

Speaker Abstracts

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Community and public engagement for challenge studies in Kenya: Stakeholders, strategies, ethical issues and lessons learnt

Considering the unique nature of challenge studies in that they involve deliberately infection participants with an infectious agent that could potentially cause a disease, most stakeholders and the public in many low- and middle-income country (LMIC) settings like Kenya are not familiar with this type of research. It is therefore critical to develop and implement a strong community and public engagement process prior to, during and after conducting a challenge study, especially in the context of changing socio-political issues. The KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme (KWTRP) has a well-established community engagement platform, with extensive experience in strengthening mutual understanding between community members and the Programme, including for challenge studies. This presentation will dwell on the experience of engaging communities and the public in the context of challenge studies conducted at the KWTRP, with focus on how relevant stakeholders were identified and engaged, ethical issues that arose during the engagement and lessons learnt. The experiences will cut across the initial feasibility study for the controlled human malaria infection (CHMI) model conducted in Nairobi in 2012, through the CHMI study with Semi-immuned Kenyan Adults (CHMI-SIKA) in Kilifi from 2016-2018, to the Shigella human infection study planned for Kilifi and Kericho from 2012-2024. The presentation will draw on secondary and primary data gathered through consultations, and individual and group interviews with targeted stakeholders. The talk will emphasize the importance of identifying the appropriate stakeholders for engagement and adapting the engagement strategies to the target audience.

