Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research (KCCR) welcomes Prof. J.S.K Ayim as Advisory Board Chairman and Dr Baffour Awuah as Ministry of Health Representative. The KCCR was established in 1997 by a State Agreement, as a joint venture between the Ministry of Health, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana and Bernhard-Nocht Institute of Tropical Medicine (BNITM), Hamburg, Germany to provide research infrastructure, train health personnel and to conduct relevant research in Ghana to boost national development.

Prof. J.S.K Ayim is a former Vice Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). He is a seasoned Pharmacist and Scientist with extensive experience in management and training. Prof Ayim takes over from Prof. Sir Dr George Wireko-Brobby who already completed his term.

Dr Baffour Awuah is a Consultant Radiation/Clinical Oncologist and former Medical Director of the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH). He is currently the Special Advisor to the Minister for Health and brings along his wealth of experience. Dr Baffour Awuah takes over from Dr Reginald Nii Odai, Acting Director of Research Statistics and Information Management at the Ministry of Health. KCCR is grateful to Prof. Sir Dr George Wireko-Brobby and Dr Reginald Nii Odai for the good work done.

Graduations

**Mrs Dorcas Owusu**
Mrs Dorcas Owusu had a successful defense of her PhD in Immunology on Hepatitis C virus in Ghana: risk factors, genotypes and role of T helper cells in spontaneous recovery. The study was carried out in Kumasi, Obuasi Municipality and Daboya. She awaits graduation at KNUST in February 2019.

**Mr Aliyu Mohammed**
Mr Aliyu Mohammed had a successful defense of his PhD in Public Health on a mobile phone-based electronic health information and surveillance system for Africa. He awaits graduation at KNUST in February 2019.
Four KNUST faculty members and their Lead Applicant that carry out Research at KCCR were selected in 2018 for the Excell Researcher and Leadership Development Programme. The programme is supported by funds from the Robert Bosch Stiftung Foundation through the African Research Excellence Fund (AREF). Drs. Augustina Sylverken, Michael Owusu, Linda Debrah and Kingsley Badu have successfully gone through two modules of training in leadership and management. The first training was organised at IRESSEF in Senegal from 28th April to 3rd May and the second training was at the Moller Centre in Cambridge UK from 1st – 3rd October, 2018. The third training which will focus on communication is scheduled for Entebbe, Uganda from 21st – 25th January, 2019.

Dr Peter Dukes (AREF Programmes Director) and Hazel McCullough (Theme Leader) visited Ghana from 12th – 13th November, 2018 to follow up on the fellows and reviewed their performance in achieving the target objectives of the programme. As part of their rounds, they met with the Provost of the College of Health Sciences, Head of Department of Theoretical and Applied Biology, Head of the Quality Assurance Programme and Provost of the College of Science, KNUST.
Small Grants Programme for Africa in Focus

The African Research Network on Neglected Tropical Diseases (ARNTD) is currently running a small grants program for African Researchers that is funded through the Taskforce for Global Health (COR-NTD) by the USAID and DFID. Mariana Stephens (Senior Associate Director of Special Program) and Waithera Kagira-Watson (Associate Program Director of Finance) from the Taskforce for Global Health (COR-NTD) visited the ARNTD Secretariat at KCCR on 3rd September 2018 to discuss the Small Grants Program. The Small Grants Program provides funding for young and middle level career scientists to carry out research on Neglected Tropical Diseases. There is commitment from COR-NTD to continue supporting this program.

Skills for Excellence in Science Series

The Global Health and Infectious Disease Group at KCCR runs the Skills for Excellence In Science Series (SEXISS). The series is designed to equip participants with the fundamental principles and technical know-how to improve their scientific output in research, academia, or career in any health or biomedical field. The workshops combine lectures with case studies and hands-on exercises designed to equip participants with practical and contextual knowledge. As part of the SEXISS, a Scientific Writing workshop was held from 10th – 12th September, 2018 at the IDL conference room at KNUST. Facilitators included Prof Kwadwo Koram, Prof Daniel Ansong, Dr Samuel Blay-Nguah, Dr John Amuasi and Richard Bruce Lamptey. The workshop covered areas such as concepts of Scientific Writing with special emphasis on proposal development for grant application; manuscript writing for publications; and other topical areas. Also as part of the SEXISS, the 2018 edition of an international four-day short course in “Basic Epidemiology with STATA” (BASES) was held at the IDL conference center from 26th – 29th November, 2018. The BASES short course aimed at providing participants with skills in epidemiological thinking, epidemiological study designs, data management and analyses, as well as basic coding using the statistical software package - STATA. The course was delivered by faculty from Ghana and Germany, and comprised lectures and practical exercises, including supervised analyses of “real-world” datasets and the discussion of published studies.
Spotlight: Dr Alexander Kwarteng

Dr. Alexander Kwarteng is a member of faculty at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and carries out his research at the KCCR. Kwarteng's research has gained both local and international recognition. He was recently selected by the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR) as a Global Scholar in the Human and Microbiome program. The CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholars programme benefits early-career investigators by providing mentorship, funding, career development training, and access to a global network of scientists. Since its establishment in the year 1982 Dr Kwarteng is the first African to join these elite scientists. He will leverage the mentorship opportunities and research support provided to advance research to unlock the complex role of the microbiome in health and physiology. Interestingly, in the December 6, 2018 issue of Nature, an interview of Dr. Kwarteng is presented where, he describes how the Global Scholars programme has advanced his career and transformed his perspective.

With an EDCTP Fellowship and grants from the African Research Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases (ARNTDs) and EDCTP, Dr Kwarteng is carrying out studies to investigate the impact of colonizing bacterial and fungal microbes on complications of lymphatic filariasis such as systematic inflammation, acute filarial attacks, and wound non-healing. He is also examining mental health-related stress among individuals with lymphatic filariasis in Ghana.

Dr Kwarteng’s research is gradually gaining momentum. Together with Professor William Foulkes at McGill University (Montreal) and Professor Paz Polak at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (New York), Alex is going to establish the proof-of-concept cell-free DNA among breast cancer patients in Ghana. This study is revolutionary because it will provide the framework to support early breast cancer diagnosis using blood samples instead of tumours, particularly in resource-limited settings. With support from the Komen Breast Cancer Foundation he will investigate mutational signatures unique to African breast cancer patients which will inform patient management practices in Ghana.
One Health Training for Genetics and Primate Capture

A one-week hands-on workshop was organized in the KCCR laboratories by Dr. Augustina Sylverken as part of the TREPS project. This brought together for the first time human and animal experts. On the 20th-22nd September the workshop focused on Genetics of Treponema pallidum. On the 24th-25th September practical techniques utilizing state-of-the-art equipment for primate capture was held at the Kumasi Zoological Gardens. Participants and the zoo workers had the privilege of using state-of-the-art equipment in capturing non-human primates at the Kumasi zoo. The workshop was sponsored by the German Research Foundation.

Articles to Read

Dr Joseph Obeng-Baah, Isaac Boakye and other local and external collaborators for the ACT4 study carried out at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital and hosted at KCCR succeeded in putting 2 articles in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) in August 2018. ACT 4 study funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) is a cluster randomized Trial providing evidence for enhancing the public health impact of latent TB infection diagnosis and treatment.

Read the full articles at:


Recent Publications

Recent publications may be found at http://kccr-ghana.org/research-impact/publications

KCCR Scientists at International Meetings

Dr Oumou Maiga-Ascofare a Postdoctoral Scientist at KCCR co-chaired a session on Malaria at the recent ASTMH meeting in New Orleans USA. She also presented posters highlighting the impact of Malaria and Schistosomiasis co-infection on malaria outcomes.

Dr Oumou Maiga-Ascofare (middle) explains a point to scientists at the ASTMH meeting in New Orleans USA.
Moving Flow Cytometry to the Next Level

As a measure to strengthen the capacities to conduct cutting-edge immunological research on site in Ghana, the KCCR was recently equipped with a modern multicolour Beckman Coulter Cytoflex S flow cytometer, which was funded by the German Centre for Infection Research (DZIF). This is an addition to the portable BD Accuri C6 system already installed at the KCCR. A workshop was conducted on the 15th of November, 2018 for KCCR scientists and students with a background in immunology. In total 12 scientists were introduced in the function and use of the Cytoflex S. The training was conducted by Dr Maria Sophia Mackroth and Ms Lea Kaminski from the Bernhard Nocht Institute of Tropical Medicine and the University Hospital in Hamburg.

Training of Veterinary Experts

From 24th - 26th September, 2018 the FAO-ECTAD, in their quest to improve biosafety and biosecurity, conducted training-of-trainers (TOT) of veterinary experts, so that trained personnel can replicate the training for other staff in the field at regional and district levels. The overall aim is to improve the quality of bacterial, viral and parasitic samples and ensure a safe transport to the respective laboratories. Expert Facilitators from the Veterinary Services Directorate (VSD) of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture as well as KCCR at KNUST conducted this training. In all 14 veterinary field and laboratory staff had hands-on laboratory training in the KCCR laboratories. This training was very successful and the FAO was very appreciative.
Laboratory Training for technicians in Liberia and Nigeria

Dr. Michael Frimpong, a Postdoctoral Fellow at KCCR provided technical support towards in-country testing of Buruli ulcer by PCR in Liberia and Nigeria. This was to increase the capacity of the existing laboratories in the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) and the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR). The mission was jointly supported by the AIM Initiative and the German Leprosy Relief Association (GLRA).

Food and Drug Authority Clinical Trials GCP Training for KCCR scientists

Ten scientists associated with TakeOff and BuruliNox trials attended the 3-day annual Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) Good Clinical Practice (GCP) course in Accra from 14th - 16th August 2018. This has significantly impacted on documentation practices relating to clinical trials.

Wednesday Seminars!
Do not miss our educative Wednesday seminar and journal club meetings. Contact Henrietta at info@kccr.de for more information.
Training for Asante Akim District in Recognition of Neglected Skin Diseases

A team from KCCR experienced in managing Neglected Skin Diseases joined others in the Asante Akim District to train laboratory and health teams in recognition and laboratory confirmation of Buruli ulcer, leprosy and yaws.

Erasmus programmes at KNUST to be expanded through links with University of Bonn in Germany

Christine Müller from the International Networking Office at the University of Bonn visited KNUST with hope of establishing an Erasmus programme with the KNUT. This was driven by the long-term relationship between the University of Bonn and Scientists at the KCCR. In 2019 KCCR celebrates 20 years of research between KNUST/KCCR with the University of Bonn. The team held mutually beneficial discussions with Prof. Rexford Assasie Oppong (Dean, International Programmes Office) and Prof Yaw Adu-Sarkodie (Provost of the College of Health Science) KNUST. With establishment of the Erasmus program, funds will be made available for exchange of faculty and students from KNUST and the University of Bonn. This will further strengthen the relationship between the two institutions. Christine Müller gave a talk to lecturers and students on the Teaching and Training Opportunities at the University of Bonn in Germany.