

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Job Summary

Position: PhD Student in Epidemiology (1 post)
Reports to: Principal Investigator/Project Leader
Work station: Bagamoyo
Apply by: January 23rd 2024

Institute overview

Ifakara Health Institute (IHI) is a leading research organization in Africa with a strong track record in developing, testing and validating innovations for health. Driven by a core strategic mandate for research, training and services, the Institute's work now spans a wide spectrum, covering biomedical and ecological sciences, intervention studies, health-systems research and policy translation.

Project overview

The Child Health and Infection with Low Density (CHILD) Malaria project will be an open-label randomized controlled trial in 600 children 6 months to 10 years of age at a trial site near Bagamoyo, Tanzania, where the proportion of low-density infections are high. The baseline assessments were completed in December 2023 and end line assessment will be conducted after 24 months follow up.

Low-density Malaria Infection (LMI) are often chronic and represent a high proportion of infections among children in the community and children presenting with fever, but they have been largely ignored because standard point-of-care diagnostics have limited sensitivity to detect them. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that LMI are associated with recurrent malaria, chronic anemia, poor growth, co-infection with invasive bacterial disease, and cognitive impairment.

The objective of the CHILD project is to determine the long-term health and socioeconomic effects of detecting and treating LMI in children. The project will investigate if compared to a standard of care, detecting and treating LMI through use of molecular detection methods in active case detection (ACDm) and passive case detection (PCDm) in children will improve all-cause morbidity and have cognitive and socioeconomic benefits. The potential long-term impact is improved health, cognitive, and socioeconomic potential for millions of children living in areas afflicted by malaria worldwide

Position summary

The Ifakara Health Institute, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH), and University of Basel Switzerland welcomes applications for a **PhD program in Epidemiology**. IHI and partners are looking for a highly motivated African PhD candidate with a keen interest in childhood neurocognitive functioning and malaria research. Expertise in epidemiology is required, experience with neurocognitive instruments and assessments is an advantage.

The student will be part of the CHILD project team and will be based at IHI Bagamoyo. The candidate should be comfortable to work in international teams. Due to the collaborative nature of the project,

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excellent communication skills and working efficiently both independently and as part of a team are required.

The student will focus on investigating neurocognitive functioning in children with and without low-density malaria infections in Tanzania, as well as the long-term impacts of hypothesized relationships. Neurocognitive functioning will be assessed in a pilot validation study, at baseline and a 2-year follow-up of the CHILD randomized controlled trial.

The student will use the baseline data to evaluate cross-sectional relationships between malaria infections, cognition and schooling. Furthermore, the student will be part of preparing and conducting the 2-year follow-up neurocognitive assessments. From the generated data, the student will model the long-term benefits of cognitive RCT outcomes.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Support the design and assessments of the neurodevelopmental part of the project
- Evaluate neurocognitive study instruments as required for quantitative assessments.
- Take part in quantitative data collection during the follow-up period.
- Analyze quantitative data.
- Support report writing and findings presentation.
- Draft manuscripts for peer-reviewed journals and write PhD dissertation(s).
- Be an integral part of the wider activities of the CHILD.

Qualification and Experience

- Master's degree in Epidemiology accredited by the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU)

Skills and Competencies

- Skills in quantitative data management.
- Skills in quantitative methods (data preparation and analysis, regression modelling).
- Programming experience (R or STATA).
- Experience with neurodevelopmental instruments for children is an advantage.
- Effective communication skills.
- Professional attitude with the highest level of integrity.
- Able to meet deadlines.
- Be fluent in both English and Swahili languages.

Remuneration

An attractive and competitive remuneration package will be offered to successful candidates as per IHI salary scales for scientists.

Equal Opportunity

IHI is an equal opportunity employer. We prohibit intentional biases or discrimination and harassment

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of any kind at the workplace and during recruitment. All employment decisions are based solely on job requirements and individual qualifications, and our recruitment process is governed by the labour laws of Tanzania.

Mode of Application

All candidates who meet the above job requirements should send their application letters together with their detailed curriculum vitae (CVs) showing contact addresses including email, telephone/cell phone numbers and copies of academic and professional certificates to the email address below.

The **deadline** for this application is **17:00 hrs on Tuesday, January 23rd 2024**. All e-mail application subject lines should include: **PhD Student CHILD project – BAGAMOYO. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted for an interview.**

Human Resources Manager,
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