European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP)

EDCTP

This project is part of the EDCTP2 programme supported by the European Union

> **Core-NB:** Collision of three global pandemics: the effect of tuberculosis and HIV on the epidemiological, clinical, virological and immunological trajectory of COVID-19 in Botswana and Namibia

Core-NB is an observational study supported by EDCTP and conducted by epidemiologists and researchers from Namibia, Botswana and Germany.

Since February 2020, COVID-19 has become a global pandemic with unprecedented impact on public health and society in general. So far, most cases have occurred in high-income countries, and consequently, COVID-19 diagnostics and research have been established mainly in these countries. Looking at the global South, it becomes apparent that here Sars-Cov 2 meets already existing infectious diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis (TB). Both diseases themselves affect the immune systems of the patients and subsequently affect the immune response to further infection with other pathogens. The influence of HIV and tuberculosis on the course of COVID-19 disease is a particular gap in our knowledge. It is therefore important to understand how these three pandemics interact.

Core-NB brings together researchers from the University of Namibia (UNAM) with health experts from VICTUS GLOBAL BOTSWANA ORGANISATION (VGBO) and Health POVERTY ACTIONS (HPA). Both VGB and HPA are non-profit organisations (NGOs) working to improve lives through health promotion and economic empowerment. It is worth noting that VGBO was founded by women in Botswana, who also form the board of this organisation. The Research Center Borstel Leibniz Lung Center, as the coordinating institute, will not only be responsible for management and reporting, but will also offer training workshops to push capacity building in the partner countries.

The project includes two studies that will be conducted sequentially. The first study will follow the WHO protocol for household transmission investigations in the context of COVID-19. It will explore transmission frequency and describe the clinical spectrum of disease. Samples collected will also serve as basis for COVID-19 molecular epidemiology and host immunological response. The second study will evaluate the presentation, diagnosis and clinical characteristics of individuals presenting to sentinel health facilities in both countries. The project will have a strong laboratory strengthening component which will enhance COVID-19 laboratory and research capacity.
This will include the development of skills and knowledge for diagnostic testing and COVID-19 sequencing and will build scientific and research capacity. The findings from this project will provide robust data to assist in guiding national responses to COVID-19 in both countries as well as assisting with our understanding of the pathogenesis of the virus in the context of TB and HIV, in turn providing vital information on how to deliver clinical care and how to design therapeutics and vaccines.

Consortium

Research Center Borstel Leibniz Lung Center
Prof. Dr. Stefan Niemann
sniemann@fz-borstel.de
www.fz-borstel.de

UNAM – UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA
Prof. Dr. Mareli Claassens
mcla@sun.ac.za
www.unam.edu.na

VICTUS GLOBAL BOTSWANA ORGANISATION
Dr. Chawanga Modongo
cmodongo@gmail.com
www.victusglobal.org

HEALTH POVERTY ACTION
Dr. Tadesse Kassaye Woldetsadik
tadesse@healthpovertyaction.or.ke
www.healthpovertyaction.org

Management Team

Coordination
Prof. Dr. Stefan Niemann
sniemann@fz-borstel.de

Scientific Project Management
Dr. Christiane Gerlach
cgerlach@fz-borstel.de

LINQ Management GmbH
www.linq-management.com