairobi, Kenya 2013

Recent Publications

Maina, A. N., & Bii, L. C. (2020). Factors affecting HBV vaccination in a Medical training College in Kenya: A mixed methods Study. *BMC Public Health*, 20(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-8158-2>

Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) is highly endemic in Sub-Saharan Africa with 70 to 90% of the population becoming infected before the age of 40 years. Healthcare workers (HCWs) including healthcare students (HCSs) are at an increased risk of contracting HBV due to occupational exposure. Despite the availability of an effective vaccine, and its recommendation by Kenya's Ministry of Health, few HCW and students are vaccinated. The aim of this study was to evaluate the influence of awareness, attitude, practices, and access factors on hepatitis B vaccination uptake by HCSs at Kenya Medical Training College (KMTc).

"There's now a policy in place about postgraduate students publishing their work before they can graduate and so the skills gained in MR are now more needed than ever. [...] My first publication was the research I carried out for my Masters and I used the notes that we got during our MR training. I am happy to report that it was accepted by the first journal that I submitted to. This, I hope, will encourage the MR team that though the MR projects may be taking time to be published, there are individuals publishing based largely on the skills gained during the training"

- Anne Njeri Maina, MR Participant, University of Nairobi 2012



Leah Bii, MR graduate and author of *BMC Public Health* publication



Janeth Bulemela, MR graduate and author of *International Breastfeeding Journal* publication

Bulemela, J., Mapunda, H., Snelgrove-Clarke, E., MacDonald, N., & Bortolussi, R. (2019). Supporting breastfeeding: Tanzanian men's knowledge and attitude towards exclusive breastfeeding. *International Breastfeeding Journal*, 14(1), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13006-019-0244-7>

Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) is one of the key strategies to ensure infants and young children survive and grow. However, a 2010 study showed that it was only practiced by 50% of Tanzanian women. That study also found that men were rarely supportive; either at home or in the health facilities, due to their personal beliefs or to traditional beliefs and culture of the community. In this qualitative study, we used focus groups to assess the knowledge and attitudes of 35 men from three villages on the benefits of EBF, the disadvantages of not breastfeeding, and how they can support their partners' breastfeeding. In addition, we assessed how they felt about spending time at home, if they considered handling the infant to be rewarding and whether they helped the mother with home chores.

MicroResearch and Rotary International

In the past year, Rotary Clubs of Atlantic Canada and Uganda have become important partners to MicroResearch, providing funding for MR projects. To promote stronger connections between Canadian Rotary Clubs and Rotary Clubs in Uganda, Louisa Horne, Chair of the Rotary District in Atlantic Canada, accompanied MicroResearch to Mbarara, Uganda for the February workshop at MUST. While there, Louisa met with local Rotary representatives and attended portions of the MR workshop. We are excited to see these partnerships grow in the future.

Furthermore, to inform local Rotary members in Nova Scotia of the MicroResearch program, co-director Bob Bortolussi made a presentation at a regional meeting on March 7th. We hope to engage even more clubs going forward.



Funding renewed for MicroResearch Nova Scotia

We are happy to announce that the IWK Health Centre and Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) have generously renewed their respective funding for MicroResearch NS. This funding announcement comes after an evaluation report was submitted, outlining the various successes and accomplishments MR-NS has had over its three year history.

The partnership between the IWK Health Centre and NSHA, along with funding from Dalhousie University and Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation, will allow the program to continue to grow and expand throughout the province.

To read the MicroResearch Nova Scotia 2019 Program Evaluation, visit: http://www.microresearch-international.ca/ns_evaluation.html



IWK Health Centre



MicroResearch Strategic Plans



MicroResearch Strategic Planning committee, 2014

The MicroResearch International five-year Strategic Plan, which was developed in 2015, is due for revision. There are tentative plans to hold a strategic planning meeting later this year. This meeting will build of the previous Strategic Plan, which is available to view on our website: <http://www.microresearch.ca/goals-and-objectives> (at bottom of page).

Similarly, MicroResearch NS has will hold its first Strategic Planning meeting, likely in late 2020 or early 2021. This meeting will be attended by members of the MR-NS Advisory Committee.

These plans aim to map out the growth and progress of the program, allowing MicroResearch to expand its reach globally and within Canada.

As always, we are grateful for all the funders and partners of MicroResearch International and MicroResearch Nova Scotia!



Academics Without Borders (AWB)
Brunswick Street Mission
Canadian Child Health Clinician Scientists Program
Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS)
Cape Breton University
Chitwan Medical College, Nepal
Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation
Dalhousie University Research and Innovation
Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine
Dartmouth Regional Hospital
Dartmouth Regional Hospital Foundation
Fidelis House
Halifax Regional Police
Horizons Community Development
Healthy Child Uganda
Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
IWK Health Centre
Kabarak University, Kenya

Kigali University Teaching Hospital (CHUK), Rwanda
Library Services of St. Francis Xavier University
Maternal Newborn Child Health Institute (MNCHI), Uganda
Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda
McGill University
Mildmay Uganda
Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation
Nairobi Hospital, Kenya
Nova Scotia Emergency Health Services
Nova Scotia Health Authority
Provincial Library Services MSSU SPOR
QEII Health Sciences Centre Foundation
Rotary Clubs of Nova Scotia, PEI, and Uganda
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
Society of Obstetrics and Gynecologists of Canada
St. Martha's Regional Hospital Foundation
University of Calgary

**Please consider donating your time or resources,
visit www.microresearch.ca for more information.**