ANESVAD supports control and elimination of NTDs in Ghana

ANESVAD, a Spanish NGO is providing support to Ghana Health Service in a 2 year project to integrate care for Buruli ulcer, Yaws and Leprosy patients. The project was launched in Accra by the Director General of Ghana Health Service Dr Nsiah Asare in February 2018. As part of this, KCCR, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) and the University of Ghana (UG) is offering laboratory support for 15 selected districts in Ghana. The ANESVAD team Mr Alfonso Noboa, Mr Pedro Landin and Ms Ellsie Ansareo visited KCCR on 25th January 2018 for discussions. The three laboratories will provide laboratory diagnostic confirmation of Buruli ulcer, Yaws and Leprosy suspected cases aimed at fighting these Neglected Tropical Disease. KCCR will serve 7 districts, Ashanti Akim North, Sekyere Afram Plains, Nkoranza South, Upper Denkyira West, Upper Denkyira East, Mpohor and Wa Municipal in the middle & Northern Ghana whilst Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) and the University of Ghana will cover 8 mainly southern areas (Asikuma Odoben Brakwa, Akuapem South, Akwapem North, Ayensuano, Upper West Akim, Biakoye, Jasikan and Wassa Amenfi East). Capacity will also be built at the district level by training laboratory technicians and health workers on the proper methods of specimen
collection, storage and transport to the reference laboratories. The laboratories have been provided 4x4 Toyota Hilux vehicles to facilitate travel to districts. ANESVAD launched a special report on the new project at https://branded.eldiario.es/enfermedades-etd-mujer-ghana-anesvad/. See also http://kccr-ghana.org/anesved

**AREF Excell Researcher and Leadership Development Programme**

KCCR and Scientists selected from KNUST were awarded the prestigious Excell Researcher and Leadership Development Programme award funded with a grant from the Robert Bosch Stiftung and run by the African Research Excellence Fund (AREF) of the Medical Research Foundation in the UK (https://africaresearchexcellencefund.org.uk/). Drs Sylverken Augustina and Badu Kingsley from the Department of Theoretical and Applied Biology, Linda Debrah from the Department of Microbiology and Michael Owusu from the Department of Medical Laboratory Technology are participating in the programme.


The programme is being executed through a series of workshops and conferences in an 18 month period. In May 2018 the nominees and a lead Prof Alex Debrah with the Department of Medical Laboratory Technology at the College of Health Sciences attended the first AREF workshop in Senegal. This program is having a significant impact on the careers of these Scientists. Within this program they hope to execute a project to locally Strengthen Research Communication Skills for Young Investigators at KNUST with support from AREF. http://kccr-ghana.org/kccr-selected-to-participate-in-aref-excell-researcher-and-leadership-development-programme-2018

**Centre for Disease Control at KCCR**

The Centre for Disease Control (CDC), Atlanta and Ghana visited the KCCR on the 30th of January 2018 and also paid a courtesy call on the Vice Chancellor of KNUST Professor Kwasi Obiri Danso. During the visit to KCCR, the team was given a tour of the laboratories and interacted with Scientists and the institution as a whole. Possibilities on how CDC can support KCCR in their work and how the KCCR can be integrated into the work plans of the CDC were discussed. http://kccr-ghana.org/centre-for-disease-control-at-kccr

**BNITM supports establishment of a Global Health and Infectious Diseases Group**

To locally advance the careers of young Ghanaian scientists who train abroad and to support efforts at retaining them in Ghana, the Bernhard Nocht Institute of Tropical Medicine (BNITM) has instituted an award for establishing a Global Health and Infectious Diseases Group at KCCR. The first beneficiary of this award Dr John Amuasi of the School of Public Health’s Global Health
Department at KNUST will establish the Group and a 3 year support for training PhD students at the KCCR. Read more at http://kccr-ghana.org/research-groups-projects/global-health-infectious-diseases-group

Training in TB Second Line Drug Susceptibility Testing

As part of efforts by the Ghana National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) to pilot the use of the short Multidrug Resistant (MDR) Tuberculosis treatment in Ghana, KCCR Scientists were trained in the Line Probe Assays (LPA) for the Anti-TB drugs from the 15th to 19th January 2018 by Specialists from Hain Life Science. Dr. Christopher Wainaina from Hain Life Science trained Mr Richard Larbi, Rejoice Arthur, Joshua Ocansey, Godfred Acheampong and Richmond Yeboah from KCCR. Similar training was conducted at Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, Koforidua Regional Hospital and Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital. Subsequently this TB diagnostic Assay has been made available to Ghana Health Service Hospitals. Since the training KCCR is currently processing patient samples from all over the country. The NTP is providing support for a technician dedicated to this assay at KCCR. This has been a successful programme. http://kccr-ghana.org/training-in-tb-second-line-drug-susceptibility-testing

Hepatitis B vaccination exercise

A novel introduction in the Health and Safety Policy at KCCR was the compulsory Hepatitis B vaccine for everybody working in the KCCR laboratories and/or with blood and blood products. KCCR together with the Ghana Health Service organized the testing and immunization of all current staff at KCCR, who had not received the Hepatitis B vaccine. The first, second and third shots of the Hepatitis B vaccine were completed in June 2018. http://kccr-ghana.org/hepatitis-b-vaccination-exercise

Training in Malaria diagnostics

Microscopy remains the most accessible method for parasite quantitation, classification of severity of malaria disease, for drug efficacy monitoring, and as a gold standard reference of assessing other diagnostic tools. The mismatch between quality and needs highlight the importance of the establishment of reliable standards and procedures for assessing and assuring quality. Constant training is a key component of quality management program towards establishment of quality assurance and quality control in the laboratory. The Infectious Diseases Epidemiology Group at KCCR developed a curriculum in Malaria Microscopy Training according to WHO standards that lasted for 10 days. Three sessions were
organized from 22nd January to 2nd February 2018, 12th to 27th February 2018 and 17th to 27th February 2018. The facilitators were Geoffrey Foli, Henry Hanson and Oumou Maiga-Ascofare. Fifteen personnel have already participated in the three sessions using validated malaria slides provided by the Kintampo Health Research Centre. Participant progress was monitored daily using three essential parameters - parasite detection and quantification, and species identification. The post-course review showed that the course was highly appreciated by the participants. Researchers from KNUST, Ghana Health Service and personnel from the National Malaria Control Program have expressed the need for the course and encourage its continuation. [http://kccr-ghana.org/training-in-malaria-diagnostics](http://kccr-ghana.org/training-in-malaria-diagnostics)

**Team from Volkswagen Foundation Tour the KCCR Cold House**

The Volkswagen Foundation (VW) has had a long relationship with the KCCR at KNUST. The New cold house of KCCR was built with sponsorship from the VW foundation. In April 2018, representatives from the foundation visited the premises of KCCR to inspect work completed on the cold house. Mrs Hanna Wieland and colleagues were impressed with the output of the investment. KCCR also assured them of using the facilities to further research in Ghana and beyond. [http://kccr-ghana.org/team-from-volkswagen-foundation-tour-the-kccr-cold-house](http://kccr-ghana.org/team-from-volkswagen-foundation-tour-the-kccr-cold-house)

**Friends University Students Gain Tropical Experience**

Students from the Friends University, Wichita, Kansas visited KCCR from the 29th of May to the 6th June 2018. The main purpose was to familiarize themselves with the laboratory aspects of Tropical Medicine particularly in the area of Neglected Tropical Diseases. They also toured field communities in Ashanti Akim Agogo. They were provided with insight into Mycobacterium ulcerans disease, diagnostics and its management. They were really impressed with the experience they acquired.
First Aid Training

First Aid training was given to all the staff and students at the Centre on the 27th of April 2018 and 11th of May 2018. The facilitators, Dr. Ayisi Boateng (Family Medicine, KNUST Hospital) and Dr. Joseph Bonney (Emergency Medicine Unit, KATH), took the participants through the most important prevention and emergency responses. The staff and students were trained to safely assess an emergency situation, to identify and interpret signs of life and to act well in cases of emergency. Participants were also trained on life saving measures such as chin lift, recovery positions and chest compression on mannequins and on themselves. Particularly important in a laboratory setting was the application of first aid measures on burns, cuts and chemical poisoning. Participants were also trained on how to Prevent emergency situations from occurring. For example by knowing the hazard symbols, proper storage of chemicals and to familiarize themselves with the material safety data sheet (MSDS) before handling a chemical. We are grateful to Dr. Ayisi Boateng and Dr. Joseph Bonney to have conducted this training at KCCR. [http://kccr-ghana.org/first-aid-training](http://kccr-ghana.org/first-aid-training)

Students from University of Groningen on internship

Scientists from the University of Groningen Prof Ymkje Stienstra and Prof Tjip Van der Werf are leaders in the field of research into Buruli ulcer. Six of their students in partial fulfillment of their academic work spent 6 weeks on internship in KCCR at KNUST. They were attached to the Buruli ulcer and Skin NTD group. During their stay they were assigned various tasks to accomplish with Dr Martin Agyei, Dermatologist and faculty member of the School of Medical Sciences. The Students spent some of their time at Agogo Presbyterian Hospital attached to the Buruli ulcer management team and had the chance to interact with Mr Alex Kesse, General Manager at the Hospital. [http://kccr-ghana.org/students-from-university-of-groningen-on-internship](http://kccr-ghana.org/students-from-university-of-groningen-on-internship)

DELGEME Capacity Building Programmes

DELGEME (Development of Excellence in Leadership and Training in Genetics for Malaria Elimination) in Sub-Saharan Africa encourage young scientists to specialize in cutting edge tools like genomics, metabolomics, drug design and bioinformatics with the
focus of eliminating malaria in Africa.
As part of the DELGEME Program, a workshop for the second cohort of PhD, Post-Doctoral fellows and aspiring Leaders together with awardees and supervisors was held from 30th of April to the 07th of May 2018 with the aim to identifying gaps and improving individual research proposals.
Dr. Oumou Maiga-Ascofare from KCCR was present as Facilitator and Aspiring leader awardee. A week of training for staff of National Malaria Control Programs (NMCP) from 15 African countries (Cameroon, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Gabon, Cote d'Ivoire, Angola, Cape Verde, DR Congo, Tanzania, Kenya, The Gambia and Chad) was organized in Bamako, Mali. During this training, participants learnt the basic concepts of Molecular Biology and its application in the fight against malaria. http://kccr-ghana.org/delgeme-capacity-building-programmes

At the WHO Neglected Tropical Disease Meeting in Abidjan

The NTD Program of the WHO Regional Office for Africa brought together National NTD program Managers from 10 Member countries as well as, NTD experts and Members of the Regional Program Review Group for Case Management NTDs. The meeting was held in Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire from 15th to 18th May 2018. The group discussed implementation of the Yaws Eradication Strategy (Morges Strategy) in Combination with Case Management for the elimination of leprosy and Control of Buruli ulcer and integration with Mass Medicine Administration(MMA) for NTDs amenable to Preventive Chemotherapy (PC-NTDs).  http://kccr-ghana.org/at-the-who-neglected-tropical-disease-meeting-in-abidjan

Leaving-do for National Service Personnel

A leaving-do was held for our 2017-18 National Service Scheme personnel at the KCCR cafeteria. Food was served by 'Silver Lobster' as usual. The personnel were attached to various research projects with varying experiences. They discussed their positive experiences as well as provided suggestions for future personnel. Suggestions included introduction of a formal mid-term review of their assignment at KCCR. Their feedback was generally positive.  http://kccr-ghana.org/leaving-do-for-national-service-personnel

Look out for these Events!

- Workshop in Antimicrobial Resistance at KCCR (October 2018)
- Symposium on Malaria co-morbidity in sub-Sahara Africa at ASTMH in New Orleans (October 28th to 1st November 2018)  See more at https://kccr-ghana.org/