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Neglected Global Diseases Initiative



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## NGDI Newsletter November, 2013



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## NGDI Member News

### Planning Grant Success for NGDI Members Dr. Rich Lester PI, and Co-Investigators Dr. Kish Wasan, David Cox, and Mia Van Der Kop

**Title: A global health research collaboration on engagement in HIV care: UBC, AMREF and AKU. Grant highlights new partnership opportunities for NGDI.**

HIV has transformed from an acute, fatal disease to a chronic disease requiring long-term medical management. To optimize patient health outcomes and the success of HIV care and treatment programs, it is critical that patients remain engaged in HIV care; however, in both North America and sub-Saharan Africa, a large proportion of patients are insufficiently engaged in care. This planning proposal brings together three organizations with HIV/AIDS research and care expertise, the University of British Columbia (UBC), the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), and Aga Khan University, East Africa, to collaborate on global health research focussed on patient engagement in HIV care. Researchers from these organizations, together with citizen representatives, research trainees, and government stakeholders, will meet in Nairobi, Kenya for a two day forum in March 2014. The objectives of the forum are to: (1) identify HIV engagement in care research priorities that are common to AMREF, AKU, and UBC; (2) provide a forum to discuss relevant upcoming funding opportunities; (3) develop plans to move research ideas generated during the meeting into a research grant application. (4) promote the development of new international partnerships between investigators from UBC, AMREF and AKU; and (5) further solidify an existing collaboration between AMREF and UBC. Through carefully planned sessions and networking opportunities, the forum has been specifically designed to fulfil our aim of fostering new international partnerships to ultimately improve patient engagement in HIV care, both in Canada and abroad.

### NGDI Student Member Jo-Ann Osei-Twum's Grand Challenges Canada Summer Internship

Read Jo-Ann's blog on her time spent in Toronto this summer working for the Stars in Global Health Program at Grand Challenges Canada! Below is a snippet.

"I am truly appreciative of the organization's dedication to providing a phenomenal educational experience for its summer students. Listening to more than 20 speakers, some of whom were from international non-governmental organizations or were grantees, reiterated the fact that diverse skill sets are required to spawn change in global health. Unknowingly, my fellow summer interns and I were mimicking the current state of global health work, one where individuals from all academic backgrounds have an important role to play. Working in this interdisciplinary environment was extremely rewarding, as it provided lessons in how foreign policy shapes investments in global health, the silent burden of disrupted early childhood development, and the dire need for commitments to mental health." <[Read more](#)>

### New NGDI Student Global Health Journal – ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS NOW OPEN

**Journal Matches Student with Faculty Member to Highlight Issues on Global Health**

**GOAL:** The NGDI Student Global Health Journal is a new, cross-disciplinary publication created and published by

student members of the NGDI. Articles in the journal will be written by students and edited by a paired expert UBC faculty member. The journal will focus on a wide range of topics pertaining to global health. This bi-annual publication will foster student interest and participation in global health research by allowing



**NGDI-UBC Student Global Health Journal**

students a chance to work directly with a faculty mentor to produce a journal article, which will be published and accessible through the UBC library and the NGDI website.

**Mechanism for Submission:** Please submit by following the link on the right hand tool bar. Students will submit **an abstract or general idea**, and the editorial board will contact a faculty member that would be appropriate as an editor, including the proposed article abstract/idea. If the faculty member is interested in the project, the student will be contacted and introduced to the collaborating faculty member. When the student has completed their article, they will submit it to the faculty member for revision. The faculty member will review and edit the article, and return it to the student. Communication between the faculty member and student is strongly encouraged throughout all steps of the writing and editing process. The final article will be submitted by the faculty member to the editorial board for formatting and publication. The final publication will contain both the student and the faculty member as authors. <[Read more](#)>

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## NGDI Representation at the 20th Canadian Conference on Global Health

The Canadian Conference was held Oct 27-29<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the Westin Hotel in Ottawa. Dr. Charles Larson was a panel member on *Scaling Impact: Using a Grand Challenges approach to uncover and scale bold ideas in global health*. Dr. Kishor Wasan was a panel member on *The Remaining Challenges: Neglected Areas*.

## NGDI News

### Distinguished Lectureship Seminar with Dr. Robert E.W. Hancock

On October 18, 2013, the Neglected Global Diseases Initiative at UBC (NGDI) held its ninth Distinguished Lectureship, featuring UBC's very own Dr. R.E.W. (Bob) Hancock. Dr. Hancock is a Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, an Associate Faculty Member of the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute and a Canada Research Chair in Health and Genomics. Hancock is also co-founder of the Neglected Global Diseases Initiative and a member of the NGDI Scientific Advisory Board. The lecture was delivered to 120 student, faculty and staff members of the UBC community.

In this lecture, Dr. Hancock posed the question, "What can we as a University community do about the Inequities of Poverty and Neglected Disease?" The fact is, Dr. Hancock argues, when it comes to health, location is everything; where an individual is born and, therefore, one's country's socio-economic conditions, determines whether or not an individual grows to lead a full, healthy life, or dies of infection at a young age.



In response to the problem of Neglected Diseases of poverty, Dr. Hancock's research team has pursued research on innate immunity, inflammatory diseases, and multi-drug resistance at the Centre for Microbial Diseases and Immunity Research. The audience learned about the Innate Immunity Database project ([www.innatedb.com](http://www.innatedb.com)), which is a manually-curated database and analysis platforms of the genes, proteins, interactions and signaling responses involved in human, mouse and bovine innate immune response. This database essentially maps immune system behaviour. The unlocking of the secrets to innate immunity could have significant implications for

neglected global diseases, because so many of these diseases are drug-resistant and innate immunity has the potential to combat and even protect against this problem.

However, the audience also learned about obstacles in the university community that prevent this kind of research from reaching its full potential. “As academics, ten thousand drugs are required to produce one new drug a year,” he explained. That is to say, the patenting and approval process of important new drugs for neglected diseases is stalled. Massive amounts of funding is required to see projects through to drug production and delivery because of these bureaucratic obstacles. Therefore, the university community must innovate but we must also confront these economic and political barriers to progressive research and effective delivery.

It is this strong belief that the university community has a responsibility and the ability to facilitate these disease interventions that motivates Dr. Hancock’s work. Co-founding the NGDI with Dr. Kishor Wasan and his research projects are part of this process.



A full house for the talk!

## NGDI Sponsored Global Health Focus Travelships Awarded for November AAPS Conference

The AAPS Annual Meeting and Exposition to be held in San Antonio, November 10–14. This is the third year that NGDI has sponsored travelships for students attending and presenting a paper at the event. This year’s awardees are: Nitesh Kunda – Liverpool John Moores University for the paper: “*Protein Absorbed PGA-co-PDL Nanocarriers for Vaccine Delivery*” and Xiaolei Pan – Virginia Commonwealth University for the paper: “*Potential for Drug-drug Interactions on Human Organic Solute*”. The awards will be presented on November 11<sup>th</sup> to the students.



## Funding Opportunities

### Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

And its funding partners in the Grand Challenges family of grant programs are inviting innovators to apply for four new grant opportunities:

1) **Grand Challenges Explorations**, an initiative to encourage innovative and unconventional global health and development solutions, is now accepting grant proposals for its latest application round. Applicants can be at any experience level; in any discipline; and from any organization, including colleges and universities, government laboratories, research institutions, non-profit organizations and for-profit companies.

- Proposals are being accepted online until **November 12, 2013** on the following topics:
- Innovations in Feedback & Accountability Systems for Agricultural Development
- Inciting Healthy Behaviors: nudge, leapfrog, disrupt, reach
- Novel Enabling Tools and Models Supporting the Development of Interventions for Severe Diarrhea and Enteric Dysfunction
- Develop the Next Generation of Condom
- The "One Health" Concept: Bringing Together Human and Animal Health

Initial grants will be US \$100,000 each, and projects showing promise will have the opportunity to receive additional funding of up to US \$1 million.

Full descriptions of the new topics and application instructions are available at:  
[www.grandchallenges.org/explorations](http://www.grandchallenges.org/explorations).

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## CIHR – Canadian Immunization Research Network

Letter of Intent due: **December 16, 2013**. The highest ranked application at the LOI stage will be invited to submit an application.

This funding opportunity will support the formation of a Canadian Immunization Research Network. The proposed Network would undertake coordinated, collaborative, and multi-disciplinary vaccine-related evaluation research. This includes examining various biomedical research questions and aspects of the vaccine life cycle including safety, short- and long-term effectiveness and protection, as well as social issues like hesitancy and uptake. The Network would thus create new capacity for timely evaluation of vaccines for a variety of infectious diseases, improve immunization programs and coverage nationwide, and build strong links between the research community and key decision makers. Accordingly, the proposed Network would contribute to the establishment of a clinical trials resource for vaccine-preventable diseases and create research infrastructure that could be rapidly mobilized and used in the event of an infectious disease outbreak.

The proposed Network will be comprised of teams who will be linked and who will each be comprised of researchers spanning CIHR's four themes (biomedical; clinical; health systems and services; social, cultural, environmental and population health). Although each team will focus on a separate aspect of vaccine and immunization research, their activities will be coordinated to form a larger, concerted research strategy. The Network will also have a formal governance structure to provide guidance and direction to the research teams, and to promote knowledge sharing.

Included in the Network design will be a plan for conducting essential outbreak research projects. Should an outbreak of an emerging or re-emerging infectious disease occur, team leaders would submit a more detailed research plan, which will undergo an expedited peer review and funding process related to the circumstances of any such outbreak. The Network will be expected to complement these mobilized research teams during an infectious disease outbreak.

Funds available: The total amount available for this funding opportunity is \$6,625,000, enough to fund one (1) national network. The maximum amount available for the network is \$2,200,000 per year for up to three (3) years. A development grant of up to \$25,000 will be available to the single, highest ranked application at the Letter of Intent stage. Please refer to CIHR Opportunities page for more information.

## Save the Date

### mHealth for Infectious and Chronic Disease Management: Taking Evidence to Scale

An **International Roundtable Discussion** will take place in Vancouver BC, from **May 7 - 10, 2014**. For four days we are bringing together thought leaders and community stakeholders from around the globe to discuss and develop strategies for scale up implementation of mHealth programs in low, middle and high-economy countries, including Canada.

This event is a CTN and WelTel collaborative initiative supported by the Peter Wall Centre for Advanced Studies at the University of British Columbia. At this time we have been awarded funding from the Peter Wall Centre to host this event but we are also awaiting news (in November) of additional CIHR funding in order to conduct a full size Roundtable event.



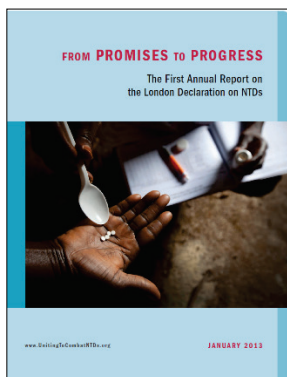


Final invitations and attendance limits can only be determined once we receive notice of CIHR supplemental funding, and we therefore request your patience and understanding in the event of any changes to the size of our event.

However, in anticipation of receiving the final funding approval, we would appreciate it if you could save the date in your calendar and let us know if you can come by sending an RSVP to [ctninfo@hivnet.ubc.ca](mailto:ctninfo@hivnet.ubc.ca).

## Reports of Interest

### From Promises to Progress: The first Annual Report on the London Declaration on NTDs.



2012 was a historic year in the fight against neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) as the global health community came together to chart a new course toward a world free of many of these devastating ailments. On January 30, an unprecedented group of partners in the NTD community committed to the control or elimination of 10 NTDs in line with targets set by the World Health Organization (WHO). This commitment was captured in the landmark London Declaration on Neglected Tropical Diseases.

Over the past year, there has been exciting progress:

- Pharmaceutical partners supplied 1.12 billion treatments meeting the increased requests from endemic countries.
- Donors committed funds to support integrated NTD programs, scale up and expand existing programs, increase resources available for mapping, improve program strategies through research, and develop new tools.
- More than 40 endemic countries developed multi-year integrated NTD plans, and Nigeria, Brazil, Cameroon, Honduras and Burundi launched their plans.
- Oman became the first previously endemic country to verify the elimination of trachoma.
- Partners developed a comprehensive London Declaration Scorecard, presented in this report and online, to promote accountability, transparency and evidence-based prioritization. This scorecard tracks the delivery of London Declaration commitments, highlights key milestones and targets, and helps identify priority action areas to ensure that 2020 goals are met.

With these new drug supplies and integrated NTD plans, programs are ready to scale up. Building on these promising beginnings, new partners and resources are urgently needed to be on track toward achieving the WHO goals. By redoubling our efforts, together we can empower communities to break the cycle of poverty and neglect by overcoming the burden of NTDs. Download the report from: [www.UnitingToCombatNTDs.org](http://www.UnitingToCombatNTDs.org)