



HPTN

HIV Prevention
Trials Network

HPTN International Scholars Program: The experience of international scholars: Cohort 1

JESNE KISTAN

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSRAND, SOUTH AFRICA
HPTN AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING**


Introduction

- 2015: First cohort of International Scholars: Emilia Jalil (Brazil), Jesne Kistan (South Africa)
- Based at the Perinatal HIV Research Unit as a sub-investigator working on HPTN 052, HPTN 075 and HPTN 077 clinical trials
- Attended the HPTN Annual meeting in 2015; watched domestic scholars present work, Prof LGB present on HPTN 067
- Awareness of the program: HPTN scholar call sent to all research sites via email
- Project: a sub-study of HPTN 067 looking at acceptability and adherence of PrEP among South Africa women of varying age groups

Scholars application process

Requirements

- Project proposal based on available studies, NIH biographical sketch, motivational letters from mentor and employee, PHS 398 Grant application



INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

A Scholarship Opportunity in HIV Prevention Research

The HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN), a global network of HIV researchers funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, is proud to offer an 18 month scholarship program for early-career international investigators.

An applicant should:

- Be a member of a disadvantaged community and/or come from a disadvantaged background
- Be a current PhD, MD or MChB student, or within 10 years of graduation
- Be <40 years old at application deadline
- Plan to continue working in-country

The scholarship provides for up to 30% salary support, travel funds, and other research expenses. Applicants should be eager for the opportunity to work with a mentor scientist to complete a research project based upon an existing HIV research study in the HPTN.

APPLY BY
25 SEPTEMBER
2015

Selections made:
by early October 2015

Funding period:
1 November 2015 through
30 April 2017



The HPTN Scholars Program is funded by a supplement from the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), under Cooperative Agreement UM1 AID68619.

To learn more about the International Scholars Program, the application process, and our current Domestic Scholars, visit:
http://hptn.org/hptn_structure/scholars.htm

Scholars application process

- Letters of support: engage with mentor prior to application process, engage with employer for support
- PHS 398: familiarity with grants, discussions with financial departments of institutions
- Project proposal: awareness of research currently being conducted, awareness of research protocols, case report forms (available on website)
- Ask the ISP co-ordinator: Erica Hamilton is hands on, willing to help.

First experiences

- Orientation in Seattle: meet with domestic and international scholars, essential for networking and collaboration
- Meeting with co-ordinators: David Serwadda, Erica Hamilton: essential orientation into the program
- Introduction to SCHARP: discuss face-to-face requirements
- Monthly calls: learning opportunity, progress reports, supportive mechanism



Challenges of the program

- Mentor-mentee contact time: due to being in different cities. Creative meeting opportunities: visit to the PHRU, annual meet, calls, emails
- Statistical support: based in Seattle, possible misinterpretations of requirements, fitting into a demanding environment – forward planning
- Moving to an governmental organization – financial support does not continue. This excludes a large proportion of medical doctors from these opportunities.

Benefits of the program

- Learning experience: research, statistics, writing skills, mentored by world renown leaders
- Collaboration with other members of the network; published an opinion piece for the Lancet HIV
- Writing skills improved; published in the Royal Society of School and Hygiene
- Job opportunities; acceptance into the Department of Community Health Medicine Registrar training program
- To present work at the Annual meeting
- To complete a manuscript and submit for publication

Rethinking HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis prevention strategy

The prevalence of HIV in young South African women aged 20-24 years is three times higher than that in their male counterparts.¹ Young South African women are a key population group that contributes to 30% of all new infections in the country, highlighting the need for effective HIV prevention strategies in this population.^{2,3} Although HIV oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) has proven effective in several clinical trials, vaginal and oral PrEP have failed in studies involving women in South Africa. In particular, adherence to PrEP has been low in clinical trials.^{4,5} HIV prevention strategies applied in clinical trial settings of young South African women can lack the cultural, socioeconomic, and historical background knowledge and insight to cater for the specific needs of this population. A PrEP panacea might, therefore, not be an achievable goal.

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Pulmonary TB: varying radiological presentations in individuals with HIV in Soweto, South Africa

Jesne Kistan^{1,2*}, Fatima Laher², Kennedy Otumbe², Ravindra Panchia², Nohemie Mawaka³, Limakatso Lebina⁴, Andreas Diacon⁵, Bavesh Kana⁴ and Neil Martinson^{5,6}

¹Perinatal HIV Research Unit and MRC Soweto Matlosana Collaborating Centre for HIV/AIDS and TB (SoMCHAT), Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa; ²Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada; ³Division of Physiology, Department of Medical Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa; ⁴DST/NRF Centre of Excellence for Biomedical TB Research, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, National Health Laboratory Service, Johannesburg, South Africa; ⁵Johns Hopkins University Center for TB Research, Baltimore, MD, USA; ⁶Department of Community Health, School of Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

*Corresponding author: E-mail: jesnek@gmail.com

Tips for new scholars

- Build a supportive network: mentors, employers
- Be cognizant of HPTN clinical studies – utilize the website
- Awareness of deadlines: application, progress report, manuscript deadlines
- Maximise opportunities within the network: actively seek learning opportunities



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Prof LGB and the HPTN 067 team
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K Otwombe
Jim Hughes, Maoji Li
SCHARP
FHI
PHRU