

JWARG UPDATES

NEWS FROM THE JOINT WEST AFRICA RESEARCH GROUP

STUDY OF SEVERE INFECTIOUS DISEASES ENROLLS 100TH VOLUNTEER

JWARG's RV466 research protocol, a study designed to identify and characterize cases of suspected severe infectious disease, reached a key milestone in August with the enrollment of its 100th volunteer.

This multi-site protocol led by the U.S. Military HIV Research Program opened in Nigeria late last year and has now been activated at sites in Liberia and Ghana as well.



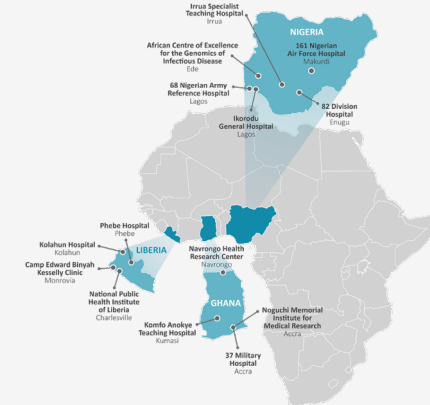
Clinicians at the 37 Military Hospital in Accra, Ghana, conduct a mock RV466 visit.

The study enrolls adult volunteers who present to clinics as severely ill with a suspected infectious source. In addition to receiving care, they provide specimens for laboratory analysis and complete a brief questionnaire that captures basic clinical, demographic and exposure data.

RV466 brings advanced diagnostic methods to bear in the West African hospital setting, including assays for the diagnosis of Lassa and other viral hemorrhagic fevers, generating data on circulating infectious disease threats in the region and informing countermeasure development.

The RV466 team has enrolled participants at two sites in Lagos (68 Nigerian Army Reference Hospital and Ikorodu General Hospital), and in Makurdi at the 161 Nigerian Air Force Hospital, as well as in Ghana at the 37 Military Hospital and Liberia at the Camp Edward Binyah Kesselly (EBK) Clinic. The protocol is supported by

JWARG Clinical and Laboratory Sites – Clinical and laboratory sites in Nigeria, Ghana and Liberia support RV466 and the ACESO Observational Study of Sepsis.



reference laboratories in each country: the African Centre of Excellence for the Genomics of Infectious Disease (ACEGID) in Nigeria, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) in Ghana, and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL).

This effort represents new collaborations between military, academic and public health labs in the subregion, developing a network of infectious disease research capability.



Study staff at the Armed Forces of Liberia Camp EBK Clinic conduct a mock study visit RV466 protocol training.

INSIDE:

Sepsis Research Site Initiated • Annual Investigators Meeting • Three Laboratories Commissioned

PHEBE HOSPITAL SITE INITIATES SEPSIS PROTOCOL

The Austere environments Consortium for Enhanced Sepsis Outcomes (ACESO) celebrated a significant project milestone this quarter with the initiation of a sepsis clinical observational protocol at Phebe Hospital in Liberia.



Investigators attend training in preparation for the Phebe Hospital site's initiation of the ACESO sepsis protocol.

Led by the ACESO technical team, Drs. Anne Fox and Josh Chenoweth; National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) Principal Investigator, Dr. Fatorma Bolay; and Phebe Hospital Investigators, Drs. Jefferson Sibley and Philip Mendy, the study enrolled launched following months of planning and training activity.

Joined by Senior Regulatory Affairs Specialist, Andria Civitella; Senior ASM Fellow, Dr. Lourens Robberts; Africabio Enterprises, LLC Project Manager, Gaeduo Stewart; ACESO Study Manager, Vincent Cleveland; Site Coordinator, Catherine Nimely; and ACESO Program Manager, Melissa Bradshaw, the Phebe team conducted role-play protocol procedures and study simulations leading up to site initiation of the protocol.

In preparation for study activation, the ACESO-Phebe partnership established the first functioning microbiology laboratory in the country in the last 40 years, trained a team of physicians, nurses, and laboratory personnel and implemented standard operating procedures needed to conduct and manage a complex clinical study of severely ill patients.

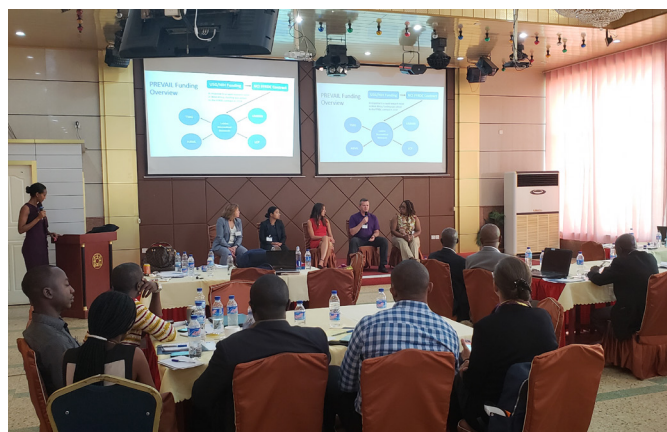
TRAININGS BOOST CLINICAL, LAB AND ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

- 2018 has seen the largest Lassa fever outbreak ever recorded in Nigeria. In April, JWARG collaborators at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the Uniformed Services University (USU) led focused training in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) at study sites in Nigeria located in areas affected by the outbreak. Clinical and lab staff at the 161 Nigerian Air Force Hospital in Makurdi and the 82 Division Hospital at Enugu participated in the training. Dr. Bolaji Tiamiyu, the coordinating JWARG investigator in Nigeria, subsequently transitioned this training to Armed Forces of Liberia partners in Monrovia.



Nigerian laboratory personnel participate in Infection Prevention and Control training.

- The Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine, on behalf of JWARG, and in-country partner Africabio Enterprises, organized a three-day training workshop that covered rules and regulations associated with use of U.S. Government and U.S. DoD research funds. The July meeting in Monrovia, Liberia focused on training administrative, accounting and compliance officers and research teams to enhance their ability for effective administration, compliance and program management, as well as navigation of complex directives.



Liberia agreements and accounting training

ANNUAL INVESTIGATORS MEETING HELD IN GHANA



Attendees of the 2018 Investigators Meeting in Accra, Ghana

In June, NAMRU-3 Ghana Detachment (N3-GD) hosted the annual investigators meeting in Accra for researchers involved in JWARG studies. During the three-day meeting, investigators presented research data from program studies, as well as complementary regional projects.

The investigator's meeting was chaired by CDR Andrew Letizia, OIC N3-GD, and Dr. Jessica Eisner, RV466 Protocol Chair. Regional investigators shared enrollment progress at their sites, describing their experience implementing the protocols along with challenges and problem solving strategies.

Naval Medical Research Center (NMRC), Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), and United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) investigators reviewed early data from the ACESO Observational Study of Sepsis and the RV466 severe infectious disease study; they further discussed data sharing and communication strategies. JWARG reference laboratory leaders also shared summary findings from related research efforts including sequencing from the Lassa outbreak performed at the African Centre of Excellence for the Genomics of Infectious Disease and the Broad Institute, investigation into dengue cases at Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR), and ongoing PREVAIL activities at the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL).

Distinguished guests representing the U.S. and Ghanaian militaries spoke at the meeting, including CDR Edward Owusu Nyarko, Officer in Charge of Public Health at 37 Military Hospital; Dr. Chris Daniel, Senior Advisor for Global Health Engagement in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs; and CAPT Andrew Vaughn, Commanding Officer NAMRU-3. Brig. Gen. Yeboah, Commander of 37 Military Hospital, and Dr. Kwabena Abraham Anang, Director of NMIMR also spoke at the meeting.

Attendees included representatives from WRAIR, NMRC, NAMRU-3, USAMRIID, Uniformed Services University, Broad Institute, Nigeria Ministry of Defense, Ghana Armed Forces, Armed Forces of Liberia, Redeemer's University, NMIMR, NPHIL and regional civilian hospitals.

THREE LABS COMMISSIONED

Three JWARG-supported labs were recently commissioned and dedicated to improve diagnostic capabilities in the implementation of JWARG research in all three partner nations.

Nigeria

A state-of-the art infectious diseases research laboratory was commissioned at Ikorodu General Hospital in Lagos, Nigeria, in partnership with ACEGID and Lagos state. The facility will allow for rapid detection of a wide range of pathogens including malaria, Lassa fever, Ebola virus, dengue and monkeypox.



The ACEGID/JWARG research lab at Ikorodu General Hospital was commissioned in June at a ceremony attended by U.S. Consul General F. John Bray (pictured left), ACEGID Director Dr. Christian Happi (right), and the Lagos State Health Commissioner. Dr. Douglas Shaffer, Director of the U.S. Army Medical Research Directorate - Africa (center) delivered remarks.

Ghana

A molecular laboratory with the capability to process research specimens and rapidly detect viral pathogens was commissioned at the 37 Military Hospital in Accra, Ghana in June.



Left: A handshake between U.S. Ambassador to Ghana Robert P. Jackson and Ghana Armed Forces Chief of Defense Lt. Gen. Obed Boamah Akwa at the dedication of the molecular laboratory at 37 Military Hospital. Right: NAMRU-3 Commanding Officer CAPT Andrew Vaughn and LTC Julie Ake at the molecular lab commissioning

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Liberian Lab Named in Memory of SGT Boima Kromah

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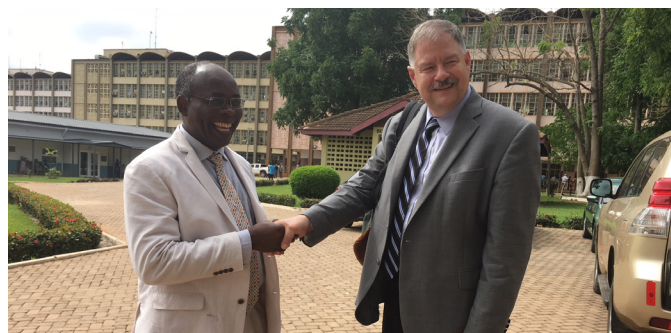
In April, the newly renovated laboratory at Camp EBK Clinic was commissioned by MG Prince Johnson, Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), with representation from the U.S. Embassy and remarks by the Minister of Health and other key parties. The clinic renovation, supported by Department of DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program and JWARG, brings new routine clinical laboratory capability to the AFL.

The lab is named in memory of SGT Boima Kromah, an AFL laboratory technician who was exposed to the Ebola virus while working overtime at the Camp EBK Clinic during the 2014-15 West Africa outbreak and later died.



MAJ Joseph Kowo, JWARG investigator from the AFL, helps dedicate the lab in honor of SGT Boima Kromah.

MRMC LEADERSHIP VISITS JWARG PARTNERS



Dr. George Ludwig (MRMC Principal Assistant for Research and Technology) with Dr. George Oduro at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi, Ghana.

Leaders from the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (MRMC) leadership visited key partners in Nigeria, Ghana and Liberia – meeting with country teams at the embassies as well as local stakeholders to learn about the implementation of JWARG on the ground, from clinical to laboratory settings. Members of the delegation conveyed the mission of MRMC and how it relates to infectious diseases research in the region.

MRMC was represented at site visits and the Camp EBK Clinic Laboratory dedication ceremony by Dr. George Ludwig, Principal Assistant for Research and Technology; Ms. Dawn Rosarius, acting Principal Assistant for Acquisition; and COL Wendy Sammons-Jackson, incoming Director of the Military Infectious Diseases Research Program.

WRAIR COMMAND VISITS NIGERIA

In June, the WRAIR command visited JWARG and other Institute activities in Nigeria, led by WRAIR Commander COL Deborah Whitmer. COL Whitmer met with key collaborators in the Nigeria Ministry of Defence, including Permanent Secretary Ms. Nuratu Batagarawa and Director General of the NMOD Health Implementation Programme Brig. Gen. N.A. Hussain. COL Whitmer also visited WRAIR's Clinical Research Centre in Abuja, which is concluding final visits for a Phase 2 Ebola vaccine trial.

U.S. Army Medical Research Directorate-Africa Director Dr. Douglas Shaffer, WRAIR Chief of Staff LTC Victor Suarez and WRAIR Command Sergeant Major William Barnes attended the commissioning of the research laboratory at Ikorodu General Hospital, where enrollment of RV466 is ongoing. The team also toured the laboratory training Center of Excellence at 661 Air Force Hospital in Ikeja, which supports clinical laboratory and infectious disease diagnostic training for JWARG study investigators.



WRAIR Commander COL Deborah Whitmer receives a commemorative plaque from Permanent Secretary Ms. Nuratu Batagarawa.

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