



WELCOME

Welcome to the first newsletter from the Center for Social Science Research on AIDS! CeSSRA is a collaborative training and research center, with collaborators from Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), Makerere University, the Joint Clinical Research Centre, and Mbarara University of Science and Technology. CeSSRA has two major objectives: to train social scientists working in the area of HIV/AIDS and to conduct a longitudinal study on the social context of HIV/AIDS treatment. The long-term goal of the centre is to develop a cadre of well-trained social science researchers who can pursue work within the social sciences and work together with their medical and clinical colleagues to combat HIV/AIDS.

CeSSRA OFFICE

The CeSSRA Kampala office is now open. It is located in Seminar Room 7 in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Makerere University main campus. Feel free to check at the office in case of any enquiries! The Centre is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm.



Ancilla and Stephen in our new office at MUK

RECENT EVENTS

IRB Videoconference: In February, CeSSRA held a videoconference between approximately 35 researchers and members of institutional review boards (IRBs) in Cleveland and Kampala. The two hour transcontinental conversation covered issues of reciprocity/ cross IRB relations, local context review, social science research review, informed consent, and broader cross cultural considerations in research ethics. Participants in the videoconference were excited to continue their discussion, and we hope that this will serve as a platform for future discussions or workshops on research ethics.

Recruitment of Fellows: From a large pool of well-qualified applicants, ten fellows were selected for a two year

fellowship for training in research in the social sciences. The following people were selected; Akurut Chantal Dorothy, Kanya Innocent Royal, Katushabe Juliet, Kitatta George, Kyebuzibwa Joseph, Mubiru Mustafah, Mugabi Nicholas, Mukama Raymond, Nyirandikumwami Ruth and Tumwine Jackson Bwagi. Fellows had their first general meeting in March 2008 with Dr. Mafigiri and staff. In this meeting, fellows were introduced to a brief description of CeSSRA mission and objectives. Centre expectations and aspirations were also highlighted in this meeting.

Reception: Among the events that transpired during Prof. Janet McGrath's one week working visit to Kampala was hosting guests to a reception at Makerere University Guest House on Tuesday 6 May 2008. The purpose of this event was to bring together members from the different partnering/collaborating institutions and these were the Joint Clinical Research Center (JCRC), Infectious Disease Institute (IDI), Makerere University, and those from Uganda Case Western Reserve University research collaboration Mulago to know each other and briefing them about CeSSRA. The function was well attended with a composition of about 50 invited guests.



Janet McGrath, Charles Rwabukwali, Bogere Stephen, Gasanzwe Ancilla and Ssendegye George outside of the reception at the MUK Guest House

Pre-testing Activities at study sites: In preparation for the longitudinal study of HIV treatment seeking to be conducted in Kampala and Mbarara, a pilot study was conducted with 20 HIV-infected patients in Kampala and Mbarara during March and April to pretest, refine and revise interview instruments, recruitment and data collection procedures. A recruitment plan has also been prepared for the study operations at the two sites.

UPCOMING EVENTS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Workshops: We will be holding a several day workshop with research fellows on research design and proposal writing sometime in August 2008. Details coming soon! Plans are also underway for an ethics workshop in the coming months.

Monthly meetings: Beginning in July 2008, we will have monthly meeting with the fellows. The days/ time will be determined. These meetings will feature a presentation by one or two fellows on their current work or ideas. The objective is to permit fellows to meet and discuss issues of common interest. These meetings will be facilitated by David Kaawa-Mafigiri.

The Proposed CeSSRA Resource Centre: We hope for the CeSSRA office to double as a resource center and meeting place for fellows and our collaborating institutions. We are seeking resources such as papers, reports, or manuals for our

“CeSSRA Library” from our fellows, academic institutions, our collaborating institutions, government and non-government organizations. For fellows, please send us your theses, papers, or reports to include. If you submit abstracts to conferences or have papers published, please send us these as well. If you identify specific items that you think we should include please let us know and we'll do our best to acquire such. Thank you for your efforts in this task!

Training: We are planning sessions focusing on use of electronic library databases such as Pubmed; bibliographic software, such as Endnote; and presentation software, such as PowerPoint. These will be workshops that will be offered on an ongoing basis.

The Uganda Society for Health Scientists will be holding their 9th Annual Scientific Conference on 24 and 25 July. The theme of the conference is: Multidisciplinary approach to improved health care in the era of HIV/AIDS. “Building interdisciplinary bridges.” Fellows are encouraged to attend this conference.

PROFILES

In the coming months, we will be featuring a brief profile of each of the 10 CeSSRA fellows in this space. For our first issue, we would like to introduce the CeSSRA investigators and staff.

Dr. Janet McGrath (co-director) is an associate professor of anthropology at CWRU. She has been working on research projects in Uganda for nearly 20 years as a collaborator with the CWRU-Uganda Research collaboration since its inception. She has have participated in multiple research projects, focusing on issues related to risk, transmission, the impact of disease, and most recently the development of new strategies for prevention, such as vaginal microbicides.

Dr. Charles Rwabukwali (co-director) is an associate professor of sociology at Makerere University. He has been and is still a Principal Investigator and Co-investigator on a number of research projects nationally and internationally, funded by Sida, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, WHO, European Union, CWRU Research Collaboration, Family Health International, DANIDA, and USAID, among others. He has published widely on the subjects of HIV, gender and poverty.

Dr. David Kaawa Mafigiri (associate director) is a postdoctoral fellow in the department of anthropology at CWRU, where he recently completed his doctorate in anthropology. He also has a master's degree in public health from Makerere University. He has been a part of many studies in Uganda and conducted his own research on social networks and tuberculosis treatment in Kampala, funded by the World Health Organization.

Margaret Winchester (program coordinator) is a doctoral student in the department of anthropology at CWRU, where she also received her master's degree. She has been studying and working in Uganda for several years and will

be conducting research on women and HIV in Kampala and Mbarara for her dissertation.

Bogere Stephen (assistant director) has a master's degree in sociology from MUK. He has worked with a number of academic institutions, government, non-government organizations and consultancy firms as a Research officer (doing data collection, data entry and analysis), Supervisor, Co-researcher, Documentation officer and Consultant.

Ancilla Gasanzwe (administrative assistant) has a degree in social science from MUK. She has experience working as a secretary and administrative assistant for Mutolere Hospital, African Crop Science Society/Journal, and most recently Makerere University - School of Graduate Studies. She will be pursuing a master's degree in Public Administration and Management from Makerere University.

Namutiibwa Florence (research assistant/interviewer) has a degree in social sciences from MUK. She has attained various trainings in the field of HIV/AIDS, including counseling and adherence. She previously worked with Makerere University Walter Reed Project as a Research Assistant/Counselor. In August 2008 she will pursue a master's degree in Public Health from Makerere university Kampala.

Ssendegye George (research assistant/interviewer) has a bachelor's degree in community psychology. He has worked as a research assistant at AIDS Information Center (AIC), conducted a study on prevalence of safe sex practices and HIV/AIDS prevention among university students, and has worked as a lecturer and administrator.



Putting up the official CeSSRA sign in our new office

RESOURCES/ LINKS

Source for scholarships, grants, and volunteer positions:
<http://www.advance-africa.com/>

The Uganda Society for Health Scientists (USHS):
<http://ugshs.org/>

CONTACT INFORMATION

For any questions regarding this newsletter or CeSSRA activities, please contact:

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