

RAMP Project Abstract: LILONGWE, MALAWI

Project Title: HIV Vaccine Trial Experiences: Lessons for COVID-19 Vaccine Research and Acceptance

Project Type: Short-term Project 8-10 weeks On-site

Proposed Project Dates: Flexible 8 -10 weeks On-site between June 2023 – September 2023

Project Site: The University of North Carolina (UNC) Project, Lilongwe, Malawi

Project Overview:

The University of North Carolina (UNC) Project, Lilongwe, Malawi is a collaboration between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Malawi Ministry of Health. It is located in the capital city of Malawi on the premises of Kamuzu Central Hospital (KCH), a 1,000-bed, public tertiary care hospital operated by the Ministry of Health that serves a population of nearly four million people. The UNC Project Malawi has been conducting research in Malawi since 1990. The project will require 8-10 weeks on site at the UNC Project, Lilongwe, Malawi. The scholar will learn mixed research methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods, and will obtain data on factors associated with uptake of COVID-19 vaccine among HIV vaccine trial participants at an urban Health Centre in Lilongwe, Malawi. After data collection, the scholar will work with their mentor to analyze the data and prepare a manuscript and poster/oral presentation.

Project Summary:

The project will assess baseline factors that influence COVID-19 vaccine uptake among HIV vaccine trial participants in Lilongwe, Malawi and will also describe the perceptions and experiences of the HIV vaccine trial participants, as they may give important lessons for COVID-19 vaccine study participation and COVID-19 vaccine acceptance. This will be done by conducting a cross-sectional survey of 150 HIV vaccine trial participants and 20 in-depth interviews. Our community educators and tracers will contact the participants to explain the purpose of the study. Interested participants will be invited to the clinic to take part in the study. Since currently COVID-19 has been controlled and cases have significantly declined, we expect the candidate to conduct the study onsite. If circumstances due to COVID-19 preclude this from happening, the scholar will conduct the study remotely and research assistants will be used to assist with data collection.

Regulatory requirements for the project and plans for completing them:

The project will require approval by the Malawi National Health Sciences Research Committee (NHSRC). It generally takes about 2 – 3 months to obtain approval from NHSRC. The project will also require approval by the University of North Carolina IRB and approval is usually processed within 4 – 6 weeks.

Expected Deliverables:

The scholar will spend 8-10 weeks on site training, developing and conducting the survey and 4 months of data analysis, manuscript preparation, and poster/oral presentation at the HVTN Full Group meeting.

Project Contact Person(s) (Name, Email):

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