Collaborative Initiative for Paediatric HIV Education and Research (CIPHER)

Growing the Leaders of Tomorrow Fellowship Programme

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FELLOWSHIP OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Growing the Leaders of Tomorrow Fellowship Programme is to contribute to strengthened HIV clinical research capacity in high-burden countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) by providing two-year research fellowships to emerging young leaders in paediatric and adolescent HIV clinical science.

When top-tier publications and guidelines in paediatric and adolescent HIV are mapped out, there is a clear disconnect between where the majority of international leaders are from (mainly from well-resourced countries) and the geography of the epidemic, particularly SSA where the majority of treating physicians work. There is recognition that support is needed to develop young leaders in paediatric and adolescent HIV clinical research, especially in resource-limited settings. This project seeks to contribute to the success of emerging paediatric and adolescent HIV investigators in SSA by providing participants a chance to work with internationally renowned mentors on a research project that will develop their skills and place them in a stronger position to apply for subsequent intermediate level fellowships or grants.

Specifically, the programme is aimed at medical practitioners from SSA with clinical research experience and the potential to become the next generation of leaders in paediatric and adolescent HIV clinical science. Candidates will have established links with a potential mentor, who is a prominent researcher in paediatric and adolescent HIV with an established clinical research collaboration based at an institute of excellence in SSA. By supporting their work with the mentor, the programme will strengthen each fellow’s research skills and facilitate their integration into international clinical research networks while also contributing to increased institutional capacity in SSA. The fellowship funds are to provide a stipend for the fellow and can support travel to attend one academic meeting to present results; fellowship funds are not intended to cover direct research expenses, which must be provided by the host institution or additional grants.

The programme has four key outcomes:

1. Fellows have increased knowledge and skills in HIV clinical research;
2. Fellows can compete more effectively for international research funding opportunities;
3. Fellows have strengthened relationships with a leading clinical scientist in paediatric HIV and with an institution of excellence in SSA;
4. Priority research gaps in paediatric and adolescent HIV clinical science are addressed.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications will be submitted by the fellows, with documented participation of the mentor and support of their institution(s). Mentors may apply with more than one fellow.

Mentor’s eligibility criteria
The mentor must:

• Be either an Associate or Full Professor or Chief/Principal Research Officer with an established position at a research institute in SSA;
• Submit their CV, including publication record in paediatric HIV clinical research;
• Demonstrate that they are the principal investigator of the proposed research project that the fellow will be contributing to and that direct research expenses and adequate infrastructure for the period of the fellowship will be provided for by other grants or sources of funding;
• Establish a mentorship plan that demonstrates how the fellowship will contribute to skill building and professional development of the fellow, as well as ensuring successful completion of the research project.

Fellow’s eligibility criteria:
• The fellow must be a junior investigator with a doctoral degree (PhD) or a doctor of medicine degree (e.g., MD, MBBS or equivalent) obtained no more than ten years before the application deadline and who has less than five years of relevant research experience.
• The fellow must hold a passport from a country in SSA¹.
• The fellow must fulfil one of the following criteria prior to the application submission deadline:
  o He/she is a clinical/research trainee (e.g., research or clinical fellow, senior medical resident/Registrar) at an SSA academic institute or an SSA institute whose primary mission is research.
  o He/she has a faculty or comparable position (e.g., assistant professor, lecturer, research officer) at an SSA academic institute or an SSA institute whose primary mission is research.
  o He/she is working at an SSA organization with adequate research infrastructure to undertake the proposed research activities.
• The fellow (and mentor) must demonstrate that funding to support the direct costs of the proposed research is available.

The research project should respond to the identified research gaps in Annex I.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

• Call for applications
• Application for consultation

Visit the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for more information about the Growing the Leaders of Tomorrow fellowship programme.

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¹ Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the, Congo, Republic of the, Cote d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, United Republic of, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
ANNEX I: ELIGIBLE RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The research funded by the Growing the Leaders of Tomorrow Fellowship Programme must address crucial gaps in paediatric and adolescent HIV research that impede optimal HIV diagnosis, prevention, treatment and care for infants, children and adolescents affected by HIV in SSA. Eligible research projects include original research that falls within defined priority clinical research questions.

Paediatric HIV (infants and children 0-10 years old, including the perinatal and in-utero period, studies on mother-baby pairs and HIV-exposed uninfected children)
- Safety, efficacy, acceptability, pharmacokinetics and optimal dosing of existing and new antiretroviral drugs and formulations, particularly with novel drug delivery systems
- Strategies or interventions to improve adherence, and factors that impact their success
- Optimal prevention and clinical management of coinfections, particularly tuberculosis
- Impact of HIV infection and ART on short- and long-term outcomes, in particular non-communicable disease
- Short- and long-term virologic and immunologic outcomes of starting very early treatment in infants living with HIV (impact on functional cure)
- Patterns and correlates of HIV drug resistance among infants and children living with HIV

Adolescent HIV (10-19 years old)
- Effective monitoring approaches and strategies to improve adherence among adolescents and factors that impact their success;
- Safety, efficacy and acceptability of novel drug delivery systems;
- Prevention and clinical management of co-infections, particularly tuberculosis;
- Optimal sequencing of ART in adolescents;
- Impact of HIV infection and ART on short- and long-term outcomes of adolescents, in particular non-communicable diseases.
- Patterns and correlates of HIV drug resistance among adolescents living with HIV
- Acceptability and feasibility of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)