RePORT International Newsletter
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MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN TUBERCULOSIS RESEARCH

As we strive to fight against tuberculosis, dedicated professionals at RePORT International work tirelessly behind the scenes to advance research and improve patient care. We will periodically spotlight some remarkable individuals from our networks whose contributions are helping to shape the future of TB research across continents. In this issue, we feature members from Brazil and Indonesia.

Michael Rocha

Study Coordinator at RePORT Brazil, Brazilian Institute for Tuberculosis Research

Research is critical in understanding and combating tuberculosis, especially in vulnerable populations. Michael Rocha, a trained nurse, has dedicated his career to advancing TB research and care strategies since 2011.

As study coordinator for the RePORT Brazil network at the Brazilian Institute for Tuberculosis Research (IBIT), Mr. Rocha leads clinical research teams and focuses on translational medicine. His work involves developing more effective care approaches and generating research to inform public health policy.

Advancing TB research since joining RePORT Brazil in 2015, Mr. Rocha has been instrumental in expanding understanding of tuberculosis. "It is through research that we expand our understanding of the disease and its impact," he explains, "and that provides us the tools we need to improve the care we give."

Mr. Rocha's journey illustrates how dedicated professionals can drive meaningful change in public health research, bridging clinical practice with scientific innovation to address critical health challenges.

Melinda Setiyaningrum

Data Manager at INA-RESPOND, Indonesia

Effective public health research relies not only on medical professionals, but also on specialists managing crucial data. Melinda Setiyaningrum has been fulfilling this vital role at INA-RESPOND since 2019, bringing her background in nutrition and food technology alongside years of research experience.

As Data Manager, Ms. Setiyaningrum oversees data collection and management for studies on HIV, Tuberculosis, Schistosomiasis, and COVID-19. Her work ensures that researchers can draw reliable conclusions from quality data.

In 2021, Ms. Setiyaningrum has made key contributions to the TRIPOD study within the RePORT TB Cohort A in Indonesia, handling data entry, quality control, and dataset preparation. She also helped harmonize data and finalize the RedCAP database with the RePORT team. Technology has transformed her role, particularly through the OpenClinica Clinical Data Management System. This platform allows multiple research teams to access data simultaneously while automatically flagging discrepancies for immediate resolution.

Looking to the Future of TB Prevention and Care

Indonesia continues to face rising TB rates, but Ms. Setiyaningrum has a vision for how data innovation can support the government's goal of TB elimination by 2030.

"I'm working toward building an integrated electronic health system that would provide real-time TB data across the country," she shares. "This would dramatically improve our ability to monitor outbreaks, identify vulnerable populations, and respond quickly to emerging hotspots."

Ms. Setiyaningrum's plans also include leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) for

automated data cleaning and pattern recognition, potentially revolutionizing how Indonesia tracks and responds to TB cases. "I also want to explore more advanced data repository systems to optimize data management, including user-friendly visualizations that could support more effective decision-making in TB control policies across Indonesia."

Through her expertise, Ms. Setiyaningrum represents the technical foundation that powers modern medical research—demonstrating that conquering diseases requires excellence in data management as well as medicine.

AFRICOS: LEADING THE WAY WITH HIV RESEARCH

RePORT International will be periodically featuring related- and partner-research networks. We are currently pursuing a collaborative analysis on risk factors related to TB disease with the AFRICOS team.

The African Cohort Study (AFRICOS), now in its twelfth year, is an initiative led by the U.S. Military HIV Research Program (MHRP) to characterize and contextualize the HIV epidemic in four African countries. AFRICOS findings have informed evidence-based interventions, policy decisions and research pathways in the ongoing efforts to combat HIV. Moreover, AFRICOS is an outstanding example of investing in science and data to drive programming decisions, improving effectiveness and efficiency in lifesaving global health initiatives like PEPFAR.

AFRICOS participants are enrolled from clinic patient populations at 12 sites in Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. Researchers track the impact of clinical practices, biological factors and comorbidities on HIV progression and other health outcomes. As of March 2024, the cohort enrolled more than 4,100 participants, resulting in a wealth of data that shows how the HIV epidemic has evolved over more than a decade.

AFRICOS tracks characteristics of people living with HIV, including immune cell counts, inflammatory markers, viral loads, opportunistic infections, and treatment adherence - among many others. AFRICOS analyses have highlighted, for example, associations with persistent low-level viremia (pLLV) and shown that patients with pLLV are at increased risk for virologic failure and worse outcomes; documented the prevalence and risk factors for cognitive and mental health issues, opportunistic infections, and non-communicable diseases; and established metabolic and psychosocial consequences of different forms of antiretroviral therapy. These studies have contributed to overall understanding of disease progression, the efficacy of antiretroviral therapy, signs of potential drug resistance and other factors influencing treatment outcomes and have helped shape policy and guidance of host governments, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and international agencies like the World Health Organization

Co-infections remain a significant challenge for people living with HIV, and AFRICOS research has focused on the prevalence of co-infections such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and other sexually transmitted infections, and their impact on HIV outcomes. Other projects have examined relationships between HIV and noncommunicable diseases, showing that people living with HIV also face an increased risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and certain cancers.

Visit **AFRICOS** for more information on opportunities for collaboration on this study led by WRAIR.

Research Data Management for Data Scientists in Africa

Application Deadline: May 21, 2025
Course Date: June 23-July 16, 2025

eLwazi Open Data Science platform will run an online course on **Research Data Management (RDM) for Data Scientists in Africa.** This is an introductory course aimed at graduate students and scientists who are currently working on data science projects in Africa.

Participants will gain foundational understanding of RDM principles, practical skills in storing and processing data, and sharing research data, with a focus on the unique challenges and opportunities in the African context.

LEARN MORE & APPLY

Look for other opportunities in our **Virtual Learning Room**, which now features a "What's New" section.

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