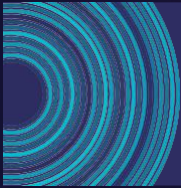




Medical
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MRC Millennium
Medal 2022



MRC
IMPACT
PRIZE 2022

MRC Prizes 2022 Awards Ceremony

Celebrating exceptional MRC-funded
impacts and achievements

Research Council

Interim Executive Chair Medical



OUTSTANDING TEAM IMPACT

The impact of poor menstrual health and hygiene on adolescent schoolgirls and interventions to improve girls' health and equity

Nominated by Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, conducted a study on the use of menstrual cups in Kenya that has since informed Kenyan health policy and been used globally including leading to the formation of the Menstrual Cup Coalition

Team members:

- Prof Penelope Phillips-Howard, Professor of Public Health Epidemiology, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM)
- Ms Elizabeth Nyothach, Study Coordinator/Research Officer, Kenya Medical Research Institute/Centre for Global Health Research (KEMRI/CGHR)
- Ms Garazi Zulaika, Technical Officer (Epidemiologist and Logistician), LSTM
- Dr Clayton Onyango, Deputy Laboratory Director, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-Kenya
- Dr Linda Mason, Senior Research Associate, LSTM
- Mr David Obor Okoth, Research Coordinator for Health and Demographic Surveillance System, KEMRI/CGHR
- Dr Anna Maria van Eijk, Senior Research Officer, LSTM
- Mr Clifford Oduor, Biostatistician, KEMRI/CGHR
- Ms Kelly Alexander, Senior Learning and Influencing Advisor, CARE (formerly LSTM/ SWAP during MRC study)
- Mrs Jane Juma, Microbiologist Center for Vaccine Development (CVD)-MALI (formerly KEMRI/CGHR during MRC study/trial)
- Mr Alex Mwaki, Country Director, Safe Water and AIDS Project (SWAP)
- Ms Emily Omwenga Kerubo, Laboratory Technologist, KEMRI/CGHR
- Dr Valerie Opollo, Laboratory Director, KEMRI/CGHR
- Dr Daniel Kwaro, Clinical Epidemiologist, KEMRI/CGHR
- Dr Eunice Fwaya, Chief Officer of Health, County Government of Siaya, Kenya
- Ms Alie Eleveld, Founder and Technical Advisor, SWAP
- Mr Kelvin Oruko, Lecturer (formerly KEMRI/CDC during MRC study)
- Dr Kayla Laserson, Deputy Director Infectious Diseases Cluster, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (formerly CDC-Kenya during MRC study)
- Ms Filister Ogwama, Study Nurse, KEMRI/CGHR
- Prof Duolao Wang, Professor in Biostatistics, LSTM



- Ms Clara Akello, Research assistant, KEMRI/CGHR
- Prof Philip Spinhoven, Professor of Clinical Psychology, Leiden University
- Professor Rhiannon Tudor Edwards, Professor in Health Economics, Bangor University
- Dr Isaac Ngere, Medical Epidemiologist, Washington State University

Summary of impact:

Few studies have examined how impoverished girls manage their periods, how menstruation impacts their lives, and what solutions are needed to ameliorate these challenges. In 2012 MRC awarded us a grant to explore Kenyan schoolgirls' menstrual challenges and investigate if a reusable menstrual cup could help. We found cups reduced rates of reproductive tract infections and improved girls' schooling. To achieve impact, we built a broad collaborative team comprising Kenyan, UK, and international partners, with a range of academic skills, including laboratory, clinical, epidemiological and social science, with value placed on local partner understanding of cultural, social and ethical issues associated with this sensitive topic.

Our team communicated continuously with school, community, and ministry stakeholders to understand cup acceptability, and barriers to uptake, and to interpret results.

Findings on poor hygiene in schools informed Kenya's menstrual hygiene policy and strategy, and menstrual cups were included in these guidelines. Knowledge generation from the initial nominated study included 15 peer reviewed publications. Evidence generated was used by global menstrual health collaborations, including the WHO's expert panel, and supported founding the Menstrual Cup Coalition.

We have presented findings in over 30 conferences, webinars, and meetings. Following successful completion of the nominated grant, we have led and co-partnered 13 further grants to build knowledge on this topic, including MRC, BMGF, WSSCC, UKRI, UNICEF, NIH, and Grand Challenges Canada.

We have now published over 40 papers, commentaries, viewpoints, and debates in peer reviewed journals to build knowledge internationally on this previously neglected public health issue

