

BHP Hosts Training on Responsible Conduct of Research



RCR Trainees

The Botswana Harvard Health Partnership (BHP) hosted a fundamental mandatory training session on Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) from 18-21 March 2025. The RCR provides training on the core principles and ethical guidelines researchers must adhere to in order to ensure scientific integrity and public trust. The session brought together BHP staff from various departments, as well as key partners, including trainees from the Ministry of Health, the University of Botswana, and the Botswana University of Maryland Health Initiative.

Giving an overview of the course, BHP Regulatory Manager Tumalano Sekoto stressed the importance of the training, explaining that it not only ensures compliance with funding agency and sponsor

requirements but also fosters a culture of accountability and respect in research environments. "This course is critical for upholding the integrity of our work and maintaining the trust of both the public and our funding partners," Sekoto remarked. Led by the BHP Regulatory Office, the RCR training covered a variety of essential topics. The RCR Team, consisting of multiple trainers, guided participants through the core principles of responsible research conduct. The training was designed to equip researchers with the knowledge necessary to conduct their work with professionalism, integrity and ethical responsibility.

One of the key sessions delivered by Sekoto, focused on the ethical responsibilities of scientists as members of society. She highlighted ethical issues specific to biomedical

and public health research, emphasizing the role of researchers in protecting both the integrity of their work and the well-being of their participants. Sekoto, alongside Senior Regulatory Coordinator Ngozana Seonyatseng, also covered regulations and guidelines governing research involving human participants. Seonyatseng highlighted the importance of ethical principles, including informed consent and the protection of participants. "Informed consent is at the heart of ethical research," Seonyatseng stated. "We must always ensure that our participants fully understand the risks and benefits of their involvement in research."

Seonyatseng also led a session on data acquisition, emphasizing the proper collection, storage, and

sharing of research data to maintain its integrity. The topic of mentor-mentee relationships was addressed by Modiegi Diseko, [Tsepamo Study](#) Coordinator. Diseko stressed the importance of providing upcoming researchers with effective guidance and support. "Mentorship is fundamental in shaping the next generation of responsible researchers," she said.

Study Coordinator, Kutlo Manyake, who led the session on collaborative research, educated trainees on the complexities of navigating multi-institutional and international partnerships. BHP Research Associate while Dr Emily Shava focused on research misconduct, helping trainees understand the importance of identifying and reporting data fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism.

BHP Deputy CEO, Dr Gerolwe Masheto, facilitated a session on the peer review process, responsible authorship, and publication ethics. Dr Masheto emphasized the need for fairness, confidentiality, and constructive feedback in peer review. He also stressed the importance of clearly defining authorship criteria and avoiding issues such as honorary authorship and redundant publication.

Pharmacy Manager Tshepo Frank led a session on managing conflicts of interest, highlighting the importance of identifying and addressing personal, financial, or professional conflicts. "A transparent approach to conflicts of interest is crucial in maintaining the trust of our colleagues and the public," Frank noted. PhD Fellow and Laboratory Scientist, Patrick Mokgethi,

presented on safe laboratory practices, ensuring that researchers understand the critical role safety plays in the research process. This was followed by a session on creating a safe research environment, delivered by fellow PhD Fellow and Lab Scientist, Natasha Moraka-Mankge. Moraka-Mankge emphasized the importance of inclusivity and maintaining a research environment free from discrimination and harassment.

In addition to the course content, participants took part in pre- and post-course tests to assess their understanding of the material. A course evaluation was conducted at the end, allowing attendees to provide feedback on the training experience. This evaluation helps to ensure that future RCR training sessions continue to meet the needs of researchers and maintain the highest standards of education.

In his closing remarks, BHP Chief Operations Officer Cornelius Gaetsaloe urged all BHP investigators to strive for excellence. "The safety of our participants and the integrity of our research outputs are in our hands," he said. "Our participants entrust us with the most vulnerable parts of their lives. Their health and well-being are at the core of everything we do. Through research, we aim to help them not only today but for generations to come."

The RCR training was made possible through BHP administrative budget as part of compliance and research excellence initiative.



Trainees taking post course test



Ms Ramontshonyana, trainee from University of Botswana

Dr Wonderful Choga Named Harvard Global Health Institute Visiting Research Scholar



Wonderful Choga

BHP medical laboratory researcher and bioinformatician, Dr. Wonderful Choga, has been selected as one of the 2024-2025 Harvard Global Health Institute (HGHI) Visiting Research Scholars. This prestigious program offers Harvard faculty a unique opportunity to strengthen collaborations with international researchers in global health. Through a six-week, in-person residency in Cambridge, MA, the program

fosters deeper academic engagement and advances joint research initiatives.

Dr Choga holds a PhD in Medical Sciences and an MSc in Medicine (Human Genetics) and his expertise spans computational biology, immunoinformatics, evolutionary biology, and host-pathogen interaction dynamics. His research focuses on analyzing bacterial and viral genomes, including HIV, hepatitis viruses, and respiratory pathogens.

In addition to his impressive research contributions, which include over 50 publications and more than 2,900 citations, Dr Choga is an important figure in bioinformatics education, both regionally and internationally.

During his residency, Dr Choga will collaborate with Professor Alicia Yamin from The Petrie-Flom Center at Harvard Law School and Professor Yonatan Grad from the Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Together, they will advance global health research initiatives, focusing on projects that explore how institutional corruption impacts mental health care delivery and enhancing bioinformatics for comprehensive pathogen detection and analysis using metagenomic data.



HARVARD

GLOBAL HEALTH INSTITUTE

Streamlining Manpower Requests and E-Signature Adoption

The Botswana Harvard Health Partnership (BHP) is introducing two key updates to improve efficiency in HR and finance operations. To streamline and improve manpower requisition process, the Human Resources (HR) department has introduced a dedicated email address for all future manpower requests.

In an email communication to Study Coordinators, HR Manager, Omphile Masuku, announced that, effective immediately, all authorized manpower requisition forms should be submitted to manpower@bhp.org.bw. This initiative aims to enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of the HR team, ensuring faster processing and better management of requests from various studies and departments.

The HR office has also provided an updated manpower

requisition form for use in recruitment. For any inquiries regarding this new procedure, staff are encouraged to contact HR.

Additionally, the Finance department is encouraging the use of e-signatures to expedite document approvals. Delays in financial document processing have resulted from the unavailability of approving officials for in-person signatures. To address this, Finance Manager Ronald Ruele has urged all authorized signatories to adopt e-signatures, ensuring timely approvals for improved internal processes such as reporting and cash flow management. Staff requiring guidance on **e-signature** implementation should reach out to the Finance department.



Omphile Masuku



Ronald Ruele

BHP Empowers Staff with Essential Insurance Knowledge

In a continued effort to promote financial wellness amongst its workforce, the Botswana Harvard Partnership (BHP)'s Human Resources (HR) Department dedicated the month of March to insurance education. Following recent floods that caused significant property damage, which also affected several BHP staff members, HR took the initiative to provide valuable insights on property and asset insurance.

On March 7, 2024, Kgari Insurance Brokers hosted a comprehensive session in the BHP Conference Room, focusing on insurance products specifically tailored for BHP staff. The presentation covered a variety of essential coverage options, including home insurance to protect against risks such as fire, lightning, storms, floods, and theft. Additionally, household contents insurance was discussed, covering the protection of valuables and personal belongings, while motor cover

options, including comprehensive and third-party vehicle insurance, were also highlighted.

The momentum continued on Friday, March 28, 2025, when Botswana Life Insurance delivered another enlightening presentation to BHP staff. Held in the BHP Conference Room, the session focused on life insurance, investment portfolios, and annuity plans, equipping employees with the knowledge needed to make informed financial decisions for their future.

These sessions are part of BHP's ongoing commitment to enhancing the financial literacy and overall wellbeing of its staff. The Human Resources Department remains dedicated to providing employees with the tools and knowledge to make confident financial choices and secure a stable future.



BHP staff attentively listening to an insightful insurance presentation by Botswana Life

BHP Football Team Kicks Off 2025 Season



BHP Football Team

The Botswana Harvard Health Partnership (BHP) men's football team has commenced its 2025 season, continuing its mission to promote health, wellness, and foster stronger connections among its staff members. This initiative aligns with BHP's ongoing efforts to encourage a healthy work-life balance while strengthening team spirit.

The team played its first match of the year on Monday, March 24, 2025 against Equation FC at Lekidi Football Grounds, where they secured a loss of 4-0. This was followed by a five-a-side practice game held Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at The Fields Mall Courts, a regular feature of the club's weekly schedule. The five-a-side sessions take place on Wednesday evenings, while full eleven-a-side team matches are held every Monday.

The team is captained by Coulson Kgathi, BHP's Software Engineering and Data Manager, who has been instrumental in fostering team spirit and commitment to promoting overall well-being. The BHP football team welcomes staff from all departments, providing an inclusive environment where employees can unwind, stay active, and build meaningful connections outside of the workplace.

Meanwhile, over 50 BHP staff members have registered for the 10km race in the upcoming Diacore Gaborone Marathon 2025 scheduled for May 4, 2025. BHP covered the registration fees and provided team t-shirts, ensuring participants proudly represent the BHP

brand wearing the same colours. BHP management's proactive support for these initiatives underscores its commitment to promoting holistic wellness alongside its impactful research and healthcare initiatives.

BHP employees are encouraged to join the BHP Soccer Team and the BHP Runners Club. Female staff members, in particular, are urged to take advantage of these wellness opportunities to support both their physical and mental well-being while fostering team spirit and social connections. Interested staff members can contact Tebogo Akanyang at the Human Resources Office for more information.



Team Captain, Coulson Kgathi

Human Resources updates

Welcoming New Employees and Promotions effective March 2025.



Amantle Gouwe
Research Assistant
(Phodiso Study)



Rashida Majola
Research Assistant
(Phodiso Study)



Gaolese Moradu
Research Assistant
(Tshireletso Study)



Warona Mokganedi
Pharmacist
(Pharmacy)



Fikile Ditshweu
Lab Scientist Trainee
(Phodiso Study)



Bridget Ganetsang
Grants Trainee
(Grants)



Wonderful Choga
Senior Bioinformatician
(Laboratory)



Naledi Tapologo
Regulatory Officer
(Regulatory)

Publications

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- [Prospective longitudinal assessment of Albumin-to-Creatinine ratio \(ACR\) in a clinical cohort of people living with HIV in Gaborone, Botswana.](#) Mosepele M, Kebotsamang K, Ponatshego P, Molebatsi K, Moshomo T, Mokgatthe L, Lockman S, Gross R, Jarvis J, Jaffar S, Wang D. *BMC Infect Dis*. 2025 Mar 7;25(1):327. doi: 10.1186/s12879-025-10721-z. PMID: 40055617
- [Safety of combined long-acting injectable cabotegravir and long-acting injectable rilpivirine in virologically suppressed adolescents with HIV \(IMPAACT 2017/MOCHA\): a phase 1/2, multicentre, open-label, non-comparative, dose-finding study.](#) Moore CB, Baltrusaitis K, Best BM, Moye JH, Townley E, Violari A, Heckman B, Buisson S, Van Solingen-Ristea RM, Capparelli EV, Marzinke MA, Lowenthal ED, Ward S, Krotje C, Milligan R, Agwu AL, Huang J, Cheung SYA, McCoig C, Yin DE, Roberts G, Crauwels H, Van Eygen V, Zabih S, Masheto G, Ounchanum P, Aurpibul L, Korutaro V, Gaur AH; IMPAACT 2017 Collaborators for the IMPAACT 2017 Team. *Lancet HIV*. 2025 Mar;12(3):e191-e200. doi: 10.1016/S2352-3018(24)00344-8. PMID: 40049924
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CORE VALUES

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BOTHO

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