

### WACCBIP HOLDS ANNUAL ASCB-OXFORD WORKSHOP



WACCBIP hosted collaborators from the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) and the TrypTag team from the Dunn School of Pathology of the University of Oxford for the third WACCBIP-ASCB-Oxford workshop, held from January 17, 2018 to January 26, 2018, at the Department of Biochemistry, Cell & Molecular Biology of the University of Ghana.

The two-week workshop was organised to build the capacity of 11 first-year PhD students and 26 first-year MPhil students in general topics in cell biology & advanced methods for studying cells. The workshop also equipped students with practical skills in developing research grant applications and other professional tools.

Prof. Keith Gull of the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology at the University of Oxford, and Chair of the WACCBIP International Advisory Board, underlined the importance of the workshop as an investment towards training students by offering diverse scientific research perspectives.

Following lectures on topics such as RNAi machinery, plasmodium invasion, and leishmania life cycle, participants reviewed selected research articles in Journal Club sessions and made group presentations on selected topics.

Visiting faculty included Professors Lars Hviid of the Univ. of Copenhagen; Joy Power of the Univ. of Colorado; and Kirk Deitsch of Cornell University.

### FROM OUR FELLOWS



**Prof. Gordon Awandare**  
Director

"My research interest is in the red cell invasion mechanisms of *Plasmodium falciparum* and the pathogenesis of malaria in children. I also study genomic variation in *P. falciparum* isolates across transmission areas. I have a wide network of collaborators across the world and have published extensively on malaria parasite biology and pathogenesis.

When I'm not working, I like to spend time with my family, play basketball with friends or watch my favourite football teams, Accra Hearts of Oak and Arsenal."

### Student Spotlight



**Ruben Ayivor-Djanie**  
PhD

"I work in the Infectious Diseases Research Laboratory and Prof. Gordon Awandare is my supervisor. I am working on a very interesting study focused on finding an interphase between Malaria and Burkitt's Lymphoma. In general, I'm interested in finding out how immune responses to infectious pathogens can lead to genomic instability in lymphocytes.

I want to know how infectious pathogens like *P. falciparum* affect the antibody production process at the molecular level. Hopefully, this would help the scientific world find remedies to both Malaria and Burkitt's Lymphoma.



## THREE COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM WACCBIP TB OUTREACH EVENTS

WACCBIP has completed three outreach events in three low-income communities in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, providing TB screening and other medical consultation services.

The events were organised in partnership with the National Tuberculosis Programme and the the Chest Clinic of Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital.

Residents of Korle-Gonno in the Ablekuma South Municipality, were screened on the day of the first event. The second event was held at Glefe in the Ablekuma West Municipality, and the final event saw residents at Gbese in the Ga West Municipality come out in their numbers to be screened.

Overall, around 1000 residents were screened in the three communities.



## WACCBIP TRAINS NCHS BIOMEDICAL SCIENTISTS

WACCBIP has collaborated with the National Catholic Health Service (NCHS) in a bid to improve the skills and techniques of 25 biomedical laboratory scientists working in the 36 hospitals and 78 clinics under the NCHS across Ghana.

Prof. Gordon Awandare, Director of WACCBIP, explained that the workshop was organised to mobilise career biomedical scientists to conduct cutting-edge research & drive innovation. He was confident the workshop would upgrade participants' skills, particularly in diagnostics.

Welcoming the partnership & subsequent workshops with the NCHS, Mr. George Adjei, Director for the Service, was thankful that efforts were being made to build capacity for scientists in Ghana. He was particularly thankful to Dr. Patrick Kobina Arthur, Head of Research & Training at WACCBIP, for his key role in facilitating the workshop, which was the first for the NCHS biomedical scientists.

Training covered topics in advanced strategies in diagnostics & healthcare, diversity and transmission of pathogens, in-depth study of RT-PCR methods, and professional research grant proposal writing techniques, among others.

## WACCBIP PARTNERS QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY'S CENTRE FOR EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE

WACCBIP and the Centre for Experimental Medicine at Queen's University in Belfast have completed a collaborative research symposium, which officially begins a research partnership between the two institutions.

The partnership will provide opportunity for collaborative research programmes, short-term students exchange visits, & joint consultations for identifying new research priorities.

The symposium was held in Accra from February 20-22, 2018 & covered topics such as bacterial infections, immunity & parasite genetic diversity, drug & biomarker discovery, and clinical research.



## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



Dr. Paemka (left), who was featured on the show on March 14, spoke about her work in genetics, specifically in identifying genetic markers in Triple Negative Breast Cancer among Ghanaian women.

Dr. Manful-Gwira (below), who was on the programme the following week, discussed Trypanosomiasis and her work in training farmers in the identification and handling of cases among infected animals.



### WACCBIP RESEARCHERS INTERVIEWED ON POPULAR RADIO STATION

WACCBIP researchers, Dr. Lily Paemka and Dr. Theresa Manful-Gwira were featured on the morning show of a popular Accra-based radio station, Starr FM, to talk about their respective research priority areas and the larger scope of the research and training activities at WACCBIP.



### WACCBIP ENGAGES EWIM COMMUNITY

As part of our activities under the Tackling Infections to Benefit Africa (TIBA) partnership, WACCBIP, on Friday, February 23, 2018, visited the Ewim community in the Central Region of Ghana, to discuss malaria prevention, treatment, and control.

The Ewim Polyclinic records 124 cases of malaria each week, with an estimated 4 children dying every year. Efforts to reduce the number of reported cases have generally been unsuccessful

Speaking at the event, Dr. Abigail Derkyi-Kwateng, Medical Superintendent for the Ewim Polyclinic, said that in spite of the periodic distribution of treated mosquito nets to members of the community, high numbers of malaria cases

persist because residents were reluctant to sleep in them.

Members of the community were sensitised by experts from WACCBIP and the Polyclinic on several harmful practices and beliefs that obstruct efforts to eradicate the disease.

Dr. Yaw Aniweh, a research fellow at WACCBIP and a focal person for the TIBA Ghana project, explained that the prevalence of malaria in the community was due to unhealthy practices, particularly in sanitation management. He encouraged the members of the community to keep their surroundings clean as a way of checking the presence of mosquitoes. He also advised members of the community to ensure they take and complete medication prescribed by medical practitioners, which would help efforts to eradicate the disease.

Diana Aggrey, a public health nurse based within the Ewim community, explained that the TIBA project had been implemented at an opportune time, and that the sensitisation component would be beneficial to stopping malaria in the community.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

April 12-13, 2018



### DELTAS AFRICA GFGP WORKSHOP

WACCBIP will host, from the 12th of April, 2018 to the 13th of April, 2018, the DELTAS Africa Good Financial Grant Practice Workshop, which will bring together key personnel of all the DELTAS Africa centres and institutions across the West African sub-region.

The two-day meeting will be held at the Conference Room of the Department of Biochemistry, Cell & Molecular Biology.

July 18-20, 2018



### WACCBIP RESEARCH CONFERENCE

WACCBIP's 3rd Annual Research Conference is scheduled to be held from July 18 to July 20 at the Conference Room of the West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens on the University of Ghana campus.

The three-day conference will feature a host of presentations discussing original scientific research work conducted by WACCBIP fellows and collaborators worldwide..

## GET IN TOUCH



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