

Call for Applications: PhD Studentship NIHR Global Health Research Group STOP-HBV Project

Potential impact and cost-effectiveness of a treat-all strategy for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B virus in Malawi and The Gambia

About the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Research Programme (MLW)

The Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Research Programme (MLW) is a leading international centre for research, training, and capacity strengthening, jointly led by Malawian and international scientists. Our mission is to generate high-quality evidence that improves health outcomes in Malawi and across the region.

MLW has a distinctive translational research portfolio spanning laboratory science, clinical trials, population-based research, and policy engagement. Research activities are organised into six thematic areas:

- Infection Biology
- Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health
- Clinical and Experimental Medicine
- Vaccines
- Population Health
- Social Science

These themes are supported by 22 active research groups. For more information, visit [the MLW website](#).

Background

Eliminating mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B virus (HBV) is an important global health priority. Evidence is needed on simplified, scalable approaches that can be implemented within routine maternal and child health services, particularly in settings where access to HBV diagnostics is limited.

About the STOP-HBV Project

The NIHR Global Health Research Group STOP-HBV is an international collaboration evaluating a simplified strategy to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HBV. The programme brings together the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Research Programme and Kamuzu University of Health Sciences in Malawi, the Medical Research Council Unit the Gambia at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Imperial College London, the University of Liverpool, and Canterbury Christ Church University in the United Kingdom.

The programme includes a large prospective implementation study evaluating a 'treat-all' antiviral strategy during pregnancy in Malawi and The Gambia. It will generate evidence on clinical effectiveness, implementation, cost-effectiveness, and policy relevance.

PhD Studentship

MLW invite applications from suitably qualified African citizens for a full-time, three-year PhD studentship within the STOP-HBV project. The successful candidate will be one of three PhD candidates attached to the study and will focus on Work Package 1: Clinical Effectiveness and Implementation, with linked work in Work Package 4: Cost-effectiveness and Modelling.

PhD Research Focus

Working closely with the supervisory team and collaborators in Malawi, The Gambia, and the United Kingdom, the successful candidate will contribute to:

- Coordination and implementation of the prospective STOP-HBV study.
- Collection and management of quantitative, clinical, and costing data.
- Epidemiological analyses of clinical effectiveness and implementation outcomes.
- Health-economic analyses and cost-effectiveness evaluation.
- Collaboration with colleagues in The Gambia on comparative and modelling components.
- Preparation of scientific publications, conference presentations, and policy-relevant outputs.

The PhD will provide opportunities to develop expertise in epidemiology, implementation science, and health economics while generating evidence to inform national and international HBV elimination policies.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the following essential requirements:

- A medical degree and a Master's-level qualification in public health, epidemiology, statistics, mathematical modelling, health economics, or a closely related field, with strong quantitative skills.
- Experience conducting clinical research and analysing quantitative data, including observational cohort studies or health-economic data.
- Experience in quantitative primary data collection, with excellent ethical practice and sensitivity when approaching potentially sensitive topics; experience in maternal and child health, HIV, or viral hepatitis is particularly relevant.
- Knowledge and awareness of the Malawian health research context. Proficiency in relevant local languages would be an advantage.
- Willingness to travel regularly to project sites in Zomba, Chikwawa, and Blantyre districts for project management, supervision, and oversight, and to collaborate with colleagues in The Gambia.
- A collaborative, respectful, and professional approach to working within multidisciplinary teams.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, including the ability to communicate clearly with expert and lay audiences.
- Availability to be based full time in Malawi for three years.

Desirable experience includes:

- Preparing scientific manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals.
- Presenting scientific outputs at conferences through posters or oral presentations.

What We Offer

- A full-time, three-year PhD studentship embedded in a major international research programme.
- Close supervision and mentorship from researchers in Malawi and the United Kingdom.
- Practical experience in clinical epidemiology, implementation science, and health economics.
- Collaboration with multidisciplinary teams in Malawi, The Gambia, and the United Kingdom.
- Opportunities to contribute to scientific publications, conference presentations, and policy engagement.
- A strong platform for a research-focused academic or public health career.

Supervisory Team

Main supervisors: Dr Alexander Stockdale (University of Liverpool and MLW), Dr Shevanthi Nayagam (Imperial College London), and Dr Lucky Ngwira (Kamuzu University of Health Sciences).

Application Process

Interested candidates should submit their applications and direct any requests for further information to training@mlw.mw using the subject line: **STOP-HBV PhD Application – [Your Name]**

Applications should include:

- A motivation letter (maximum two pages) outlining your academic background, research interests, and career aspirations.
- An up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV), including academic achievements and relevant research experience.
- Certified copies of academic certificates and transcripts.

For informal enquiries, please contact training@mlw.mw.

Deadline for Submission: 11th September 2026

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.