



School of Medicine

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NYU in AFRICA

Biomedical Research,
Clinical Care and
Capacity Building

The 5th
Annual Conference
on the Health of the
African Diaspora



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Friday, February 19, 2010
9:30AM – 7:00PM
Farkas Auditorium
NYU Langone Medical Center
550 1st Avenue
(Between 30th and 33rd Streets)
550 First Ave. New York, NY 10016

NYU School of Medicine faculty residents and students have been engaged in Africa for over a decade supporting biomedical research, clinical care and capacity building activities on the continent. The conference will highlight some ground breaking projects by NYU faculty in pediatric HIV/AIDS, vaccine development and locally advanced breast cancer as well as in addressing mental health issues among victims of war related trauma in Africa and in New York City. Improving health care capacity to address challenges related to urbanization and health disparities including emergency medicine and emerging urban diseases in Africa such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes are also an area of mutual interest that NYU is pursuing with collaborators in Africa.



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Sponsored by: **Africa House** and the NYU Senior Vice President for Health

Conference Schedule

9:30AM Registration

Welcome: **Mekbib Gemed**, Director, Center for the Health of the African Diaspora
Mariano Rey, MD, Director, Institute of Community Health and Research
Robert Berne, PhD, Senior Vice President for Health, New York University

10:00AM Keynote Address

Opportunities and Challenges in the Health Sector in Ghana

Honorable Dr. Benjamin Kunbuor

Minister of Health of the Republic of Ghana

11:00AM Session 1: Clinical Care and Capacity Building

Turning Practice into Policy: a story of pediatric AIDS in Africa

Shaffiq Essajee, MD

Director of Clinical Operations, The Clinton Foundation

Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, NYU Langone Medical Center

In 2001, Dr. Shaffiq Essajee and a team of clinicians and laboratory technicians from the NYU Department of Pediatrics established Kenya's first free clinic for children with HIV. What began as an exercise in humanity gradually grew into a treatment program and then a site for clinical research and education. And now, as Dr. Essajee has taken on work with the Clinton Health Access Initiative and the World Health Organization, the clinic has become a crucible for developing international policy.

Two Cities, Two Universities, Two Public Hospitals

Lewis Goldfrank, MD

Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine

New York University and its affiliated public hospital, Bellevue Hospital Center, and the University of Ghana and its affiliated public hospital, the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, have joined together with several government agencies and non-governmental organizations to develop a multi-disciplinary collaboration for health professional development that will result in sustained and significant improvements in health and health care in Ghana and the United States. By pairing two cities, two universities, and two public teaching hospitals, the partnership recognizes shared problems – of urbanization, of inadequate and poorly allocated resources, of disparities in health access and outcomes - and the unique opportunity for mutual learning that extends from collaborative development of solutions and personnel. Our approach is to build capacity for understanding and improvements in communication, science, economic and social policy, and global health through professional development, growing directly out of shared educational programs and embedded in shared projects that focus on research, education, and service delivery both “here” and “there.”

A Surgeon's Experience in the Congo with Doctors without Borders

Mary Ann Hopkins, MD

Dr Hopkins will be discussing her surgical experiences in war-torn eastern Congo where brutal attacks on civilians, especially women and children, take place on a daily basis. Doctors Without Borders has been working in the eastern Congo since 1987 where the war has claimed over 5 million lives.

Delivering Community Mental Health Care: Global lessons learned from East Africa

Gary S Belkin, MD, PhD, MPH

Innovation in delivering mental health care will need approaches to tasking and defining elements of care so that less specialized workers can deliver care. Efforts in integrating mental health in development projects in the developing world may hold generalizable lessons for thinking about public mental health.

Moderator: James Macinko, PhD

Associate Professor of Public Health and Health Policy

The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development and the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

Director, Masters Program in Global Public Health

New York University

1:00PM LUNCH

2:15PM Session 2: Research

Broad HIV-1 and Human genetic diversity in Africa and New York City

Phillipe Nyambi, PhD

HIV-1 is highly genetically diverse. The different HIV-1 strains have been divided into three main groups, several subtypes (n=9) and recombinant forms. West-Central Africa where the Human genetic background is broad is also the epicenter of the HIV-1 viral diversity. Many immigrants from these regions of Africa living in New York City travel with their viruses. Similar viral diversity like those in West-Central Africa are now being identified in New York City. This broad HIV-1 diversity has implications for anti-retroviral therapy, vaccine design and trials, and diagnosis in New York City and in Africa.

Mycobacterium africanum, a common cause of human TB in West Africa

Bouke DeJong, MD

Tuberculosis remains the biggest cause of adult death of a curable infectious disease worldwide, and the highest incidence of TB occurs in sub Saharan Africa. *Mycobacterium africanum*, a close relative of the usual TB bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, causes up to half of human TB in West Africa. By comparing differences between these two bacteria, such as in the natural history of infection, results of diagnostic tests, and the underlying genetic differences, we can learn more about the pathogenesis of TB infection, and help ensure efficacy of TB vaccines and - diagnostics in *M. africanum* endemic areas.

Breast Cancer in Africa, realities and fictions

Robert Schneider, PhD

Much of our research effort has focused on a unique understanding of the genetic and molecular characteristics of locally advanced breast cancer (LABC) and inflammatory breast cancer (IBC), which occur at a high incidence in women of African descent and Middle Eastern descent. In fact, LABC is the face of breast cancer worldwide. With Dr. Silvia Formenti, Chair of Radiation Oncology, we have developed an international Center of Excellence for locally advanced breast cancer that is funded by a \$6 million 6 year award from the Department of Defense, and an International Consortium for Inflammatory Breast Cancer that is funded by a \$1.5 million award from the Avon Foundation. Both programs are operating in the U.S. in New York, in Tygerberg, South Africa, in Nigeria and in Cairo, Egypt. We are conducting a clinical trial in LABC and investigating in a multi-ethnic population the genetic and molecular features that promote LABC, its higher incidence in women of African descent, and the characteristics that determine treatment response. Our research in IBC has led to a new understanding of the genetic and molecular nature of IBC and new treatment strategies. We are now examining whether there are specific genetic alterations that are associated with development of IBC that account for its much higher incidence in African and Middle Eastern women.

Assessing Patient Knowledge Pertaining to Antiretroviral Treatment and its Associated Symptoms in Accra, Ghana

Catherine Ford, Year IV MD Student

Adherence to ART may be influenced by perceptions of the resolution of HIV-related symptoms on ART compared with the complications associated with the therapy. A lack of knowledge regarding expectations of ART could also negatively affect patient adherence and care. We sought to determine if adherence rate correlates with patient's knowledge of ART.

Moderator: James Macinko, PhD

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New York University

4:30PM Session 3: Health and Human Rights

Advocating Against Torture: A health and human rights Imperative

Allen Keller, MD

Health professionals have a crucial role to play in assisting torture survivors and advocating against torture. This includes applying our skills as clinicians and scientists in documenting torture and its health consequences; ensuring needed access to health services for torture survivors; promoting humane public policies such as immigration/asylum, and working to prevent further torture through accountability and public education. In this presentation I will discuss the advocacy work of the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture with regards to African torture survivors both domestically and internationally.

Wisdom, Courage and Hope: A Familial Model for the Support and Healing of African Survivors of Torture and Refugee Trauma

Hawthorne Smith, PhD

At the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture, our multidisciplinary treatment team has found group psychotherapy to be an effective intervention to foster resilience and positive coping behaviors in African survivors of torture and refugee trauma. Supportive group work has served to decrease the sense of alienation, create a sense of belonging, and help these African survivors, who are confronted with a long history of trauma in addition to the difficulties of adapting to life in the US. In addition to discussing the general approach and rationale for group treatment with this population, this presentation will focus on some of the specific needs and challenges facing African refugees as they struggle to adjust to life in America. Specific ways of adapting group psychotherapy model to be culturally appropriate and therapeutically effective for this population will be discussed.

Identifying culturally-appropriate idioms of distress: Hozun and majnun among Darfur refugees

Andrew Rasmussen, PhD

Practitioners and researchers working with refugee populations are often faced with the cultural invalidity of current measures of anxiety and mood disorders. Although there has been some work attempting to design measures for European and Asian refugees, African populations have been ignored almost altogether. We used rapid ethnographic assessment with Darfur refugee focus groups and traditional healers to create assessment tools for Darfur refugees living in eastern Chad. Results of these focus groups were then sorted with like categories by traditional healers in order to elicit the local professionals' perspective of these problems.

Moderator: Catherine Ford, Year IV MD Student

6:00PM: Poster Presentation/Reception



Allen Keller, MD

Allen Keller, M.D. is Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of the Bellevue/ NYU Program for Survivors of Torture and the NYU School of Medicine Center for Health and Human Rights. Dr. Keller serves as a primary care physician for torture survivors, including many African torture survivors. Dr. Keller is a graduate of NYU School of Medicine and a recipient of NYU's distinguished Alumnus Award. Among his publications is a 2007 report from the Open society institute documenting torture and political violence in Zimbabwe. Dr. Keller has testified before Congress on several occasions regarding torture and other human right abuses.



Andrew Rasmussen, PhD

Andrew Rasmussen, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at New York University School of Medicine and the Research Director at the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture. His work primarily concerns displaced populations (refugees, IDPs, asylum seekers) and the evaluation of programs that aim to aid these communities. A clinical psychologist by training, his research has been presented widely in national and international scholarly journals and conferences. Dr. Rasmussen is the recent recipient of a K23 Career Development Award (K23HD059075) from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development (NICHD, an institute of the NIH) to study how political violence affects the families of those exposed to it.



Bouke DeJong, MD

During her training in Infectious Diseases Dr. de Jong developed a research interest in the molecular epidemiology of tuberculosis. In 2003, she transferred molecular genotyping techniques to The Gambia, where she conducts studies on strain differences in the M. tuberculosis complex. Her focus is on Mycobacterium africanum, which causes up to half of human TB in West Africa, and on using molecular tools to address public health questions.



Catherine Ford, Year IV MD Student

Catherine Ford is a medical student at New York University School of Medicine. She graduated with a BS in Chemistry from Georgetown University in 2005. The following year, she volunteered with Generations Incorporated, an intergenerational literacy program in the Boston Public Schools, through AmeriCorps. While at NYU-SoM, Catherine has had leadership roles in Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), helping with advocacy and awareness campaigns, and the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), participating in programs regarding primary care and public health. She spent the summer of 2007 in Accra, Ghana conducting a research project of knowledge and treatment of HIV/AIDS, funded by NYUSoM's International Health Program and the Gold Foundation. Catherine is currently completing a Master's of Public Health at the Harvard School of Public Health, with a focus on reproductive health.

Gary Belkin, MD, PhD

Gary Belkin, MD, PhD, MPH is Associate Professor and Director, Program in Global Mental Health, New York University School of Medicine. He works both in day-to-day operational and overall policy development work of systems of mental health care, as well as developing and studying emerging approaches to public mental health. In that vein of both research and practice he is Senior Director for Psychiatric Services in the Health and Hospitals Corporation of the City of New York which operates the New York City public hospitals and clinics system and was formerly Chief of Psychiatry (Interim) at Bellevue Hospital. He at the same time is founding Director of the NYU Program in Global Mental Health, which is intended to further innovative implementation and policy approaches to expanding mental health treatment, as well as efforts to extend the impact of behavioral health sciences on other social sectors and outcomes, globally. A key initial venture of that Program is the development of a Mental Health Component of the Millennium Villages Project (MVP), for which he is Mental Health Coordinator. MVP is a 10 –country demonstration effort in sub-saharan Africa developed by the economist Jeffrey Sachs in a collaboration with the Earth Institute of Columbia University and the United Nations to demonstrate sustainable and affordable strategies for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the world's poorest regions.



Hawthorne Emery Smith, PhD

Dr. Smith is a licensed psychologist and Clinical Director of the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture. He is also an Assistant Professor at the NYU School of Medicine in the Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Smith received his doctorate in Counseling Psychology (with distinction) from Teachers College; Columbia University. Dr. Smith had previously earned a B.S.F.S. from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, an advanced certificate in African studies from Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal, and a Masters in International Affairs from the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. Dr. Smith speaks extensively at professional conferences and seminars on providing clinical services for survivors of socio-political violence, and enhancing cross-cultural clinical skills among therapeutic service providers.

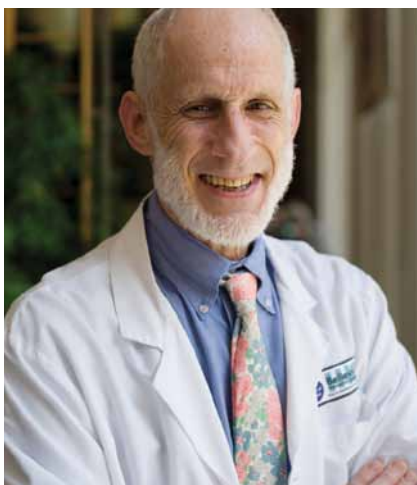


Dr. Smith was also a co-founding member of Nah We Yone, Inc. (a non-profit organization working primarily with refugees from Sierra Leone, as well as other displaced Africans), and has helped to coordinate the International Youth Leadership Institute (IYLI), a leadership program for New York City teens. Dr. Smith has led these teenagers on summer fellowship programs to diverse countries such as Senegal, Gambia, South Africa, Egypt, and Israel. Dr. Smith is also a professional musician (saxophonist and vocalist) with international experience.

James Macinko, PhD

James Macinko is Associate Professor of Public Health and Health Policy in Steinhardt's Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health and the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. Since 2008, he has directed the NYU Master's program in Global Public Health. His work has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the World Health Organization, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the government of Brazil and focuses on the social and political determinants of health inequalities and the strengthening of health systems through primary health care, both in the US and globally. He has field experience in Brazil, Central America, and East and Southern Africa.





Lewis R. Goldfrank, MD

Lewis R. Goldfrank, M.D. has worked at Bellevue Hospital Center and New York University Medical Center for the last quarter century. He is currently the first Chairman and Professor of the newly established academic Department of Emergency Medicine at New York University. He is also the Medical Director of the New York City Health Department's Poison Center. Educated at Clark University, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the University of Brussels, Belgium; he graduated from the University of Brussels, Medical School in 1970. He completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Montefiore Hospital and Medical Center in 1973.

His efforts have led to the development of NYU's Emergency Medicine and Medical Toxicology residencies. He has served as the Chairman of American Board of Emergency Medicine's subboard on Medical Toxicology, the American Board of Medical Toxicology and the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine. His entire career has been spent working in the public hospitals of New York City emphasizing the role of Emergency Medicine in improving access to care, public health, public policy and medical humanism. He is senior editor of Goldfrank's Toxicologic Emergencies, a standard text in medical toxicology, the eighth edition of which was published in 2006.

Dr. Goldfrank is a member of the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine (IOM) and chaired the IOM Committee on Responding to the Psychological Consequences of Terrorism, the IOM Committee for Evaluation of the Metropolitan Medical Response Systems Program, the IOM Committee on Preparing for an Influenza Pandemic: Personal protective equipment for Healthcare Workers. He is currently the Chairman of the IOM Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Catastrophic Events.

His investigations in preparedness include developing and leading a consortium on preparedness with the NYC Department of Health, leading the New York University School of Medicine Consortium on Preparedness, being the principal investigator for a DHS Large Scale Emergency Readiness grant and being a co principal investigator on a CDC Public Health Research grant – Health Protection Research Initiative.



Mary Ann Hopkins, MD

Dr. Mary Ann Hopkins is an associate professor of surgery at New York University School of Medicine and a member of the Board of Directors of Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) USA.

Dr. Hopkins first assignment with MSF was in 1996 when she provided surgical care to civilians in eastern Sri Lanka at the height of the civil war. She worked in Burundi in 1999 during that country's civil war between the Hutu and the Tutsis, and in 2005 Dr. Hopkins conducted surgery in Bunia in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where she encountered many children who were the casualties of war and victims of sexual violence among her patients. In August 2007, her efforts took her to Chad where she worked with refugees from war torn Central African Republic. Last summer, she was again in The Democratic Republic of Congo, this time in North Kivu, where the violence continues unabated.

Dr. Hopkins is also the director of education for the clinical sciences at New York University School of Medicine and is the Treasurer of the Association of Surgical Education.

Phillipe N. Nyambi, PhD

Dr. Nyambi is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pathology at New York University School of Medicine. Dr. Nyambi's interest is to study the HIV-1 viral genetic diversity and evolution and how dual HIV-1 infection and virus recombination drives viral evolution. Another interest is the antigenic relatedness of diverse HIV-1 viruses, the evolution of these viruses and their implication in vaccine design. Our studies have shown that despite genetic differences of various subtype viruses they still share some common antigenic epitopes and that these epitopes could be used in defining HIV-1 serotypes.

Dr. Nyambi pursued his studies at the University of Yaounde in Cameroon and at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium



Shaffiq Essajee, MD

Dr. Shaffiq Essajee is the Director of Clinical Operations with the Clinton Health Access Initiative and Associate Director of New York University's International HIV Program. He is a member of the pediatric faculty and has been caring for children with HIV for the past 15 years. He is a graduate of the Oxford University Medical School, and completed his residency in pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco before coming to join the Pediatric Infectious Disease Division at NYU. Dr. Essajee hails from Kenya, and in 2001 he founded that country's first free care program for children with HIV.



Honorable Dr. Benjamin Kumbuor

Dr. Benjamin Kumbuor serves as Minister of Health of the Republic of Ghana, a position he has held since 2009. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Kumbuor was the Deputy Minister of Health and a longtime Member of Parliament. In 2005, he was recognized for his Distinguished Performance as a Ranking Member of the Defense/Interior committee of the 3rd Parliament of the 4th Republic of Ghana. A lawyer by profession, he received a Ph D in Law from the University of Warwick, and since then has served as a lecturer at the Ghana School of Law. As the Health Minister, Dr. Kumbuor works to carry out the Ministry of Health's aim of improving the health status of all people living in Ghana, hoping that in the foreseeable future Ghana will be considered a middle income country. Dr. Kumbuor speaks several languages. He resides in Ghana with his wife and three children.





Center for the Health of the African Diaspora

The Center for the Health of the African Diaspora (CHAD) seeks to understand the causes for health disparities among peoples of African descent and to improve the health of this community through research, education, and prevention. The Center's community partners are located throughout Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. The Institute of Community Health and Research founded CHAD in 2006.

The goal of the Center for the Health of the African Diaspora (CHAD) is to improve the health of people of African descent through enhanced research and education in health disparities among this group and improved opportunities for sharing best practices and collaboration among individuals and organizations active in addressing these inequities. CHAD has evolved over the years into a tremendous resource in New York City to serve as a Center of Excellence in New York City for the Health of the African Diaspora.

The Center is driven by the leadership of Dr. Mariano Rey, Director of the Institute of Community Health and Research, the commitment and support of Dean Robert Grossman, and the mission of NYU to address challenges of the 21st Century through an integrated global and community focused vision.

NYU Institute of Community Health and Research (ICHR)

Established on July 1, 2006, the New York University (NYU) Institute for Community Health and Research's (ICHR) mission is to address, alleviate, and eliminate health disparities through an interdisciplinary and community-based collaborative research and health education approach. To accomplish this mission, ICHR is committed to the following guiding principles: a) systemic change through the use of multiple strategies and working with diverse stakeholders; b) equitable "partnerships" in research, training, and outreach; and c) action-oriented research. As a reflection of ICHR's guiding principles, the ICHR programs and activities utilize a strong and active community-based participatory research approach in engaging communities and facilitating dialogue on strategies to address, reduce, and eliminate health disparities.

The NYU Centers housed under ICHR include the Center for the Study of Asian American Health, the Center for Latino Health, the Center for the Health of the African Diaspora, the Center to Eliminate Hepatitis B Disparities, and the Health Promotion and Prevention Research Center. Community partners are actively engaged in the development and design of the ICHR Centers and programs.