



KINTAMPO HEALTH  
RESEARCH CENTRE

MARCH 2025  
EDITION

# KHRC FOCUS

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER



## TOP STORIES

- **MATERNAL IMMUNIZATION**  
MIRNA Study Engages Stakeholders in Accra to Strengthen Maternal Immunization Readiness
- **STRENGTHENING COLLABORATIONS**  
KHRC Strengthens Project Management Capacity with European Vaccine Initiative Visit in Germany
- **2025 MIRNA CONFERENCE**  
KHRC Participates in International Conference on Maternal Immunization
- **AU3S\_MI WORKSHOP**  
KHRC Joins Efforts to Strengthen Maternal Vaccine Safety in Africa
- **WHO-TDR CLINICAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP**  
KHRC Research Fellow Selected for WHO-TDR Clinical Research Leadership Fellowship
- **RSV OBSERVATIONAL STUDY**  
KHRC Trains Field Staff and Midwives for New RSV Observational Study
- **CLEAR WEBINAR SERIES**  
2nd CLEAR Climate & Health Research Webinar Series Scheduled for Thursday, 24th April 2025



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## MIRNA STUDY ENGAGES STAKEHOLDERS IN ACCRA TO STRENGTHEN MATERNAL IMMUNIZATION READINESS

The Maternal Immunization Readiness Network in Africa and Asia (MIRNA) has engaged its stakeholders in Accra to discuss strategies for preparing the country's healthcare system for the introduction of new maternal vaccines. This stakeholder meeting, which was held on Thursday, 20th March, 2025 builds on last month's MIRNA Conference held in South Africa and is part of ongoing efforts to ensure Ghana's healthcare system is well-prepared for maternal vaccine rollout.

The discussions during the meeting centered on improving vaccine administration, logistics, and supply chain management, as well as enhancing training, supervision, and surveillance. Stakeholders are also exploring strategies for monitoring and evaluation, data management, and public awareness through social mobilization and communication.

This meeting brought together health experts and representatives from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) School of Public Health, Kintampo Health

Research Centre (KHRC), Research and Development Division (RDD-GHS) of Ghana Health Service, Ministry of Health, PATH, 37 Military Hospital, Paediatrics Society of Ghana, School of Public Health – University of Ghana, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR), Cape Coast Teaching Hospital, Cape Coast Nursing and Midwifery Training College, and Ridge Hospital.

### About MIRNA

The MIRNA Consortium was established to assess how prepared countries are to introduce new vaccines for pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries and explore ways to strengthen healthcare systems for effective vaccine delivery. It is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and coordinated by the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. Learn more about MIRNA: [Read More](#)



## **KHRC STRENGTHENS PROJECT MANAGEMENT CAPACITY WITH EUROPEAN VACCINE INITIATIVE VISIT IN GERMANY**



As part of efforts to strengthen project and financial management within the Malaria Vaccine Pilot Evaluation–Case–Control Studies (MVPE–CC) Consortium, a team from the Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) visited the European Vaccine Initiative (EVI) in Heidelberg, Germany, from 11 – 12 March 2025. The visit sought to leverage EVI’s expertise in project and financial management to strengthen capacity–building initiatives within the consortium and explore future collaborations.

The KHRC team was led by Prof. Kwaku Poku Asante, Director of KHRC and Coordinating Investigator of MVPE–CC, and included Dr. Thomas Gyan (Ghana Co–PI and Coordinating Fellow, MVPE–CC), Mr. Abdul–Karimu Alhassan (Financial Administrator/Head of Accounts, KHRC), and Mr. Martin Dzimabi (Accountant).

Discussions during the visit centered on capacity building in project, financial, and research management, particularly within the context of North–South collaborations.

During the scientific and technical sessions, both KHRC and EVI explored new research areas, joint grant applications, and ongoing projects including MVPE–CC, Advance\_VAC4PM, EVAPREAP, and a study on placental malaria vaccine acceptability.

Discussions also highlighted KHRC’s institutional training programmes and EVI’s TRANSVAC initiative as key capacity–building models. The finance meeting covered budgeting, proposal development, financial management, and audits. This visit has strengthened partnership between KHRC and EVI and set the stage for future research collaborations.

### **About the MVPE–CC Consortium**

The MVPE–CC Consortium is funded under the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) (Grant Agreement RIA2020S–3310), to evaluate the implementation of the RTS,S/AS01 malaria vaccine through routine health systems in Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi using a case–control approach. Learn more about MVPE: <https://mvpecc.kintampo-hrc.org/>

## **KHRC PARTICIPATES IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MATERNAL IMMUNIZATION**





The Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) has participated in the 2nd Maternal Immunization Readiness Network in Africa and Asia (MIRNA) Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. The conference, which was held from February 24th to 28th, 2025 brought together experts from different countries to discuss how to prepare for the introduction of new vaccines for pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries.

The five-day conference brought together research institutions and representatives from the Ministries of Health in partner countries, including Ghana, Ethiopia, Uganda, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. During the conference, participants shared their experiences and discussed how existing health structures could support the smooth introduction of maternal vaccines. Each country provided updates on their research and progress over the past year. Discussions also focused on strategies to strengthen collaboration among countries to ensure better maternal and child health outcomes.

KHRC was represented by Prof. Kwaku Poku Asante, Principal Investigator and Stakeholder Engagement Lead; Dr. Samuel Asiedu-Afari, Co-Principal Investigator and Vaccine Demand Assessment Lead; Prof. Yeetey Enuameh, Lead for Synthesis of In-Country Burden of Disease; Ms. Theresa Tawiah, Cost-Effectiveness Assessment Lead; Mrs. Irene Apewe Adjei, Lead for Situational Analysis of MI Delivery Pathways; Kwame Kesse Adjei, Stakeholder Engagement Co-Lead; Clifford Kwarteng Kyeremateng, Study Coordinator; and Dr. Alfred Kwadwo Ampofo, Municipal Director of Health Services, Kintampo.

Their participation underscores KHRC's commitment to improving maternal and child health by contributing to global efforts in maternal immunization research and policy planning.

The MIRNA Consortium was established to assess how prepared countries are to introduce new vaccines for pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries and explore ways to strengthen healthcare systems for effective vaccine delivery. It is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and coordinated by the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa.

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[Learn more about MIRNA](#)





## **KHRC JOINS EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN MATERNAL VACCINE SAFETY IN AFRICA**

Ensuring the safety of vaccines for pregnant women is crucial to protecting both mothers and their babies. Recognizing this, Ghana and Kenya are preparing to launch a pilot project for active maternal vaccine safety surveillance. This project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, aims to create a system that closely monitors vaccine safety using a pregnancy registry, which will be linked to the African Union Smart Safety Surveillance (AU3S) platform, to strengthen efforts to safeguard maternal and child health.

As part of preparatory activities, the Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) participated in a three-day AU3S Maternal Immunization (AU3S\_MI) workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa, from March 3rd to 5th, 2025. The workshop brought together experts, researchers, and regulatory representatives from the Food and Drugs Authority in Ghana and Pharmacy and Poisons Board in Kenya to discuss the project's implementation, key procedures, and key activities required for the project's

success.

During the conference, members shared insights on their national vaccine safety monitoring systems (pharmacovigilance), with updates from key working groups, including the Signal Management Group, Data Working Group, and Project Leadership Team. Discussions also centered around ways to improve collaboration between Ghana and Kenya, to ensure that robust safety systems are in place to support the introduction of new maternal vaccines.

KHRC was represented by its Director, Prof. Kwaku Poku Asante, Principal Investigator and Co-Chair of the Project Leadership Team, Mr. Elvis Ato Wilson, Member of the Project Leadership Team and Signal Management Group, Dr. Afia Korkor Opere Yeboah, Pharmacist and Member of the Signal Management Group and Richard Ampomah Boakye, Senior Data Manager and Member of the Data Working Group.



## About The AU3S\_MI Pilot Project

The African Union Smart Safety Surveillance Maternal Immunization (AU3S\_MI) pilot project is designed to ensure that maternal vaccines are effectively tracked, and any adverse effects are promptly reported to national regulatory bodies, such as Ghana's Food and Drugs Authority (FDA)

This pilot project will also assess how well existing vaccine safety monitoring systems function and whether they can quickly identify potential risks. If new maternal vaccines are introduced, the AU3S\_MI project will pilot an active safety surveillance system in Ghana and Kenya, to help strengthen vaccine monitoring and build confidence in maternal immunization programmes.

Mr. Zakaria Buwah, a Research Fellow and Clinical Study Coordinator at Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) has been selected for the prestigious WHO-TDR Clinical Research Leadership Fellowship Programme. As part of the fellowship, Mr. Buwah will spend a year at the European Vaccine Initiative (EVI), where he will contribute to innovative work in vaccine development, clinical research design, project management, and grant writing.

With over 15 years of experience in clinical research on malaria, covid-19, Lassa fever, and sickle cell, Mr. Buwah has established himself as a dedicated clinical trialist. His selection for this fellowship highlights his expertise and commitment to advancing global health through research.

During his fellowship at EVI, Mr. Buwah will develop expertise in managing large-scale vaccine projects across multiple countries, refine his skills in clinical trial design and regulatory processes, contribute to vaccine research from early development to post-marketing surveillance, and strengthen his leadership in global health and research management.

Mr. Buwah expressed his excitement, stressing that the fellowship is a valuable opportunity to enhance his skills in clinical trial design while working alongside global experts.

The WHO-TDR Clinical Research Leadership Fellowship aims to equip researchers from low- and middle-income countries with the skills and experience necessary to take on leadership roles in global health research. Through placements in Training Partner Organizations (TPOs), fellows gain hands-on experience in infectious diseases, pandemic

### **KHRC RESEARCH FELLOW, MR. ZAKARIA BUWAH, SELECTED FOR WHO-TDR CLINICAL RESEARCH LEADERSHIP FELLOWSHIP**

*New colleague at EVI*  
**WHO-TDR Clinical  
Research Fellow**

**ZAKARIAH  
BUWAH**  
WELCOME TO EVI



preparedness, and other critical areas of public health. Mr. Buwah's selection reflects his outstanding contributions to clinical research and his potential to drive impactful health innovations.

Congratulations to Mr. Zakaria Buwah. KHRC is proud to celebrate this milestone in his career and remains committed to fostering excellence in research that improves health outcomes.

Read Mr. Zakaria Buwah's profile: <https://khrc-staff-profile.netlify.app/research-fellows-details/mr-buwah-zakariah-bartholomew>



## **KHRC TRAINS FIELD STAFF AND MIDWIVES FOR NEW RSV OBSERVATIONAL STUDY**

As part of efforts to successfully carry out a new study on Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), the Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) has trained its field staff and midwives to equip them with the skills needed to collect accurate data for the study.

The series of trainings, held from 19<sup>th</sup> February to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025, took place in six health facilities across the Techiman North District and Techiman South Municipality of the Bono East Region of Ghana.



The facilities include Tuobodom polyclinic, Tanoboase CHPS Compound, Abrafi Hospital, Aworowa Health Centre, Krobo Health Centre, and Offuman Health Centre. The training covered key areas including the study's objectives and procedure, data collection, assigning unique QR codes to each study participant and collecting blood and nasal swab samples from the newborns. Ten (10) field staff, who interact directly with study participants, and 67 midwives, received this training.



As part of data collection, the trained midwives will collect blood and nasal swab samples from study participants who give birth at health facilities while trained field staff will handle samples from home deliveries.



RSV is a common virus that affects the lungs, especially in children under five and is a major cause of pneumonia, the leading cause of death in young children. Since efforts to introduce an RSV vaccine are at an advanced stage, KHRC is conducting this observational study to assess its ability to carry out a larger phase 4 RSV vaccine trail in the future.



### About the Study

The RSV Observational study, titled “Prospective, Epidemiological, Non-Interventional, Multi-Country Based, Cohort Study to Assess Site Capability for A Phase IV Trial Assessing Efficacy of a Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Vaccine in Pregnant Women to Protect Their Infants (<6 Months Age) Against RSV Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTIs)” is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through Wits Health Consortium at the University of Witwatersrand and is being conducted in selected communities in Bono East Region.

KHRC will recruit 150 pregnant women between 24 and 34 weeks of pregnancy over a period of 10 weeks. The study will monitor the babies for six months after they are born to track RSV infections. Findings from this observational study will help prepare for the phase four RSV vaccine trial.

### OPTIMAP MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH STUDY CONDUCTS MAIDEN TRAINING FOR DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS TO SUPPORT STUDY ACTIVITIES



The “Optimizing Implementation of Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response” (OptiMaP) study, led by the School of Public Health (SPH), University of Ghana and Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC), has trained 30 District Advisory Board (DAB) members to help drive the study’s effort in reducing maternal and neonatal deaths in Ghana. The OptiMaP study is part of ongoing efforts to improve maternal and newborn healthcare and prevent avoidable deaths by strengthening systems that monitor and respond to these deaths.





The training, which was held in Nkoranza, from 12th-13th February 2025, involved DAB members from Nkoranza North, Nkoranza South, and Atebubu Districts, where the study is being implemented. The training for the DAB members focused on their roles in the study as the link between the research team and the local communities. They were also taken through the communication channels to be used as well as the study's objectives and procedure.

Prior to the DAB training, the study team attended a two-day trainer of trainers (TOT) workshop at KHRC, from 10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> February. The TOT workshop equipped the study team with essential skills to effectively train the DAB members on the various study procedures.

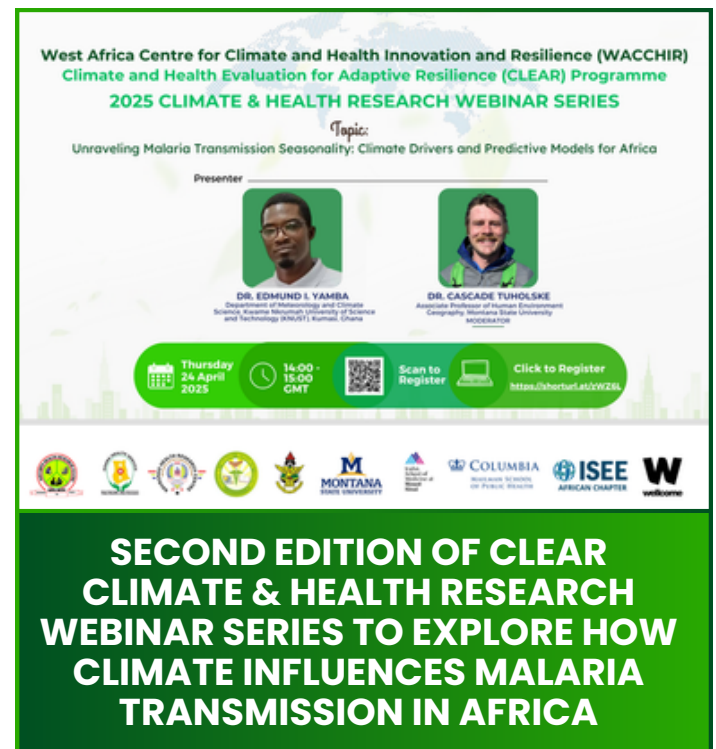
### About OptiMaP

OptiMaP is a four-year study that seeks to develop and improve the way the 'Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response' (MPDSR) system tracks and responds to maternal and newborn deaths, and to evaluate how it helps reduce these deaths.

This study is led by the School of Public Health (SPH), University of Ghana in collaboration with the Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) and implemented in the Nkoranza North, Nkoranza South, and Atebubu Districts of the Bono East Region of Ghana.




The research team leading this study includes Prof. Kwaku Poku Asante, and Dr. John Amoah from KHRC; Prof. Alex Manu, Prof. Francis Anto, Prof. Patricia Akweongo, Prof Kwasi Torpey, Dr. Timothy Abagre, Vida Kukula, Shirley Abanga, and Naadu Hazel from SPH; and Dr. Merlin Wilcox and Dr. Mary Mbuo, collaborators from the University of Southampton, UK.




West Africa Centre for Climate and Health Innovation and Resilience (WACCHIR)  
Climate and Health Evaluation for Adaptive Resilience (CLEAR) Programme  
2025 CLIMATE & HEALTH RESEARCH WEBINAR SERIES

Topic:  
Unravelling Malaria Transmission Seasonality: Climate Drivers and Predictive Models for Africa

Presenter:



DR. EDMUND I. YAMBA  
Department of Meteorology and Climate  
Science, Kwame Ninsin University of Science  
and Technology (KUNUST), Kumasi, Ghana



DR. CASCADE TUHOLSKE  
Associate Professor of Human Environment  
Geographic Information Science  
MODERATOR

Thursday  
24 April  
2025

11:00  
-  
15:00  
GMT

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Logos of partner institutions: Ghana Health Service, University of Ghana, Kintampo Health Research Centre, Navrongo Health Research Centre, Montana State University, Columbia University, ISEE African Chapter, and WACCHIR.

**SECOND EDITION OF CLEAR  
CLIMATE & HEALTH RESEARCH  
WEBINAR SERIES TO EXPLORE HOW  
CLIMATE INFLUENCES MALARIA  
TRANSMISSION IN AFRICA**

The Climate and Health Evaluation for Adaptive Resilience (CLEAR) Programme is set to host the second edition of its Climate & Health Research Webinar Series on **Thursday, April 24, 2025**. This session will feature a presentation on **"Unravelling Malaria Transmission Seasonality: Climate Drivers and Predictive Models for Africa,"** which will offer valuable insights into how climate influences malaria patterns and how predictive models can aid in disease control efforts.

This webinar series is organized by the Kintampo Health Research Centre in partnership with the Navrongo Health Research Centre, Dodowa Health Research

Centre, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Columbia University (USA), the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (USA), Montana State University (USA), and the West Africa Centre for Climate and Health Innovation and Resilience (WACCHIR). The CLEAR Programme is funded by the Wellcome Trust, UK.

## WEBINAR DETAILS



**THURSDAY, 24 APRIL 2025**



**14:00 - 15:00 GMT**

## PRESENTATION

- **Unraveling Malaria Transmission Seasonality: Climate Drivers and Predictive Models for Africa - Dr. Edmund I. Yamba, Department of Meteorology and Climate Science, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana.**

The April edition will be moderated by Dr. Cascade Tuholske, Associate Professor of Human Environment Geography, Montana State University.

This webinar is essential for researchers, health professionals, policymakers, and climate change advocates who want to understand climate-related health risks and innovative exposure assessment approaches.

[Click to Register](#)

Don't miss this opportunity to engage with leading experts in the field of climate and health!

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