

among NGOs, foundations, and corporate social responsibility arms of global pharmaceutical companies.

**Interpretation:** Given the recent surge of interest in global mental health, this research is timely and essential as it provides a baseline for future evaluation of the impact of the renewed attention to mental health.

**Source of Funding:** None.

**Abstract #:** 2.037\_NCD

### Telepathology: Reducing Time from Biopsy to Treatment in Limited Resource Settings

*C. Wilson; University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA*

**Program/Project Purpose:** Innovating Health International (IHI) operates one of the few cancer treatment centers in Haiti and is setting up the first pathology lab at a public facility outside Port-au-Prince. Up until recently, histopathologic diagnosis of tumors required the use of private pathologists in Haiti or transporting samples to United States for evaluation. This resulted in a lag between initial consultation and diagnosis and ultimately delayed treatment onset. To address this, IHI established a telepathology program at Justinien University Hospital (HUI) in Cap Haitien, Haiti. The center is now fully functional and is able to process biopsied tissue from grossing the specimen to slide creation. As there are a limited number of pathologists in Haiti, and none outside Port-au-Prince, created slide images are then scanned using Mikroskan hardware and software. Digital images are then uploaded to the Internet and thereby available to be analyzed by pathologists around the world through an online platform that allows manipulation of images, including 100x zoom capability. The online platform also allows pathologists to remotely make and record a diagnosis which the Haitian pathology technicians can then print out and report results to patients. Each pathology technician spent one month training in the pathology lab in Baptist Health South Florida in Miami. Then, volunteer histotechnologists from abroad rotated through the lab in Cap Haitien, establishing protocols, training the staff, and providing oversight through all phases of the process. IHI's pathology lab now has the ability of rapid histopathologic diagnosis in a setting with limited resources. We are validating the quality of the process by double reading the first 100 samples in Cap Haitien and the pathology lab at the University of Florida. We are working with the government to use the online platform to help establish an electronic cancer registry in Haiti. The process, however, has not been without obstacles. Road blocks that had to be overcome include issues with sample preservation as well as poor internet speed and connectivity which slows the speed at which we can upload images.

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### Expert Perspectives on Mesoamerican Nephropathy (MeN): Examining the Production of Biomedical Knowledge about a Contested Epidemic

*E. Wright<sup>1</sup>, S. Hamdy<sup>2</sup>; <sup>1</sup>Brown University, Providence, RI, USA, <sup>2</sup>Brown University, Providence, USA*

**Background:** A form of chronic kidney disease sometimes called Mesoamerican nephropathy (MeN) is killing thousands of impoverished young men, mostly sugarcane harvesters, throughout Central America. Despite growing research interest in this disease since it was first described in 2002, its characteristics, causes, and even existence as a distinct clinical entity remain uncertain and, at times, contested. Using extensive interviews with leading MeN researchers, this study explored how biomedical knowledge about MeN is produced in a research climate fraught with barriers and controversy.

**Methods:** We interviewed 39 researchers from clinical, laboratory, academic, and/or field settings in 14 countries based on their publications and participation in conferences about MeN. Twenty-seven (69.2%) were male, 33 (84.6%) had a doctoral or medical degree, and 29 (74.3%) had been involved in MeN research for  $\geq 6$  years. Interviews were semi-structured and conducted in English (n=29, 72%) or Spanish (n=11, 28%) by Skype/telephone or in person. They were verbatim transcribed, translated, de-identified, and analyzed using 35 themes developed iteratively by content analysis.

**Findings:** Informants expounded their often nuanced thoughts on MeN etiology and impressions of the research environment, enriching and sometimes diverging from what research processes and findings peer-reviewed MeN publications describe. Informants' support for different causal factors (e.g. heat stress/dehydration, pesticides, infection), confidence in existing evidence, and prioritization of interventions versus additional etiological studies depended on their expertise, funding source, and experience in MeN-affected communities. Informants described numerous factors that stymie research broadly, yet are rarely referenced in MeN literature, including limited funding, uncooperative state and private actors, and significant methodological and logistical challenges, as well as local obstacles such as gang interference, participant loss of livelihood, and deportation of researchers. Half of informants believed their work on MeN posed personal and/or professional risk to them. Informants' experiences working with marginalized affected communities often motivated them to address not only MeN, but also broader occupational, environmental, and social injustices in these communities.

**Interpretation:** These results contextualize the limited progress that has been made in understanding and addressing MeN and highlight sources of the contestation surrounding the epidemic. They also underscore the need to identify strategies for facilitating MeN science and addressing the community-wide suffering caused by MeN.

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### Taipei Hospital's Chronic Kidney Disease Education Program and eGFR Outcomes

*E. Young<sup>1</sup>, B. Liu<sup>\*1</sup>, V. Wan<sup>\*1</sup>, T.-L. Lin<sup>2</sup>, A. Lin<sup>1</sup>, Y.-Z. Chen<sup>2</sup>; <sup>1</sup>Touro University of California, Vallejo, USA, <sup>2</sup>Taipei Hospital - Ministry of Health & Welfare, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.*

**Background:** Taiwan has the highest prevalence and incidence of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) in the world. Taipei Hospital established the Chronic Kidney Disease Education Program (CKDEP)