RAMP Project Abstract: LILONGWE, MALAWI

Project Title: Understanding engagement to HIV prevention and family planning services among women after participating in a HIV vaccine trial

Project Type: Long-term Project 9 – 12 months On-site

Proposed Project Dates: On-site between May 2023 – April 2024

Project Site: The University of North Carolina Project Malawi

Project Overview:

The University of North Carolina Project Malawi (UNCPM) conducts HIV prevention and vaccine trials under the HIV Vaccine Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) and the HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN), and HIV treatment trials through the Adult AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG) and the International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials Network (IMPAACT). The research site also conducts research in other infectious disease and cancers. UNCPM also conducts social behavioral science research. For this proposed project, the scholar will work with an implementation science epidemiologist, social scientists and community engagement staff at our site in Lilongwe Malawi. The scholar will learn implementation science epidemiology methods, community-based participatory research approached and mixed methods data collection methods. The scholar will obtain information on uptake of HIV prevention and family planning methods and barriers and facilitators to their access and uptake among women after completing participation in the HVTN705 (IMBOKODO) vaccine trial. Information will be collected on access and use of HIV prevention methods and family planning services. In addition, information on barriers and facilitators to access and uptake of HIV prevention and family planning services. The information on barriers and facilitators will be used to develop a counselling guide that will be implemented to increase uptake of HIV preventions and family planning services. In addition, the information on barriers and facilitators will be used identify strategies for increasing access and uptake of HIV preventions and family planning services among high-risk women in future. The scholar will analyze the data with guidance from their mentors and prepare an oral presentation and manuscript.

Project Summary:

The aim of this study is to obtain information from women at risk of HIV infection post-HTV705 trial participation to investigate the uptake, barriers and facilitators to uptake and access of HIV prevention and family planning services, and to identify implementation strategies to improve access and uptake of these services. This will be done by conducting a baseline survey of uptake and barriers and facilitators to uptake and access to HIV prevention and family planning services. All (157) available women who participated in the HVTN705 trial at UNCPM will be surveyed (in-person or online) on use of HIV preventions and family planning services using a structured questionnaire. A subset (6 women per group; total 24) of women (using HIV prevention method only, using family planning services only, using both HIV prevention and family planning services, and not using HIV prevention or family planning services) to evaluate barriers and facilitators to uptake and access to these services. The in-depth interviews will be guided by the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) to

systematically assess barriers and facilitators. The information on barriers and facilitators obtained will be used to develop a counselling guide that will be implemented through the study to increase and sustain uptake of HIV prevention and family planning services. Counselling will be provided during monthly visits as women will be followed longitudinally for 6 months. At end-line, another set of interviews assessing barriers and facilitators will be conducted with the women. Both the baseline and end-line interview results will be used to identify strategies that can be used to increase access and uptake of will be guided by the Expert Recommendation for Implementing Change (ERIC) tool.

Regulatory requirements for the project and plans for completing them:
The proposal will be submitted to the University of North Carolina Institutional Regulatory Board and the National Health Science Research Ethics Committee for approval. The proposal will be submitted to the regulatory boards in January/February 2023. We anticipate to receive approvals from both regulatory boards by May 2023 to commence study activities by June 2023. The scholar will complete the Good Clinical Practice (GCP) and Human Subject Protection (HSP) course online in May 2023.

Expected Deliverables:
One-month on-site training and orientation (May 2023)
One-month baseline survey
One-month baseline data analysis and selection of strategies
Six months longitudinal data collection
Three months on-or off-site data analysis and manuscript preparation
Oral presentation at the May 2023 HVTN full group meeting

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

Dr. Mitch Matoga, mmatoga@unclilongwe.org; mmatoga@email.unc.edu