

## NIHR Global Health Research Unit on Improving Health in Slums funded international PhD studentship

### Division of Health Sciences, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick and international partners within the NIHR Global Health Research Unit on Improving Health in Slums

We are looking to recruit two international PhD studentships to study within the recently funded NIHR Global Health Research on Improving Health in Slums at the University of Warwick. This research programme aims to improve access to healthcare for people who live in slums in the following cities: Nairobi, Kenya; Lagos and Ibadan, Nigeria; Karachi, Pakistan and; Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The successful candidates will be part of a vibrant and expanding research team at the University of Warwick within the Division of Health Sciences. The studentship is part of an exciting international collaboration with the University of Ibadan, African Population and Health Research Center, Aga Khan University and the Independent University Bangladesh. Successful candidates will need the support of one of these international partners in order to apply for the studentship as they will undertake their fieldwork in a slum location in a partner country.

Some examples of projects that the successful candidate might want to undertake are described below. However we are open to other ideas as long as it involves improving health in slums in the countries in which we are currently working.

The first academic supervisor will be based at the University of Warwick with a second supervisor based at an international partner institution (described above).

The successful candidate will be expected **to start on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018** and will be for 3 years. They will be required to spend a minimum of 12 weeks over the course of the study at the University of Warwick.

The applicant is required to have a Master's degree (where they gained more than 60%) in either epidemiology or public health or social science or a similar subject is required.

This studentship is available to international students and includes full fees for the successful candidates along with a tax free maintenance allowance in line with Research Council UK stipend (£14,539 for the year 2017/18).

To formally apply please email the following documents to [j.sartori@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:j.sartori@warwick.ac.uk) by the **30<sup>th</sup> November 2017**:

- 1) A copy of your Curriculum Vitae (CV).
- 2) A one page personal statement stating your idea or the particular project you wish to apply for.
- 3) A letter of support from the appropriate institutes:
  - University of Ibadan (Prof Akinyinka Omigbodun [omigbodun@yahoo.com](mailto:omigbodun@yahoo.com))
  - African Population and Health Research Center (Dr Catherine Kyobutungi [ckyobutungi@aphrc.org](mailto:ckyobutungi@aphrc.org))
  - Aga Khan University (Dr Romaina Iqbal [romaina.iqbal@aku.edu](mailto:romaina.iqbal@aku.edu))
  - Independent University Bangladesh (Dr Rita Yusuf [ritayusuf@iub.edu.bd](mailto:ritayusuf@iub.edu.bd))

**The successful candidates will need to meet the following essential requirements:**

- 1) A Master's degree (where they gained more than 60%) in either epidemiology or public health or social science or a similar subject.
- 2) Have gained a score of 7.0 or more in the IELTS test. The IELTS test will be undertaken after a provisional offer to the successful candidate has been made. Further details can be found here:

<https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/study/researchdegrees/admissions/>

**The closing date for applications is 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Interviews will be held in December 2017 via skype.**

Please contact Ms Jo Sartori for further information: [j.sartori@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:j.sartori@warwick.ac.uk) or +44 (0) 24761 50625

**NIHR Global Health Research Unit on Improving Health in Slums Potential PhD projects**

**The use of mobile digital communication by slum dwellers in sub-Saharan Africa/South Asia to manage their health and wellbeing.**

Mobile phone ownership by slum dwellers is almost ubiquitous. Nested within a programme of research on healthcare in slums, this PhD will involve a mixed methods approach to explore whether, how and how often slum dwellers use the digital channels available via mobile phones to access basic needs such as water, sanitation, food, shelter, security, to gain income and where needed, access to healthcare, and to identify digital innovations developed by slum dwellers to maximise their health and wellbeing.

**The use and impact of digital access to health information and health care for slum dwellers**

Access to health information and health care is growing in low income settings as government seek to achieve universal health coverage despite lack of money and health worker capacity. Nested within a programme of research on healthcare in slums, this PhD will involve a mixed methods approach to identify national, regional and local initiatives (government, non-governmental organisations, commercial, community based) to provide digital access to health information and healthcare for slum dwellers, explore how and why they work/might work, and to evaluate their impact on the ability of slum dwellers to manage their own health.

**The engagement of slum dwellers in sub-Saharan Africa/South Asia, in the design and development of healthcare services in their locality**

Slum dweller organisations seek to influence the provision of services in their locality including healthcare services, but they represent a population with high turnover and that includes many marginalised groups. Nested within a programme of research on healthcare in slums, this PhD will involve the use of social science methodology to explore whether and how slum dwellers who are recent arrivals or from marginalised groups seek to influence the provision of healthcare and the opportunities for them to do so both via formal slum dweller organisations and informal groupings.

**Perceptions of people who live in slums about the health services available to them**

This project will elicit qualitative information on the attitudes, priorities and concerns of people who live in slums regarding the health services available to them, and will run alongside a household survey collecting quantitative data on health service utilisation by the same population allowing mixed methods analysis.

### **Mental wellbeing of people who live in slums**

This project will validate the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale in the population of people who live in slums in Africa and/or South Asia and collect data on mental wellbeing for these settings. Analyses will describe the association between sociodemographic variables and mental wellbeing in these populations.

### **Investigating the relationship between physical geography and health in slums using detailed geospatial data**

The PhD would use the data generated in the NIHR project on the slum sites to further investigate relationships between characteristics of the physical environment of slums and health, including urban morphology parameters (road network, building density, construction materials and roof types). Methods to be used include spatial data analysis and geostatistics. The student could do a complementary data collection in one/two of the slum sites if needed to introduce other elements such as water and sanitation facilities, presence of garbage, etc.

### **Quality of health services in slums**

This project will involve direct observation of health facilities in slums to examine health care quality including both humanity of care and technical quality as well as debriefing people who have received care after their consultations to ascertain their perceptions of care. Further development of this project could include in-depth qualitative work with care providers, simulated patients or case-note reviews where possible and appropriate.

### **Characterising determinants of slum health through evidence synthesis to facilitate the development and evaluation of interventions to improve the health of people living in slums**

Our previous work has shown that the volume of research literature directly related to slum setting is disproportionately low in comparison with research literature in other settings, such as deprived inner city and rural settings. While more research in slum settings is needed, this does not mean that lessons cannot be learned from existing literature related to other settings. Judgement on the relevance and usefulness of a piece of information (e.g. a study from inner city) to a question in hand (i.e. slum health) is guided by theories (prior beliefs of how things work based on existing knowledge) which can be validated, refuted or refined by testing with further empirical evidence. The proposed PhD aims to enhance our understanding of applicability of evidence from other settings to slums, firstly through characterising important features of slum health using a thematic analysis of the literature, and then test various theories related to how some generic features of individuals, population and contexts (such as poverty, spatial crowdedness, environmental hazards, socioeconomic level of the country, political recognition and culture etc) exhibit their effects and/or interact in different settings to impact upon the health of individuals and population. This is to be achieved through a series of theory-driven systematic reviews/overviews of the literature across contexts and settings ("multiple context reviews").

### **How do slum dwellers make decisions about where to access healthcare?**

Slum dwellers have to weigh up different factors (quality, cost, time etc.) when deciding where to access healthcare. This PhD would explore what matters most to them, making comparisons either between different slums, or between slum and non-slum areas. The study would involve collaboration with the larger study team to analyse quantitative data collected during a large scale survey, plus separate discrete choice experiments with residents.