


New Publication out of Rwanda

We congratulate Jean Pierre Gafaranga and his colleagues on being the first MicroResearch team out of Rwanda to complete their project and publish their findings! This progress is sure to motivate the other teams in Rwanda and we are looking forward to seeing MicroResearch grow in the country.
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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Knowledge, Barriers and Motivators to Cervical Cancer Screening in Rwanda: A Qualitative Study

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Background: Cervical cancer is a global public health problem with marked geographical disparity. There are high morbidity and mortality rates in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) associated with low screening rates. In 2020, in Rwanda, 3.7 million women aged 15–59 years were at risk of developing cervical cancer. It is the most commonly diagnosed female cancer in Rwanda with an incidence rate of 42 cases per 100,000 women per year. Despite Rwanda being the first African country to vaccinate against human papillomavirus (HPV) with a three-dose regimen, vaccination coverage of nearly 93 % in the target population of girls aged < 15 years, and having an established cervical cancer screening program, recent studies have found low screening rates. Our study sought to determine knowledge, motivators, and barriers to cervical cancer screening.

Methods: This was a qualitative phenomenological study conducted in an urban health facility and a rural health center offering cervical screening services in Rwanda. Focus group discussion (FGD) participants were women seeking these services and female staff at health centers.

Additionally, a key informant (KI) from the national organization was interviewed. Thematic analysis was used.

Results: Thirty women were enrolled in the FGDs, with an average age of 39 years. Many participants showed knowledge about cervical cancer existence and prevention methods. However, fear for pain, lack of knowledge about screening, how and where the screening was done, and privacy concerns were recurring subthemes. KI and FGDs participants also mentioned a lack of health insurance as a possible barrier for cervical cancer screening.

Conclusions: Barriers to the utilization of cervical cancer screening program in Rwanda are related to poor information about cervical cancer and the importance of screening among women, as well non-adherence to medical insurance schemes. Population sensitization through campaign and community outreach activities could have a positive impact on increasing the uptake of cervical cancer screening in Rwanda.

Hats off to all the MR reviewers, coaches, teachers, advisory committee members, volunteers, and Forum panelists from the past 6 months!

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IMPORTANT DEADLINE!

MicroResearch
International grant
application deadline:
November 1, 2022



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MicroResearch Virtual Forum

MicroResearch International hosted its second Virtual Forum on June 6 & 7, 2022. Funded by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, a total of 82 presenters, panelists, and participants joined from Uganda, Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Canada. A full report on the Forum is available on the website at www.microresearch.ca/news

The objectives of the two-day event were to:

- **Present and share findings from MicroResearch projects** by providing investigators an opportunity to present their projects and discuss implications on local/regional health programs and policies.
- **Provide participants with a better understanding of:**
 - **Networking:** show how a research network can support synergistic community focused health research efforts in East Africa and identify challenges in developing a network.
 - **Storytelling:** Illustrate the value of storytelling as a communication tool with the public, funders and other researchers.
 - **Decolonization and democratization of research:** review the history of colonization and the opportunities for investigator-initiated research in a decolonized social structure. And illustrate the opportunities offered in a democratized research environment.



Virtual Forum panelists and presenters

Session I: Networking

"Managing the process of a networking group comes with challenges of voluntary contribution and engagement [...]. Some measures to consider: have mid-term targets set; have periodic check-ins at the MR Canada level; coaching/mentorships." (Forum participant from Uganda)

The objectives of this session were to identify advantages in fostering an effective research network, to highlight the progress and challenges of the MR networks and working groups from the previous Forum.

After an update on the networks and working groups by Teddy Kyomuhangi of the MR Hub Site in Mbarara, Uganda, a panel led by Dr. Tony Otley discussed various challenges and opportunities that come from building networks.

Session II: Storytelling

The storytelling session on day two started with a viewing of different digital story videos made by MicroResearch graduates in Uganda. These videos were created in collaboration with the IT team at Healthy Child Uganda as part of a mini-workshop based around digital storytelling.

The presentations and panel discussion that followed, led by Louisa Horne, focused on how storytelling can be used effectively to share information and forge new partnerships. There have been requests to offer more mini-workshops/webinar training on how to do digital storytelling.

"Storytelling is more than conveying facts/knowledge - it offers opportunity for interaction, relationships and even ownership." (Forum participant from Kenya)

Session III: Democratization and Decolonization of Research

"This is why, the community still has problems. It's as if there was no research done. Because it was done without the knowledge of decolonization and democratization" (Paraphrased comment from a Forum participant from Tanzania)

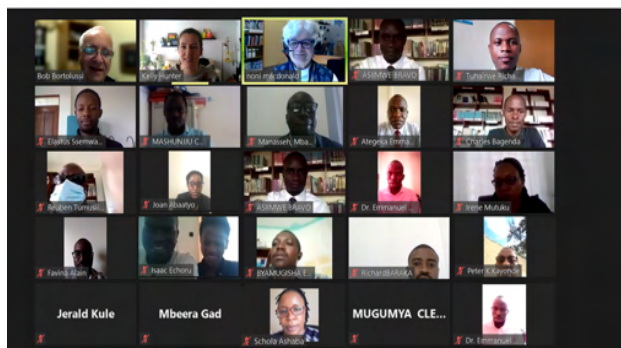
The final session of the Forum was led by Drs. Bob Bortolussi and Noni MacDonald, who presented on the concepts of democratization and decolonization of research and how they are embedded in MicroResearch's mission and values.

A meaningful panel discussion followed, discussing the power imbalances between high-income and lower-income countries, the need to change mindsets about who can contribute to research, and what structural change is required.

To learn more about how MicroResearch has been actively democratizing and decolonizing research, see a recent commentary in the Canadian Journal of Public Health by the three co-founders of MicroResearch:

MacDonald NE, Bortolussi R, Kabakyenga J. **A long-term process for decolonizing and democratizing community-focused research: the case for MicroResearch in East Africa and in Canada.** Canadian Journal of Public Health. 2022 Aug 18:1-5. DOI: 10.17269/s41997-022-00680-2

MUST Virtual Workshop Mbarara, Uganda April 25 - May 5, 2022



MicroResearch Virtual Workshop in Mbarara, Uganda in 2022

The 14th MicroResearch workshop for the Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Uganda was held virtually. This workshop was attended by participants from five institutions in Uganda, including Kampala International University, Kabale University, Ibanda University, Mayanja Memorial Training Institute, and Mbarara University of Science and Technology.

The teams are expected to submit full proposals for MicroResearch grants in November.

The next virtual workshop for MUST is scheduled for February, 2023.

Team 1: Knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of university students towards use of telemedicine to access sexual and reproductive health services: A case of Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Uganda

Team 2: Cervical lesions among adult women in Nakivale Refugee settlement in southwestern Uganda

Team 3: Prevalence and factors associated with traditional cuttings among young children with acute respiratory infections in Kabale District

Team 4: Post-COVID-19 effects and increase of common cold infections among school going children: A case of Rwamwanja refugee settlement in Kamwenge District, Rwenzori Region

Team 5: Factors associated with teenage pregnancy among rural youths in Bwizibwera Sub-county Mbarara District, Southwestern Uganda

Team 6: Prevalence and factors associated with self-medication with antibiotics among health professional students of Mayanja Memorial Medical Training Institute

MicroResearch Agriculture in Ethiopia

After seeing the success of MicroResearch in the health research field, Hannah Pugh and Dr. Lord Abbey from Canada's Dalhousie University's Faculty of Agriculture decided to adapt the program to build research capacity among Agricultural instructors, industry, and community members, with the course being offered in Ethiopia.

Modeled after the traditional MicroResearch workshops, participants learn the basics of research and develop their own project proposals related to agriculture.

Over two workshops, total of eight groups have successfully completed the course and used the results for publications and, most importantly, to disseminate the results to local communities and Ethiopian policy makers, where they could be beneficial and not otherwise known.

"I had lots of ideas about projects that would benefit the farmers in my community, sustainable land use, solving community waste problems, pest control using local alcohol. MicroResearch showed me how to choose the best idea and make it into a successful project... and provided the funding to complete it."
- MR Agriculture Participant in Ethiopia

This agricultural program is another great example of how MicroResearch principles can be applied to other disciplines. This is in addition to the SEER program implemented in partnership with Academics Without Borders. SEER is modelled after MicroResearch with the goal of improving research capacity within engineering globally.

"Most of my previous training has been very theoretical. The MicroResearch model taught me the skills needed to lead a successful research project and get results that can be given to the farmers."

- MR Agriculture Participant in Ethiopia



MicroResearch Agriculture participants in Ethiopia

More recent MicroResearch publications:

Vivalya BM, Vagheni MM, Piripiri AL, Masuka RK, Omba AN, Mankubu AN, Andjafono DO, Kitoko GM. **Prevalence and factors associated with relapse and long hospital stay among adult psychiatric patients with a history of childhood trauma.** Psychiatry Research. 2022 Jul 26;114745. DOI: 10.1016/j.psychres.2022.114745

Kanyesigye, H., Kabakyenga, J., Mulogo, E. et al. **Improved maternal-fetal outcomes among emergency obstetric referrals following phone call communication at a teaching hospital in Southwestern Uganda: a quasi-experimental study.** BMC Pregnancy Childbirth 22, 684 (2022). DOI: 10.1186/s12884-022-05007-0

Mukama Semei, C., Nakubulwa, S., Nyirabega, E., Mugabe, P., et al **Predictors of access to sexual and reproductive health services by urban refugees in Kampala City, Uganda.** International Journal of Women's Health Care, 7(3), 131-139.



Check out our most recent MR Project Booklet for a full list of publications and project updates! www.microresearch.ca/projects

Meet Mona! The new MicroResearch Finance and Database Coordinator



We are happy to introduce our new Finance and Database Coordinator, Mona Fouda! Mona has joined the MicroResearch team in Halifax, Canada and will be working closely with Bob, Noni, and Kelly on matters related to finance and database management, as well as general program coordination.

Mona is an international medical graduate from Egypt, with a background in public health and health administration and experience in health service research in Canada, Africa, and Asia. She is excited to be a part of the MR team in realizing its great impact on our communities!

Upcoming MicroResearch Workshops:

Kabarak University, Kenya
Meru University of Science and Technology, Kenya
Korle-Bu Training Hospital, Ghana
Kenyan Medical Training College, Kenya
Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda
Mildmay Uganda
Georgetown Regional Referral Hospital, Guyana
Amar Seva Sangam (ASSA), India

"This was the great opportunity to learn more about micro research especially for me being from a limited resources country with few or even no partnership with the international university and medical journal. I thank you to the organizing committee members and my group members for all the teamwork which has brought so far at this level."

- MR Participant from Uganda

Thank you to all our partners and supporters!



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visit www.microresearch.ca for more information.**