

Newsletter



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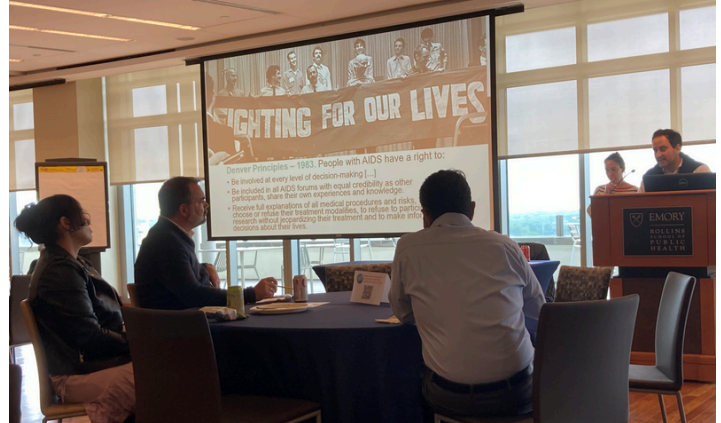
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On May 14th, members from [Treatment Action Group](#) (TAG) and the TB Community Research Advisory Group (CRAG) led a 3-hour "Best Practices for Community Engagement Training." The primary goal of the training was to delve into the principles and stories of effective community engagement. The training provided an opportunity for students, staff and faculty to enhance their understanding of the value of community engagement and consider how to apply these insights to their future research practices, ultimately strengthening the connection between research initiatives and community welfare. Following the session, attendees expressed interest in receiving additional training related to creating a community advisory board. Students and staff have also expressed interest in leading initiatives to expand good participatory practice training offerings to graduate students across Emory and to engage patient advocacy groups and TB survivors in TRAC activities, such as World TB Day events.

We look forward to collaborating with students and staff, and TAG and CRAG members to provide additional community engagement opportunities, resources and training.



Accelerator Travel Awards

The goal of TRAC Accelerator Awards is to provide small awards that allow recipients to fund specific research needs and/or support travel to build new collaborations. Anyone, including pilot grant recipients, are eligible to apply and receive these accelerator awards. There are two categories of award:

- **OPPORTUNITY AWARDS:** Provide up to \$4,000 to conduct targeted and time-sensitive TB research activities. Funds should remove obstacles to carrying out research. Expected outcomes are a publication and submission of a NIH grant proposal within 12 months.
- **TRAVEL AWARD:** Provide up to \$4,000 to support travel by an Emory/Georgia TRAC investigator to support the development of new collaborations. Activities proposed during the trip should be directly related to the goal of submitting a grant proposal to the NIH within 12 months.

Full details of the application process can be found [HERE](#). Below we share highlights from recently funded travel awards to the Kyrgyz National Tuberculosis Program Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and an award to travel to Nairobi, Kenya, to conduct data analysis with CDC Kenya and the Eastern Deanery AIDS Relief Program.



Kyrgyz National Tuberculosis Program Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Matthew Magee, PhD, MPH Professor of Global Health and Epidemiology at Emory's Rollins School of Public Health, and

Russell Kempker, MD, MSc Associate Professor at Emory's School of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases and the Co-Director of the TRAC Developmental Core were awarded travel awards to visit

the Kyrgyz National Tuberculosis Program (NTP) in Bishkek from May 31 to June 7, 2024. The goal of their visit was to engage in discussions with the leadership at the Kyrgyz NTP about potential research collaborations. The visit focused on exploring the available research capacity and interest in pursuing a NIH Fogarty International Center D43 grant, as well as facilitating collaborations between Kyrgyzstan and the Georgian National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (NCTLD).



A highlight of the trip was their participation in a half-day TB Symposium on June 4, 2024, held at the International Kyrgyzstan Medical University. Additionally, they joined a round table discussion at the Kyrgyzstan NTP, engaging with NTP leadership, physicians, researchers, and donor partners, including representatives from the United States Agency for International Development, United Nations Development Program and the Global Subsidies Initiative. During the round table, Drs. Kempker and Magee gave a presentation to highlight Emory/Georgia TRAC's scientific research areas and identify overlapping interests, paving the way for discussions regarding future collaborations. The opportunity to meet the Kyrgyz NTP leadership, tour their facilities, and interact with their clinicians and staff from their newly developed research department is a crucial first step towards strengthening partnerships and advancing shared goals in tuberculosis research and control.



Eastern Deanery AIDS Relief Program **Nairobi, Kenya**

From May 10 to 17, 2024, David Benkeser, PhD, MPH Associate Professor, Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics, Rollins School of Public Health and Co-Director of the TRAC Clinical and Population Sciences Core traveled to Nairobi, Kenya, to work with the [Eastern Deanery AIDS Relief Program](#) (EDARP) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Kenya. The primary purpose of the visit was

to analyze the effectiveness of EDARP's TB preventive therapy (TPT) program among people living with HIV. During the visit, Dr. Benkeser worked closely with CDC statisticians and EDARP data managers and clinicians to define an appropriate study cohort and implement pre-specified analyses to determine the effectiveness of TPT in preventing TB and reducing mortality. The potential for future collaboration and analyses of EDARP's electronic medical record system was also explored.



Publication Highlight



Muluwork Getahun, PhD, former Emory-Ethiopia Research Training Program trainee and researcher at the Ethiopian Public Health Institute, with collaborators at TRAC partner institution Addis Ababa University published a Nature Scientific Reports article titled [Population structure and spatial distribution of Mycobacterium tuberculosis in Ethiopia](#). The authors examined 1,735 archived

Mycobacterium tuberculosis (Mtb) isolates from the Ethiopian National Drug Resistance Survey (2011-2013) using spoligotyping to understand the population structure and spatial distribution of Mtb. The study found that drug-susceptible TB and drug-resistant TB in Ethiopia are primarily caused by lineages 3 and 4. Regional variations in lineage distribution suggest both local and cross-border spread, highlighting the need for targeted TB control strategies.

TRACcolades

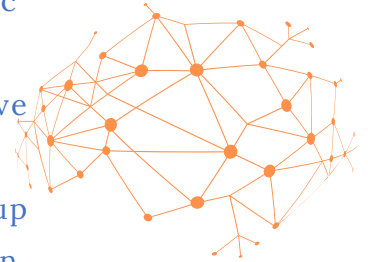


Congratulations to **Rachel Pearson**, immunology and molecular pathogenesis PhD student in Dr. Cheryl Day's lab for receiving an Early Career Researcher award to attend the Collaboration for TB Vaccine Discovery (CTVD) Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA in June. CTVD is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Rachel will present her research in a poster entitled "Single Cell Transcriptomics Reveals Depletion of TB-specific Th1 and Th17 Cells After HIV Infection".

Job Postings

Post Doctoral Fellow- Rollins School of Public Health, Epidemiology

The Department of Epidemiology at Emory's Rollins School of Public Health is recruiting a Post Doctoral Fellow to join a collaborative group of researchers studying the epidemiology of TB and to improve prevention, care, and treatment. Specific focus areas include TB transmission, drug-resistant TB, and TB/HIV co-infection. The group collaborates with U.S. institutions as well as at international sites in South Africa, Ethiopia, Brazil, the country of Georgia, India, and the Philippines. A candidate with a doctoral degree in epidemiology, biostatistics, or related field with strong statistical analysis and programming skills, substantive knowledge of infectious diseases and transmission is preferred. Candidates must have the ability to work independently and collaboratively; strong analytic and scientific writing skills; and an enthusiasm for inter-disciplinary engagement. Interested candidates may forward a CV to sarita.shah@emory.edu or apply directly online: <https://faculty-emory.icims.com/jobs/127442/job>



EMORY

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Assistant Director of Global Health Programs - School of Medicine, Infectious Diseases

The Emory Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Medicine is seeking an Assistant Director of Global Health Programs. The role involves strategic planning, development, and implementation of global health related programs. Activities are focused on a variety of National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded research training programs including tuberculosis research training programs in Ethiopia and the country of Georgia as well as research training and career development programs for junior faculty at Addis Ababa University and multidisciplinary health professional education programs at several collaborating Ethiopian academic institutions. Interested candidates can apply directly via: <https://staff-emory.icims.com/jobs/130451/job>



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Upcoming Events

TB WORKS IN PROGRESS SEMINAR: SWABBING TONGUES VS. COLLECTING SPUTUM TO ISOLATE MTB IN A MOZAMBICAN PRISON MASS SCREENING



Thursday, June 20, 2024 9-10 am
CNR Room 3001 and Zoom

Dr. Anne Spaulding is an Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Global Health at Rollins School of Public Health and Emory School of Medicine where she leads research in the areas of treatment and prevention of HIV and hepatitis C and TB.

May Publications

Abebe, M., Atnafu, A., Tilahun, M., Sero, N., Neway, S., Alemu, M., **Tesfaye, G.**, Mihret, **A.**, **Bobosha, K.**, & Wan, C. (2024). Determinants of sputum culture conversion time in multidrug-resistant tuberculosis patients in ALERT comprehensive specialized hospital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: A retrospective cohort study. *PLoS One*, 19(5), e0304507. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0304507>

Arconada Alvarez, S. J., **Hoover, A. T.**, Greenleaf, M., **Ray, S. M.**, **Schechter, M. C.**, **Blumberg, H. M.**, & Lam, W. A. (2024). "An app is just available at all times"-the process and outcomes of converting the Georgia Tuberculosis Reference Guide into a mobile application. *PLoS One*, 19(5), e0298758. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0298758>

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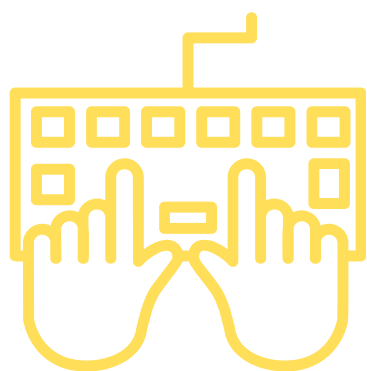
Shah, N. S., Kityo, C., Hughes, M. D., McCarthy, C., Wallis, C., Hosseinipour, M., Langat, D., Nyirenda, M., Rassool, M., Dawson, R., Joseph, Y., Some, F., Mngqobisa, R., Mukwekwerere, P. G., Woolley, E., Godfrey, C., Manabe, Y. C., Mellors, J. W., Flexner, C., & **Maartens, G.** (2024). Effectiveness of double-dose dolutegravir in people receiving rifampin-based tuberculosis treatment: an observational, cohort study of people with HIV from six countries. *Clin Infect Dis*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciae269>

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*Have items to include in
a future newsletter?*

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