



RePORT International Newsletter

August 2024

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

Our regularly scheduled meetings have been postponed because of the RePORT International Annual Meeting in Salvador, Brazil this month.

Check out the #RePORTInternational hashtag on LinkedIn and Facebook to stay up-to-date on what we're discussing there!

FEATURING OUR NIH PARTNERSHIP

Message from Jerry Ellner

This month's newsletter highlights our **partners** at the Division of AIDS, NIAID. The collaboration between academic investigators and program officers at NIAID, along with other funding agencies, has been instrumental in guiding the development of RePORT to its current stage. For instance, the Leadership Team of RePORT International meets frequently with Peter Kim, Fatima Jones, and Nicole Espy to chart the direction of RePORT. While there are other NIH programs funded as cooperative agreements where a partnership between investigators and NIH programs is anticipated, RePORT must stand as a model of genuine collaboration.

THE NIH, INFECTIOUS DISEASES, & RePORT INTERNATIONAL

A Long-standing, Mutually Beneficial Collaboration

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) under the US-based National Institutes of Health (NIH) had a long history of funding tuberculosis (TB) research globally. It is the main funder of RePORT International with a close relationship for collaborative thinking to solve the issues around TB transmission, progression, and detection. This month, we are featuring the NIAID team who graciously answered our questions.



NIH Team left to right: Peter Kim, Nicole Espy, and Fatima Jones

Describe how RePORT International developed within NIH:

RePORT International was first established in 2011 following discussions with global funding partners around the need to advance TB biomarker and other TB and TB/HIV research priorities in high-burden settings, using a collaborative bilateral funding mechanism. RePORT India was the first realization of this potential and resulted from a collaboration between the India Department of Biotechnology (DBT), the Indian Council Medical Research (ICMR), and the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), under the auspices of the Indo-US Vaccine Action Program (VAP). Further discussions and collaborations with the Brazilian Ministry of Health (MOH) and Department of Science and Technology (DECIT), and the South Africa Medical Research Council (SAMRC) followed to establish the RePORT Brazil and RePORT South Africa networks, respectively. Over the years, the network has continued to expand to include collaborations with other partner countries including China, the Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea, and most recently, Uganda.

What is the background of each NIAID team member and what brought them to working in the field of TB? How has each of your skills/experiences contributed to providing support to RePORT International?

The NIAID RePORT team has evolved significantly over the years. In addition to the Division of AIDS (DAIDS) leadership team, which includes Dr. Peter Kim, Dr. Fatima Jones, and Dr. Nicole Espy, many others have and continue to contribute to the success of the program. These include but are not limited to Dr. Sudha Srinivasan, Dr. Elizabeth Church, Nandita Chopra, Dr. Swetha Aggarwal (US-EMBASSY India), Dr. Annie Bridwell, Kathleen Muldoon, and other collaborators in the Division of Intramural Research (DIR), Dr. Aaron Neal, who serves as the NIAID Country Lead for Indonesia, and the Office of Global Research (OGR), Dr. Joyelle Dominique, William Rosa, Lucy Ruderman, and many countless others. This collaborative team brings not only expertise in TB and TB/HIV science, epidemiology, global health, and clinical research, but also a passion for ending the TB and HIV epidemic and improving the lives of people impacted by these diseases globally.

What is unique about the RePORT Consortium compared to other TB research networks?

RePORT International is one of the largest observational cohorts of people living with TB and their household contacts globally and represents a unique collaborative funding platform to advance regional and global scientific investments and research priorities in TB and TB/HIV science. Research priorities are established in collaboration with in-

country funders and partners, with support from NIAID. The large, federated network of researchers and research sites are coordinated under the umbrella of the RePORT International Coordination Center (RICC), operated through Rutgers, which allows for the independence of each regional network to focus on local priorities, while facilitating cross-networks collaborations to address emerging global needs.

What do you see as challenges for TB research in general?

DAIDS is focused on the prevention and treatment of HIV and comorbidities, and TB remains the leading cause of death of people living with HIV (PLWH). Key challenges in TB research for which the RePORT network is well positioned to address include the identification and validation of host-response biomarkers for TB disease progression; improved diagnostics and treatment strategies for pediatric TB, extrapulmonary TB, and people living with TB/HIV; deployment of novel technologies and prevention strategies including vaccines and long-acting formulations; advancing the development of better, safer, and shortened regimens for the treatment of drug sensitive and drug resistant TB; and improved strategies for the management of post-TB lung disease and other co-morbidities, in particular among PLWH.

Where do you see the scope of RePORT International in the future? Will it change or need to change?

The vision is for RePORT to continue to expand while building the operational flexibility and research capacity to ensure that the network can rapidly respond to emerging regional needs and global priorities in TB and TB/HIV science. This includes strengthening the capacity of regional networks and addressing GDPR and other global challenges to improve equitable access to data and specimens which is necessary to enhance and facilitate more robust regional and global research partnerships and collaborations. Additionally, we envision continued engagement with other global partners, national TB programs, scientists, clinical trial networks, and strategic partnerships with commercial, community-based, and academic institutions to expand the reach of the network and advance the mission to improve the lives of people living with TB and TB/HIV through research in biomarkers, diagnostics, and treatment and prevention strategies.

How does RePORT International align with NIH's broader goals in global health and TB research?

NIH's strategic objectives, as outlined in the [NIAID TB Strategic Plan](#) includes an emphasis on improving the fundamental knowledge of TB and advancing research in diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics for TB. The aims of RePORT International are reflected these priorities. RePORT International serves as an important platform for researchers to answer questions related to TB infection and disease and advance the scientific evidence needed to develop and improve diagnostic, preventive, and treatment strategies for TB. Investments in the network will ensure that clinicians, laboratorians, and staff will be at the forefront of innovation. The [NIAID TB Strategic Plan](#) also calls for collaborative science to address these priorities. This is the essence of the RePORT consortium. The success of collaborations between investigators in each country program and cross-consortium in publishing and training demonstrates the impact of investigating common research questions and building capacity to advance the science of TB.

What opportunities do you see for further collaboration between RePORT International and other NIH-funded initiatives?

There are many opportunities for further collaboration with the RePORT network and other NIH-sponsored programs and initiatives. These include the recently launched Facilitating Accelerated Science and Translation for TB regimen develop (FAST-TB)

program, established in partnership with CRDF Global to serve as a global collaborative platform to facilitate and accelerate the development and implementation of novel TB regimens in low-resource settings. Through FAST-TB, RePORT and other global TB partners are currently represented as part of the Global Forum to Accelerate Simpler TB treatments (GoFAST), which aims to advance research in diagnostics, biomarkers, and drug resistance to facilitate the implementation of novel and shorter TB treatment regimens. Other ongoing NIH/NIAID partnerships and collaborations include the Feasibility of Novel Diagnostics for TB in Endemic Countries (FEND for TB), Tuberculosis Research Units Network (TBRU), and the International Epidemiology Database to Evaluate AIDS (IeDEA) Tuberculosis Sentinel Research Network (TB-SRN).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuberculosis Research Funding Opportunities from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

Halting Tuberculosis Transmission RFA

To understand the critical drivers of tuberculosis (TB) transmission at the individual and population levels in high-burden settings; to develop effective methods to measure rates of TB transmission that rely on an increased understanding of the biomedical basis of transmission and related risk factors; and assess potential interventions, including low-cost and low-tech options, to prevent TB transmission and detect infectious TB.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Pulmonary Outcomes and Sequelae After Treatment (POST-TB)

To support applications for epidemiological and observational research projects on the long-term cardiopulmonary sequelae following treatment for tuberculosis (TB). Investigators should propose additional testing and data collection in existing cohorts of adult and/or pediatric TB participants to better characterize and understand adverse outcomes and morbidity associated with TB disease post treatment in individuals with and without HIV infection.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Identifying Host Cell Death Pathway Targets for Host-Directed Therapies for Treatment of Mtb and Mtb/HIV Co-Infection

To support mechanistic studies on host cell death pathways and their effect on immune responses to *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Mtb) and Mtb/HIV co-infection to identify immune targets for development of host-directed therapies.

[LEARN MORE](#)

RESOURCES



Complete SMART4TB's Point-of-Care Diagnostics Survey

SMART4TB has launched an important questionnaire, "Understanding Preferences for Tuberculosis Point-of-Care Diagnostics to Inform the Development of New Tests." The research study aims to understand the opinions of TB healthcare workers, policymakers, researchers, and affected communities regarding their priorities for bringing TB diagnosis closer to point-of-care for patients. If you have not taken it yet, now is your final opportunity to weigh in! The survey closes on 16 August.

[LEARN MORE](#)

The screenshot shows the Teach EPI website interface. At the top left is the logo for the Pai Global TB Group and the text "teach epi a website for learning and teaching epidemiology". To the right is a navigation menu with links for COURSES, TEACHING RESOURCES, FOR MENTORS, FOR STUDENTS, TEACHING AWARDS, LINKS, and CONTACT. Below the navigation is a grid of nine course topics:

- advanced TB diagnostics
- quality of TB care
- fundamentals of epidemiology
- fundamentals of global health
- fundamentals of global health (online)
- knowledge translation and communication
- reimagining global health
- systematic reviews and meta-analysis
- systematic reviews and meta-analyses in TB

Teach EPI – A Website for Teaching Epidemiology

The Pai Global TB Group has developed a great website for mentors, instructors, and students with various resources on epidemiology, many of which are TB related.

[LEARN MORE](#)

TB DIAH

TUBERCULOSIS DATA, IMPACT ASSESSMENT
AND COMMUNICATIONS HUB



New Tools, Platforms and Resources for TB Data Capture, Visualization and Use

August 1, 2024



Webinar Recording: New Tools, Platforms and Resources for TB Data Capture, Visualization and Use

TB DIAH, a TB data platform and communications hub, has made its recording of recent webinar available online.

Please remember to follow and subscribe. Don't forget to invite others, both inside and outside of RePORT International to follow our updates!



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