

Newsletter



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The Emory/Georgia TRAC's Bioinformatics and Integrated Systems Biology (BISB) Core is excited to start offering virtual and in-person office hours. TRAC members who have engaged with the BISB Core through TB Hack Days or have 'omics'-related questions are invited to drop in to receive one-on-one support from senior faculty and informaticists (see below) with questions regarding study design and data analysis related to bulk and single cell transcriptomics, metabolomics and lipidomics. This will be a great opportunity to learn new, personalized data analysis techniques and visualizations and troubleshoot any problems that arise during analysis. Office hours will be held the **4th Thursday of the month from 10-11am starting January 23rd** at Emory's Rollins School of Public Health, R. Randall Rollins Building, Room 205 and via Zoom. Please see the upcoming events section for additional details and please direct any questions to BISB Core Director **Jeffrey Collins, MD, MPH:** jeffrey.michael.collins@emory.edu.

EMORY FACULTY & INFORMATICISTS



Jeffrey Collins, MD, MS



Xin Hu, PhD



Boris Minasenko, MS



Khader Ghneim, MS



Ashish Sharma, PhD



PREVENTING OCCURRENCE OF TUBERCULOSIS IN PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

Check out the CDC Foundation's recent [Blog](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) posts titled 'Expanding and Improving TB Prevention' which provide an update on the '[Preventing Occurrence of Tuberculosis by Expanding Coverage of Tuberculosis Preventive Treatment among People Living with HIV \(PROTECT\)](#)' study. PROTECT is a three-year programmatic evaluation of the impact of TB preventive treatment (TPT) among people living with HIV in six countries: Haiti, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe. The study is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is being implemented by the CDC Foundation, in partnership with Emory University (study PI, **Sarita Shah, MD, MPH**, TRAC Clinical and Population Sciences Core Co-Director), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CDC country offices, Ministries of Health, and Implementing Partners Eastern Deanery AIDS Relief Program (EDARP), Georgetown Global Health Nigeria (GGHN), Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB), Makerere University School of Public Health - Monitoring And Evaluation Technical Support (MakSPH-METS), and Zimbabwe Technical Assistance, Training and Education Center for Health (Zim-TTECH).

TRACcolades

Huge congratulations to **Samhita Kumar, MPH**, a doctoral student in the Global Health & Development PhD program in the Hubert Department of Global Health, on achieving a professional milestone by speaking at the **World Economic Forum in Davos** on December 22nd, 2024. Samhita's research interests are in global mental health, integration of mental health with current and emerging health priorities, health systems strengthening, and health priority-setting and financing.



Congratulations to **Kristin Nelson, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology on being selected as a new member of the WHO **Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Evidence for Clinical and Policy Considerations for New Tuberculosis (TB) Vaccines**. The remit of the new TAG will be to focus on the research and development phase of new TB vaccines, to participate in reviews of data and product development strategies from developers, to collaborate and offer guidance to WHO, and to advise WHO on the generation of evidence related to clinical and policy considerations to inform the TB vaccine development community.

Kudos to University of Georgia PhD candidate **Adenike McDonald** and Medical Officer **Dr. Dessa Jean Casalme** at the De La Salle Medical and Health Sciences Institute on receipt of TRAC Travel Accelerator Awards to attend the **3rd International Post-tuberculosis Symposium** at the Stias Institute, Stellenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa, April 14-16, 2025. Ms. McDonald will submit abstracts on the social determinants of health and treatment outcomes among recent TB survivors in low-income settings and post-TB complications among female TB survivors who were pregnant during treatment. Dr. Casalme hopes attendance of the Symposium will be valuable for development of her research proposal to study post-TB lung disease among children and risk factors for its development in a high-TB burden setting.



Publication Highlights

Congratulations to University of Georgia PhD students **Adenike McDonald**, **Asmith Joseph** and **Patrick Kaggwa**, and Drs. **Juliet Sekandi** (University of Georgia) and **Sarah Zalwango** (Makerere University), on their recent publication titled “**Prevalence of TB-related symptoms and self-reported disability among adult TB survivors**”. Their work explores post-TB-related morbidity among TB survivors in Uganda who recently completed their treatment. The study shows the need for longitudinal evaluation for TB survivors post-TB treatment since TB-related symptoms and self-reporting of disabilities were highly prevalent in this study population.



Congratulations to **Carla Winston, PhD, MA**, Associate Director for Science for the Division of Tuberculosis Elimination at the CDC, on co-first authorship of the article titled “**Updates on the Treatment of Drug-Susceptible and Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis: An Official ATS/CDC/ERS/IDSA Clinical Practice Guideline**” publication in the American Journal of Critical Care and Respiratory Medicine by the **American Thoracic Society**, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, the **European Respiratory Society**, and the **Infectious Diseases Society of America**. The guidelines highlight that adults and adolescents with drug-susceptible pulmonary TB disease can be treated for four months instead of six, and most children with non-severe TB disease can be treated for four months instead of six. Additionally, new all-oral treatment regimens for multidrug- and rifampin-resistant TB disease can be shortened from fifteen months to six months.

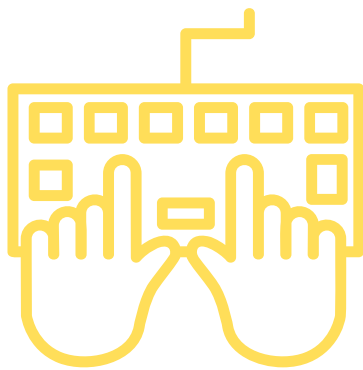
Congrats to Drs. **Juliet Sekandi** (University of Georgia) and **Noah Kiwanuka** (Makerere University) on their recent publication titled “**Pre-diagnosis and pre-treatment loss to follow-up and associated factors among patients with presumed tuberculosis and those diagnosed in Uganda**”. The study assesses pre-diagnosis and pre-treatment loss to follow-up (LTFU) and associated factors among patients with presumed TB and those diagnosed in selected health facilities. This article illustrates the need for urgent intervention due to the high proportions of LTFU before TB diagnosis and treatment.



Congratulations to **Cheryl Day, PhD**, **Lisa Marie Cranmer, MD**, and PhD candidate **Rachel Pearson** on their publication, [“Patterns and Cofactors of Polyfunctional Mycobacteria-Specific T-Cell Response Restoration Following 6-Month Antiretroviral Treatment in Children With HIV”](#). This study focuses on immune restoration of mycobacteria-specific T cells following Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) in Children with HIV (CHIV). The study found persistent mycobacteria-specific CD4 cell deficits at 6 months post-ART, despite increased Th1 cytokine production, with greater deficits in older CHIV experiencing more immunosuppression, higher immune activation, and fewer naive CD4 cells.



Congratulations to **Drs. Juliet Sekandi** (university of Georgia) and **Sarah Zalwango** (Makerere University) on the recent publication titled [“Stigma and associated sex disparities among patients with tuberculosis in Uganda: a cross-sectional study”](#). This cross-sectional study examined the prevalence of stigma and the effect of the sex and other demographics of patients undergoing TB treatment. The study found a high risk of self-stigma among TB patients who were females and unemployed, whereas patients with HIV/AIDS and TB were more likely to report anticipated stigma.



**Have items to include in
a future newsletter?**

Email:

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Upcoming Events

SPECIAL TB WORKS IN PROGRESS SEMINAR: SOUTHERN REGIONAL MEETING PRACTICE TALKS



Friday January 17, 2025, 9-10 am. CNR Room 3001 and [Zoom](#)

Acceptability of Long-acting Injectables Among Contacts in Tbilisi, Georgia. Ruth Demissie is a second-year epidemiology MPH student who completed a Global Field Experience in Tbilisi, Georgia. She worked in collaboration with Emory's long-standing partner in Georgia, National Center of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, to complete a knowledge, attitudes, and practices survey on the acceptability of long-acting injectables among household and close contacts.



Healthcare Worker Perceptions of Long-acting Injectable Tuberculosis Preventive Treatment in the Country of Georgia. Victoria Ontiveros is a second-year global epidemiology MPH student. During Summer 2024, she traveled to the National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases in Tbilisi, Georgia, to administer a survey assessing health care workers' perceptions of long-acting injectable TB preventive treatment.



TRAC
Tuberculosis Research Advancement Center
EmoryGeorgia

SYSTEMS BIOLOGY VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON OFFICE HOURS

4th Thursday of the month starting January 23rd!

Drop in to receive one-on-one support from Emory University informaticists with 'omics' study design and data analysis for **tuberculosis research** - including bulk and single cell transcriptomics, metabolomics and lipidomics.

Thursday January 23, 2025, 10-11 am [[Download to calendar](#)]
RSPH, RRR, Room 205 and [Zoom \(https://zoom.us/j/91264914573\)](https://zoom.us/j/91264914573).

Bulletin Board

TRAC
Tuberculosis Research Advancement Center
Emory/Georgia

NIH Pre-submission Mock Study Section Review

1. Express Your Interest by February 14
APPLY NOW HERE!
2. Submit Your Draft by April 1
for review by TB experts from the relevant fields
3. Receive Expert Feedback by early May
including written comments & open discussion review

Open to **tuberculosis** researchers affiliated with Emory/Georgia TRAC partner institutions who are planning to submit a proposal to NIH by the early-June, 2025 deadlines.
We encourage early-stage investigators to apply!

OPEN FACULTY SEARCH EMORY UNIVERSITY, ROLLINS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

ROLLINS
SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC
HEALTH

We are pleased to announce an open search for new TB faculty at Emory. We are looking to hire a new TB faculty member into the Department of Epidemiology at the Rollins School of Public Health, in conjunction with the [Emory/Georgia TB Research Advancement Center \(TRAC\)](#). The position is open to applicants of any rank (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor). The job posting can be found [here](#).

Applications can be submitted at [this portal](#) or by sending a letter of interest and CV to the search committee c/o Kiara Banks, kiara.latimer.banks@emory.edu.

December Publications

Alemayehu A, **Wassie L**, Alemayehu DH, Adnew B, Neway S, Tefera DA, Ayalew S, Hailu E, Ayele S, Seyoum B, **Bobosha K**, Abebe M, Aseffa A, Petros B, Howe R. *Genotypes and drug resistance pattern of Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex among clinically diagnosed pulmonary tuberculosis patients*. Front Public Health. 2024;12:1420685. DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2024.1420685.

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Mollalign H, Alemayehu DH, Beyene D, Melaku K, Ayele A, Chala D, Diriba G, Yenew B, **Getahun M**, Adnew B, Moga S, **Collins JM**, Ghodousi A, **Bobosha K**, **Wassie L**. *Phenotypic drug resistance and genetic mutations linked to resistance among extrapulmonary tuberculosis patients in Ethiopia: Insights from Whole Genome Sequencing*. Res Sq. 2024. DOI: 10.21203/rs.3.rs-5302564/v1.

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