



Botswana Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiative



NEWSLETTER

Quarter 4 | 2022

The Botswana Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiative (BSRHI) aims to improve sexual and reproductive health (SRH) outcomes among women and adolescent girls. We conduct research, provide clinical SRH and HIV services, undertake teaching and training, and support the Botswana MOH and international organisations.



Study Updates, quarter 4

The BSRHI team has been hard at work this quarter, concluding two large studies and starting several new ones!

Maduo: Data collection for our STI testing and treatment in ANC intervention study is nearly complete! The work from Maduo has already been published in several journals and presented at AIDS 2022, IUSTI 2022 and the 2022 Botswana HIV Conference.

CODA: CODA has completed enrolment! Congrats to the team on all their hard work! CODA will help us better understand compatibility of ARVs and contraception to better support women's family planning decision-making.

Dual HIV/Syphilis in ANC: Enrolment began in October, and 20% of the total sample has already been enrolled. Flying start!

MAGUS: Our genital ulcer aetiology study enrolled its first participant in October. Send anyone with a genital ulcer our way for care!

GloCal PN: Our qualitative study of STI partner notification has completed 6 in-depth interviews. Critical information needed for improved STI care!

CoTISIS: Our WHO validation study of a sexual and reproductive health instrument began enrolment this month. Exciting to be one of 20 sites internationally chosen for this important project!

PREPARE: Our study with Botswana Baylor on the inclusion of pregnant adolescents in research is ready to begin enrolment in January.

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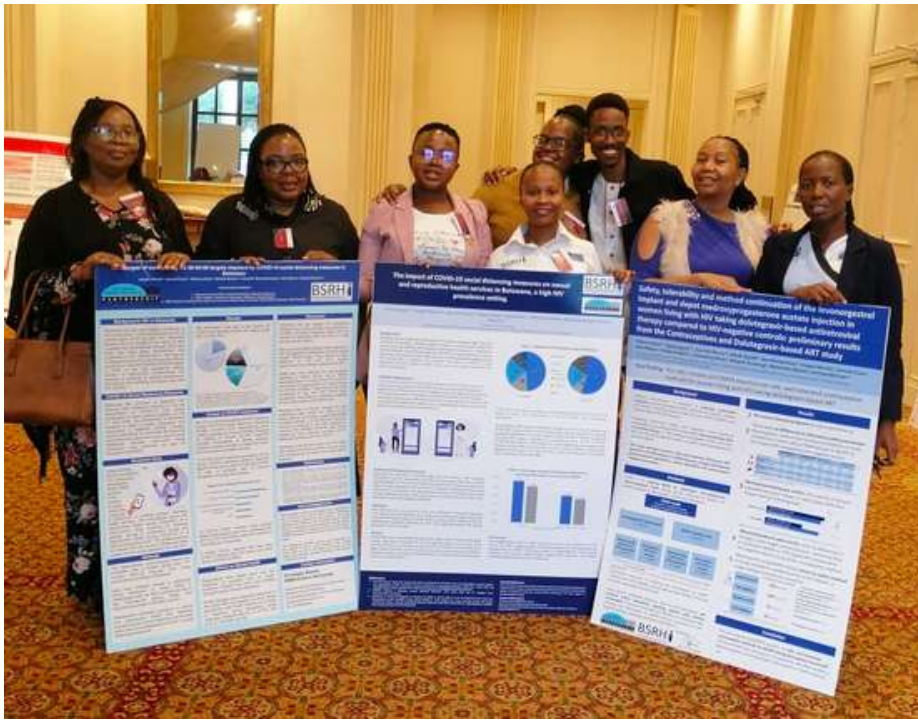
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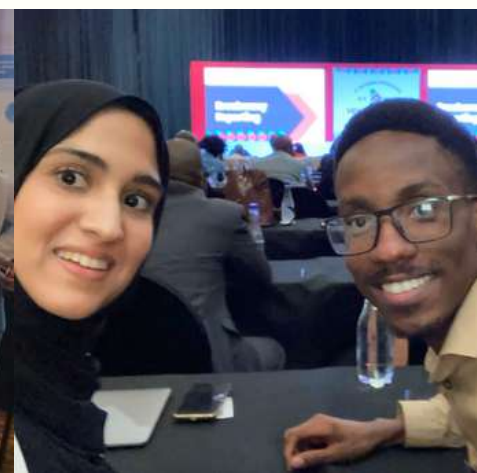
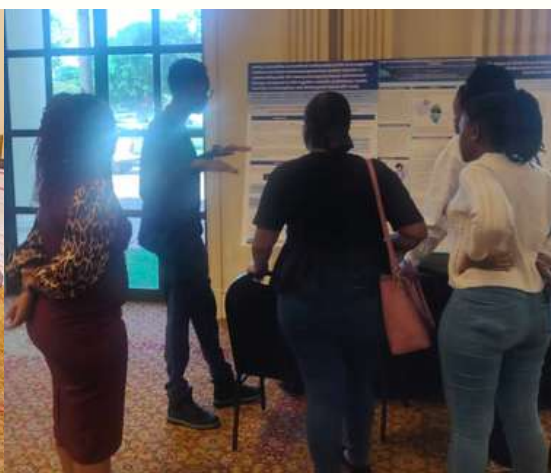
Meet Team BSRHI

- Aamirah Mussa
- Bame Bame
- Becky Ryan
- Shelby Chakona
- Neo Moshashane
- Khumile Ramontshonyana
- Neo Ndlovu
- Lefhela Tamuthiba
- Maitumelo Masole
- Mbabi Bapabi
- Maipelo Tsuaneng
- Neo Zambe
- Emily Hansman
- Lindiwe Ndlovu
- Samson Chaka
- Adriane Wynn
- Chelsea Morroni

Botswana International HIV Conference

The BSRHI team presented our work at the 8th annual Botswana International HIV Conference (November 8-11, 2022 in Gaborone). Every member of the BSRHI team was an author on a piece of work presented and everyone was able to attend the conference for engaging learning opportunities and dialogue around this year's conference theme: *New Generations, New Opportunities - Building Resilience Within Our Communities*. Work presented by the BSRHI team included the following:

- **"Safety, tolerability and method continuation of the levonorgestrel implant and depot medroxyprogesterone acetate injection in women living with HIV taking dolutegravir-based antiretroviral therapy compared to HIV-negative controls: preliminary results from the Contraceptives and Dolutegravir-based ART study"**
- **"The impact of COVID-19 social distancing measures on sexual and reproductive health services in Botswana, a high HIV prevalence setting"**
- **"Challenges of maintaining the 90-90-90 targets imposed by COVID-19 social distancing measures in Botswana"**





US Collaborator Dr Jeffrey Klausner Visits BSRHI



In September, BSRHI welcomed long-standing US collaborator Dr. Jeffrey Klausner from the University of Southern California. Dr Klausner was able to meet the BSRHI team, visit our clinic sites, and meet with BHP CEO Dr Makhema and BHP Lab Director Dr Moyo. Dr Klausner was impressed with what BSRHI has accomplished and is excited to continue our productive collaboration!

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Here's a look back at the work our team published recently:

1. Mussa A, Wynn A, Ryan R, Babalola C, Simon S, Ramontshonyana K, Tamuthiba L, Ndlovu N, Moshashane N, Klausner JD, Morroni C. High cure rate among pregnant women in a Chlamydia trachomatis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae testing and treatment intervention study in Gaborone, Botswana. *Sex Transm Dis* 2022 [preprint].
2. Babalola CM, Siebert JC, Kallapur SG, Maecker HT, Rosenberg-Hasson Y, Hansman E, Wynn A, Mussa A, Ryan R, Simon S, Morroni C, Klausner JD. Discrete Plasma Cytokine Profiles in Pregnant Botswanan Women by Chlamydia trachomatis infection, HIV infection, and Gestational age. *J Infect. Dis* 2022; 226(7):1298-1299.
3. Ryan R, Mussa A, Singtaa-Madliki M, Batting J, Balakrishna Y, Morroni C, Hofmeyr GJ. Effects of depot medroxyprogesterone acetate intramuscular injection, copper intrauterine device and levonorgestrel implant contraception on estradiol levels: an ancillary study of the ECHO randomized trial. *Frontiers in Global Women's Health* 2022; 3:887541.
4. Gertz A, Syahir ASM, Mompe A, Sickboy O, Gaines AN, Ryan R, Mussa A, Bawn C, Gallop R, Morroni C, Crits-Christoph P. Developing an assessment of contraceptive preferences in Botswana: piloting a novel approach using best-worst scaling of attributes. *Frontiers in Global Women's Health* 2022; 3:815634.



BSRHI was part of the BHP delegation at World AIDS Day in Hukuntsi on December 1. We were represented by our Nurse Coordinator Bame Bame. The BHP stall was even visited by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Botswana, Mokgweetsi Masisi!

WORLD AIDS DAY

World AIDS Day takes place on 1 December each year. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.

As part of World AIDS Day, the University of Edinburgh highlighted the work done by BSRHI at BHP on their social media channels. Check out one of the posts here and find the full series at [@edinunimedecine](https://www.instagram.com/edinunimedecine)

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Our aim is to address important research questions to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes among women and adolescent girls and to inform and advance evidence-based sexual and reproductive healthcare, programming and policy making.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH



BSRHI is proud of its close working relationship with the Ministry of Health and our wonderful friends and colleagues there!



Chelsea joins the Government of Botswana Family Planning 2030 (FP2030) Commitments Working Group. Pictured here at launch with Molly Rammipi and Sifelani Malima. Chelsea was also appointed to the MoH National Clinical Management Committee. Feeling honoured!



A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear BSRHI Family,

A huge thanks for all your hard work this quarter, this year, and always. I am so proud of us. I know it is not always easy or smooth sailing and there will always be ups and downs but I think we can all agree that we are very much on a positive upward trajectory. We have just completed recruitment for two big and complicated clinical studies on time and on budget, despite all the challenges the pandemic threw our way. Well done us! And we are about to launch several more exciting projects in the New Year. Most importantly, we have provided high-quality, evidence-based sexual and reproductive healthcare to so many women, their partners and their babies. One of our patient-participants messaged recently out of the blue with this feedback: *"experienced the best service from BSRHI. May they keep up the good work"*. That is what it is all about! Thank you for your commitment.

And a special thanks to Dineo and members of the BHP Grants and Finance Team responsible for BSRHI grant management (Doreen, Kevin, Akanyang and Ronald). You are so incredibly helpful, professional, skilled, and reliable. Thank you. And to Beauty, Tebogo and team for all of the HR guidance and support we've had. You are helping us get better and better. BSRHI could not do what we do without all of this support. Thanks to BHP for having us!

Finally thank you to our current funders US NIH, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome Trust, Open Philanthropy, and ViiV Healthcare; and to our research collaborators, Dr Klausner and team of USC, Professor Khoo and team of University of Liverpool, Dr Sullivan and team at UNC, Professor Marks of LSHTM, Dr Beale and Professor Thomson of the Sanger Institute, Dr Gonsalves of The World Health Organization and many, many more.

Have a safe, restful, lovely, joyful holiday break. Bring on BSRHI 2023!

With lots of love and thanks, Chelsea



BSRHI celebrated Botswana Independence Day on September 30 by wearing Leteisi. Pula!

BSRHI Events

BSRHI supported breast cancer awareness month by wearing pink on Fridays in October



It was a bittersweet farewell to the BSRHI study doctor, Dr. Rebecca Ryan. Thank you for all you've done for BSRHI and we wish you the best in all your future endeavours!



IUSTI World Congress

Results from our ongoing Maduo Study were presented at the 23rd International Union Against Sexually Transmitted Infections (IUSTI) World Congress. The conference was held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, and was attended by researchers from around the world. Work presented by the BSRHI team included the following:

- "The diagnosis, treatment, and cure rates of *Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* in asymptomatic pregnant women in Botswana"
- "Acceptability and feasibility of vaginal self-swab testing for *Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* in asymptomatic pregnant women in Gaborone, Botswana"
- "Partner notification and treatment for sexually transmitted infections among asymptomatic pregnant women in Gaborone, Botswana"
- "Alcohol use associated with curable STIs among asymptomatic pregnant women in Gaborone, Botswana: Maduo Trial"
- "Antenatal plasma cytokine profiles are distinct by *Chlamydia trachomatis* infection, HIV status, and gestational age; Gaborone Botswana"

Welcome to our new Fogarty UCGHI GloCal Fellow, Emily Hansman, from UCLA. We're excited to have her join the team!



BSRHI TEAM SHOUTOUTS

Here's to some big personal achievements recently!

- Neo M completed her Bachelors in Psychology and Population Studies
- Neo Z completed her BA in Healthcare Service Management
- Maipelo completed her Bachelors of Public Health
- Shelby, Bame, and Emily completed the UK FSRH International Certificate of SRH Knowledge course
- Caitlin was awarded her PhD at UCL. Dr Caitlin, that is!
- Aamirah successfully passed her University of Edinburgh one year PhD review and upgrade
- Bame has been accepted to do a Bachelors of Public Health
- Dr Adriane Wynn has been appointed as a BHP Research Associate
- Good luck to Emily taking her USMLE Step 2 Board Exam this month!
- BSRHI wishes a happy birthday to Maity, Lefhela, Kehumile and Chelsea who celebrate birthdays this quarter!