





# EDCTP Update | June 2023

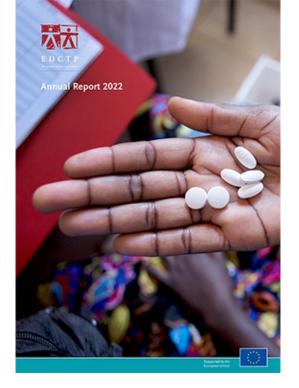


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# **EDCTP Annual Report: Connecting numbers to impact**

Launched in 2014, EDCTP2 set itself challenging targets in its efforts to advance the development of medical interventions against poverty-related infectious diseases affecting sub-Saharan Africa, while simultaneously strengthening clinical research capacity in the region. As we reached the nine-year mark, we take stock and consider how EDCTP2 investments – €826 million to date – are contributing to



the fight against poverty-related infectious diseases, now and into the future. In our Annual Report for 2022, we connect the numbers to the impact the programme is having in sub-Saharan Africa.

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# **Eleventh EDCTP Forum**

From 7-10 November 2023, the <u>Eleventh EDCTP Forum</u> will take place in Paris, France. Registration is open, and various sponsorship opportunities are available. We invite you to read the following information carefully:

#### Registration

Registration for the Eleventh EDCTP Forum is now open, and details on both in-person and virtual participation are currently available online. The (extended) deadline for early-bird registration is **31 July 2023**. More information »

#### Sponsorship opportunities

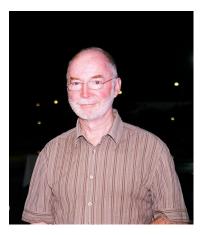
Sponsorship opportunities at the Eleventh EDCTP Forum aim to profile and raise the

visibility of organisations working in the same field as EDCTP. We invite you to browse through the various sponsorship packages on our Forum website. Please note that sponsorship applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. <u>More information</u> »

# **EDCTP** mourns the loss of Dr Søren Jepsen

On 9 September 2022, our former General Assembly member and vice-chair of the Board Dr Søren Jepsen passed away due to illness. He will be dearly missed by the EDCTP family, and remembered fondly for his contributions to the programme as well as to the broader field of poverty-related infectious diseases.

Dr Jepsen served as a General Assembly member for Denmark in the first programme of EDCTP (EDCTP1) and as vice-Chair of the EDCTP Board between May 2010 and November 2013. In these positions, he made important contributions to increasing the support and commitment from EDCTP's member states, and to the preparations for the second EDCTP programme (EDCTP2).



Dr Jepsen was dedicated to the development of medical products to prevent and treat malaria, as a Principal Medical Consultant at Statens Serum Institut (Denmark) and head of the European Malaria Vaccine Initiative (EMVI), among others. In his work, he always recognised the value of partnerships and collaborative efforts. By doing so, Dr Jepsen has left his mark on the global research community.

We extend our sincere condolences to Dr Søren Jepsen's family and friends.

# Four EDCTP-supported laboratories join CEPI Centralized Laboratory Network

Four African vaccine testing labs recently joined the CEPI Centralized Laboratory Network (CLN). As members of the CLN, each institution will be on standby to support the rapid development of novel vaccines against a future 'Disease X'. EDCTP has sustainably funded the work of the centres owning the laboratories through projects such as Regional Networks of Excellence schemes, fellowships, clinical research and innovation (RIA) programmes, and clinical research network for epidemics (ALERRT and PANDORA-ID-NET). We extend our warmest congratulations on this next step to Institut Pasteur de Dakar (Senegal), KAVI Institute of Clinical Research & University of Nairobi Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases (Kenya), Synexa Life Sciences (South Africa) and Uganda Virus Research Institute (Uganda).

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# The TRUST code gets a new name

In 2018, the TRUST consortium launched the Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings in the European Parliament. Five years later, the Code is successfully used all over the world to promote equitable research partnerships, having been adopted across the research cycle by funders, research organisations and publishers. The only concerns ever raised were about the name, in particular the phrase 'resource-poor' in the title. Therefore, the code has been renamed to <u>The TRUST</u> <u>Code – A Global Code of Conduct for Equitable</u> <u>Research Partnerships</u>.

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# WHO Call for Experts - Technical Advisory Group on Genomics

The World Health Organization (WHO) is seeking to establish a Technical Advisory Group on Genomics to support and provide technical guidance on activities implemented by the WHO Secretariat to accelerate access to genomics technologies for global health, with a particular focus on human genomics. WHO welcomes expressions of interest from professionals with expertise in a diverse set of fields related to genomics (and in particular human genomics), the application of genomics technologies for cancer, congenital disorders, rare diseases, R&D in the field of genome-based knowledge, and implementation of genomics technologies. Attention will also be given to ensure inclusion of relevant expertise in ethics, law and relevant social sciences domains. Deadline for applications: 16 July 2023.

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## EDCTP Africa Office at AU-EU Innovation Festival | Cape Town, South Africa, 15 June 2023

Hosted by the European Union, the African Union and the Republic of South Africa, the first <u>AU-EU Innovation Festival</u> took place on 15 June 2023 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre in South Africa. The event aimed to gather views and aspirations on the imminent implementation phase of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda and of its short-term actions, foreseen to run within the first three years of the adoption (June 2023 - June 2026).

EDCTP's Africa Office attended the festival and hosted a booth on EDCTP2 and the Global Health EDCTP3 Joint Undertaking. The day before the festival, Dr Thomas Nyirenda, EDCTP Strategic Partnerships & Capacity Development Manager and Head of Africa Office, attended the <u>ENRICH in Africa</u> Center inauguration. ENRICH in Africa is a Horizon 2020 project that aims to strengthen and connect innovation ecosystems in Africa and Europe. The ENRICH in Africa virtual community platform includes 439 members, 293 of whom being companies (64% from Africa and 26% from Europe), 86 investors and 60 business support organisations, such as incubators and accelerators.

## 2nd International Post-Tuberculosis Symposium | Stellenbosch, South Africa, 17-19 April 2023

On 17-19 April 2023, the <u>2nd International Post-Tuberculosis Symposium</u> took place at Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study, South Africa. The aim of the symposium was to increase global awareness of post-TB medical complications and economic and psychological consequences, and to empower TB-affected communities.

There are an estimated 155 million survivors of TB alive currently. It is estimated that 20-30% of TB survivors may have some form of disability or impairment, the most common being post-TB lung disease (PTLD), and economic, social and psychological impairment. Despite emerging evidence, there is still a lack of international guidelines and recommendations on the follow-up of patients beyond the cure of TB.

At the meeting, the current state of knowledge on post-TB lung disease was presented, and research priorities were defined, emphasising the need to embed lung health outcomes in clinical TB trials. EDCTP was represented at the meeting by Dr Thomas Nyirenda, EDCTP Strategic Partnerships & Capacity Development Manager and Head of Africa Office.

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## **PREPARED** plenary meeting

The EU-funded <u>PREPARED</u> consortium held its Paris plenary on 6-8 June 2023 at the UNESCO Headquarters in France. The project brings together a network of researchers, funders, policy makers, NGOs, citizens and publishers to create a valuesbased framework for research ethics and integrity for the next global crisis. EDCTP was represented at the meeting by Dr Michael Makanga (Executive Director) and Dr Michelle Singh (Project Officer).

Highlights from Paris included the renaming of the Global code of conduct to the <u>TRUST</u> code, and the launch of the <u>One seat, one billion people: Advocating for a G21</u> policy brief

calling on the Group of 20 (G20) to consider representation for 96% of Africa's population by adding the African Union.

# **Project news**

## **PrEPVacc HIV prevention study completes enrolment**



Participant enrolment into the PrEPVacc trial at all four sites in East and Southern Africa has been completed. Led by African researchers, PrEPVacc is the first HIV vaccine efficacy trial to be conducted in East African countries and it is the only HIV vaccine efficacy trial being conducted in the world at present. PrEPVacc is testing two different ways to prevent HIV at the same time, which includes HIV vaccine regimens against a placebo (saline), and a new form of oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) against the existing standard for PrEP.

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## **STOP-ALIVE trial completes recruitment**

On 24 March 2023, the <u>STOP</u> team in Ethiopia concluded the last visit of the last participant in the ALIVE trial. The study will generate key evidence to support a licensing decision on the albendazole–ivermectin co-formulation. This combination could improve the effectiveness of mass drug administration campaigns against common but neglected parasitic worm infections, and protect a vital drug against the development of resistance. A total of 3912 school children were screened and 861 were randomised and treated in the three trial sites (Ethiopia, Kenya and Mozambique) during phase III of the ALIVE trial.

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## **MTBVACN3** first annual project meeting

From 15-18 May 2023, the first annual progress meeting of the MTBVAC phase III clinical trial (MTBVACN3) project took place in Andasibe and Antananarivo, Madagascar. MTBVACN3 will evaluate safety and efficacy of MTBVAC administered intradermally in 7120 healthy, BCG-naïve, HIV-uninfected newborns born to HIV-uninfected mothers and HIV-infected mothers without known exposure to close/household TB contacts.

The consortium, composed of nine partners in total of which six recruiting sites (one in Madagascar, one in Senegal and four in South Africa), discussed the progress achieved in the past 12 months. The sites are recruiting at an increasing rate, with almost 300 newborns by May 2023. The attendees also visited the Institut Pasteur de Madagascar in Antananarivo with its research and clinical labs and vaccination facilities.

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## **DIAGMAL** progress meeting



The third **DIAGMAL** project progress meeting took place in Swakopmund, Namibia on 4-5 May 2023, organised by the University of Namibia. The DIAGMAL project evaluates the diagnostic performance of a simple molecular diagnostic platform in different malaria-endemic settings in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia and Sudan, and aims to diagnose malaria in over 5000 people in the different partner countries. The work has a strong health economy component led by the London School for Economics & Political Science. The first results of the diagnostic and health economy evaluation indicate that the platform performs at least as well as expert microscopy, and confirmative gPCR studies are initiated. The consortium will present updated results at the upcoming Eleventh EDCTP Forum in Paris in November 2023.

## PedMAb annual meeting



The <u>PedMAb</u> consortium held their second annual meeting in Durban, South Africa on 13-14 April 2023. The consortium is conducting a phase I/II study to determine safety and pharmacokinetics of subcutaneous administration of potent and broad anti HIV-1 neutralizing monoclonal antibodies (bNab), given to HIV-1 exposed neonates and infants. The meeting brought together the entire PedMAb consortium, with partners from France, Italy, Norway and South Africa. The meeting participants reviewed trial progress and further developed technical approaches.

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## ASAAP annual meeting

The <u>ASAAP</u> project held its annual meeting in Cotonou, Benin on 6-7 June 2023. ASAAP is a clinical trial to evaluate the efficacy, safety, tolerability and pharmacokinetics of a new antimalarial combination drug, with a particular focus on its successful application in one of the largest and most vulnerable demographics of Africa: children 0-5 years old. During the meeting, the project partners addressed current challenges and reinforced engagement to ensure timely completion of the project. Practical sub-group sessions were held with the data management, clinical monitoring and pharmacovigilance teams to streamline data capture, handling of queries and harmonisation of safety reports.

## **UNIVERSAL General Assembly meeting**

The UNIVERSAL General Assembly meeting was held in Harare, Zimbabwe on 22-24 May 2023.



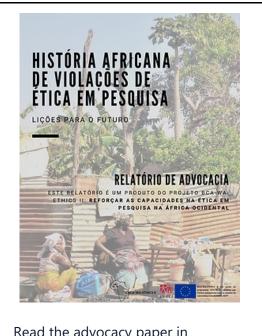
The UNIVERSAL project aims to develop two antiretroviral fixed-dose combinations for infants and children newly diagnosed with HIV. These formulations will also benefit children living with HIV whose first-line therapy is failing, and by monitoring the long-term safety and efficacy of other paediatric ART formulations, the project will provide better treatment options for children with HIV. As the project moves forward, the discussions held set a positive tone for the future.

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## **BCA-WA-ETHICS II advocacy report**

The Building the capacities of West Africa in research ethics (<u>BCA-WA-ETHICS II</u>) project has published an advocacy report on research ethics violations in Africa. The report explores Africa's long history of research ethics violations and proposes a framework and a set of lessons learned for more rigorous and harmonised research ethics practices in the present and future. It also provides an insightful perspective on health-equity-centered research ethics and how to achieve it through community-engagement and sex- and gender-sensitive ethical review of research protocols.





Read the advocacy paper in <u>Portuguese</u>

## **BCA-WA-ETHICS II: CNERS Senegal obtains ISO9001 certification**

The Comité National d'Ethique pour la Recherche en Santé (<u>CNERS</u>) of Senegal has achieved ISO9001 certification: a globally recognised stamp of approval that assures an organisation's commitment to quality and continual improvement. It demonstrates that an organisation has implemented a robust quality management system that meets international standards, focusing on client satisfaction, management processes, and continuous



improvement. This achievement is part of the EDCTP-funded <u>BCA-WA-ETHICS II</u> project's efforts to strengthen research ethics governance in West Africa.

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## **BCA-WA-ETHICS II** article on project results

The BCA-WA-ETHICS II project published a brief <u>article</u> on The Global Health Network website on the results to date. Among others, the project has trained over 150 scientists and bioethicists from 14 African countries in the aforementioned areas. It also offered a Virtual research ethics secretariat that aided National Research Ethics Committees in establishing sex- and gender-sensitive research evaluation tools and standard operating procedures. The secretariat currently collaborates with seven countries. Guinea-Bissau and Senegal have already implemented the sex- and gender-sensitive guidelines for research evaluation on a national level.

# **Publications**

EDCTP is a member of <u>Europe PMC</u>. This enables EDCTP-funded researchers to share their publications via one central location. Sharing publications by EuropePMC also ensures that they will satisfy the requirements for EDCTP-funded research projects: making publications openly accessible as soon as possible.

Submit your manuscript through Europe PMC Plus

- Vaccines: Use of an ETEC Proteome Microarray to Evaluate Cross-Reactivity of ETVAX® Vaccine-Induced IgG Antibodies in Zambian Children. Cynthia Mubanga et al. (4 May 2023)
- Infect Drug Resist: <u>Mycobacterium tuberculosis Intra-Host Evolution Among Drug-</u> <u>Resistant Tuberculosis Patients Failing Treatment</u>. Perumal R et al. (9 May 2023)
- PLOS Glob Public Health: Optimising computer aided detection to identify intrathoracic tuberculosis on chest x-ray in South African children. Megan Palmer et al. (16 May 2023)
- Infect Drug Resist: Prognostic Value of C-Reactive Protein in SARS-CoV-2 Infection: A Simplified Biomarker of COVID-19 Severity in Northern Ethiopia. Gebrecherkos T et al. (16 May 2023)
- Front Nutr: Dietary patterns and diabetes mellitus among people living with and without HIV: a cross-sectional study in Tanzania. Evangelista Malindisa *et al.* (17 May 2023)
- Biomarkers: <u>Serum biomarkers for monitoring response to tuberculosis treatment:</u> an assessment of the effect of different covariates among slow and fast treatment responders. Anna Ritah Namuganga *et al.* (21 May 2023)
- Pathogens: <u>Comparative study of Plasmodium falciparum msp-1 and msp-2 Genetic</u> <u>Diversity in Isolates from Rural and Urban Areas in the South of Brazzaville, Republic</u> <u>of Congo.</u> Marcel Tapsou Baina *et al.* (22 May 2023)
- PLoS One: <u>Correlations between three ELISA protocols measurements of</u>

RTS,S/AS01-induced anti-CSP IgG antibodies. Robert M. Mugo et al. 23 May 2023.

- Malar J: <u>Pharmacopeial quality of artemether–lumefantrine anti-malarial agents in</u> <u>Uganda</u>. Moses Ocan *et al*. (26 May 2023)
- Arch Dis Child: <u>Short-term outcomes of South African children with multisystem</u> <u>inflammatory syndrome in children: a prospective cohort study FREE</u>. Juanita Lishman et al. (26 May 2023)
- *Malar J*: <u>Unusual clinical spectra of childhood severe malaria during malaria</u> <u>epidemic in eastern Uganda: a prospective study.</u> Cate Namayanja *et al.* (1 June 2023)
- *J Clin Virol*: <u>Performance of rapid antigen tests in identifying Omicron BA.4 and BA.5</u> infections in South Africa. Natasha Samsunder *et al.* (2 June 2023)
- *Health Sci Rep:* Eosinophil: An innate immune cell with anti-filarial vaccine and biomarker potential. Alexander Kwarteng *et al.* (5 June 2023)
- Trials: A phase IIb, open-label, randomized controlled dose ranging multi-centre trial to evaluate the safety, tolerability, pharmacokinetics and exposure-response relationship of different doses of delpazolid in combination with bedaquiline delamanid moxifloxacin in adult subjects with newly diagnosed, uncomplicated, smear-positive, drug-sensitive pulmonary tuberculosis. A Dierig *et al.* (6 June 2023)
- BMC Public Health: Role and capacity needs of community based surveillance volunteers in the integrated management of skin neglected tropical diseases (skin NTDs): a qualitative study from central Ghana. Lucy Owusu et al. (6 June 2023)
- Sci Rep: <u>Site-directed mutagenesis of Mycobacterium tuberculosis and functional</u> validation to investigate potential bedaquiline resistance-causing mutations. Christian C. Otum *et al.* (6 June 2023)
- Eur Respir Rev: <u>Clinical utility of WHO-recommended screening tools and</u> <u>development and validation of novel clinical prediction models for pulmonary</u> <u>tuberculosis screening among outpatients living with HIV: an individual participant</u> <u>data meta-analysis.</u> Ashar Dhana *et al.* (7 June 2023)
- PLoS One: Prevalence of selected cardiometabolic risk factors in the global ARTnaïve HIV infected population: A protocol for a systematic review and meta-analysis. Peter Vanes Ebasone *et al.* (8 June 2023)
- Sci Rep: <u>The effect of an interactive weekly text-messaging intervention on retention</u> <u>in prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV care: a randomised controlled</u> <u>trial (WelTel PMTCT)</u>. Björn Nordberg *et al.* (9 June 2023)
- BMC Infect Dis: Memory B-cells are enriched in the blood of patients with acute Buruli ulcer disease: a prospective observational study. Jonathan Kofi Adjei *et al.* (12 June 2023)
- Ebiomedicine: Dose finding study for on-demand HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis for insertive sex in sub-Saharan Africa: results from the CHAPS open label randomised controlled trial. Carolina Herrera *et al.* (14 June 2023)
- BMC Public Health: World Hepatitis day 2021 –screening and vaccination against Hepatitis B virus in Accra, Ghana. Kwadwo Asamoah Kusi *et al.* (16 June 2023)
- *Ebiomedicine:* <u>Hi-plex deep amplicon sequencing for identification, high-resolution</u> genotyping and multidrug resistance prediction of Mycobacterium leprae directly from patient biopsies by using Deeplex Myc-Lep. Agathe Jouet *et al.* (14 June 2023)
- PLoS One: <u>Baseline malarial and nutritional profile of children under seasonal malaria</u> <u>chemoprevention coverage in the health district of Nanoro, Burkina Faso.</u> Paul Sondo *et al.* 26 June 2023
- PLOS One: Burden of and factors associated with poor quality antibiotic, antimalarial, antihypertensive and antidiabetic medicines in Malawi. Chiumia FK et al. (27 December 2022)

# Resources



Collaborative clinical R&D online Clinical research capacity PDF

Fellowships online

- EDCTP | Knowledge Hub: Tools and guidance for conducting clinical research
- ERUDIT | Planning for Financial Sustainability manual
- Europe PMC webinar | <u>Watch the recording</u> and <u>download the slides</u>
- TRUST project | <u>Video introducing the Global Code of Conduct</u>
- PACTR | Open access clinical trial registry

# **Training and funding opportunities**

# AREF Essential Grant Writing Skills Programme | Deadline for applications: 16 July 2023

The Africa Research Excellence Fund (AREF) is calling for applications from scientists who are active, emerging biomedical/health researchers in African countries to participate in the forthcoming Essential Grant Writing Skills Programme. The workshop aim is to enable talented early-career health- and health-related researchers from countries in Africa to build skills to develop their own research and fellowship proposals of the quality required to win competitive international, regional, and national funding. More information »

# AREF Research Development Fellowship 2023/24 | Deadline for applications: 14 September 2023

The Africa Research Excellence Fund (AREF) has launched a call for the AREF Research Development Fellowship Programme for 2023/24. The aim of the programme is to provide opportunities for talented health researchers based in Africa, so that they can lead research that is responsive to its African settings and can contribute to reducing the burden of disease.

More information »

#### Wellcome Trust (UK) Funding Opportunities for Applicants from LMICs Wellcome Early-Career Awards

This scheme provides funding for early-career researchers from any discipline who are ready to develop their research identity. Through innovative projects, they will deliver shifts in understanding that could improve human life, health and wellbeing. By the end of the award, they will be ready to lead their own independent research programme. Application deadline: **5 October 2023** 

#### Wellcome Career Development Awards

This scheme provides funding for mid-career researchers from any discipline who have the potential to be international research leaders. They will develop their research capabilities,

drive innovative programmes of work and deliver significant shifts in understanding that could improve human life, health and wellbeing.

#### Application deadline: 27 July 2023 Wellcome Discovery Awards

This scheme provides funding for established researchers and teams from any discipline who want to pursue bold and creative research ideas to deliver significant shifts in understanding that could improve human life, health and wellbeing. Application deadline: **25 July 2023** 

#### MRC Clinical Trials Unit online MSc courses

The Medical Research Council Clinical Trials Unit (MRC CTU) at University College London (UCL) offers online MSc courses in Clinical Trials and in Statistics for Clinical Trials. The online MSc in Clinical Trials provides grounding in management and design of clinical trials, and enhances knowledge and understanding of those already working in the field. The online MSc in Statistics for Clinical Trials develops knowledge and know-how of statistics in clinical trials. This training is relevant for future clinical trial statisticians, and as well as clinicians and other health professionals who have a strong quantitative interest in trials. The courses start in September 2023.

# Mark your calendar

## **EDCTP events**

#### Eleventh EDCTP Forum | Paris, France, 7-10 November 2023

From 7-10 November 2023, EDCTP will hold its Eleventh EDCTP Forum, hosted in Paris, France, at the Palais des Congrès de Paris. The Forum theme is "Partnering for Global Health Research Innovation and Impact in Africa - Celebrating EDCTP: two decades and beyond". Registration is now open for both in-person and virtual participation, and EDCTP sponsorship opportunities are available to profile and raise the visibility of organisations working in the same field as EDCTP. We invite you to visit the <u>Eleventh</u> <u>EDCTP Forum website</u> for more information.

## **Other events**

#### Launch of the GloPID-R Africa Hub | 22-23 August 2023

The official launch of the GloPID-R Africa Hub will take place on 22-23 August 2023 in Cape Town, South Africa and online. As part of the GloPID-R Regional Hub strategy, the Africa Hub will facilitate the coordination of funders of research on infectious diseases with pandemic and epidemic potential while helping to strengthen regional ownership and address inequity in the distribution of research funding. The initiation of the Africa Hub has been made possible through a grant from EDCTP funded by the UK Department of Health & Social Care. This event is organised by the South African Medical Research Council, host of the Africa Hub. More than 100 delegates are expected to attend including funders, policy makers and key stakeholders from the African continent and beyond. More information »

#### 3rd International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA 2023) | Lusaka, Zambia, 27-30 November 2023

The annual International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA) provides a unique African-led platform for leaders across the continent to reflect on lessons learned in health and science, and align on a way forward for creating more resilient health systems. Expanding the horizons of the conference once again, CPHIA 2023 will showcase how the continent is breaking down barriers, reaffirming Africa as a powerhouse in science and innovation, generator of new knowledge and health products, and exemplar of progress. More information »

#### Global Forum on Bioethics in Research (GFBR) meeting | Montreux, Switzerland, 28-29 November 2023

The Global Forum on Bioethics in Research (GFBR) will hold a two-day meeting in

Montreux, Switzerland on 28-29 November 2023 on the topic: "The ethics of health research priority setting". The Forum prioritises the participation of colleagues from lowand middle- income countries. <u>More information »</u>

EDCTP Communications thanks everyone who provided information for this Update.



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