



KINTAMPO HEALTH
RESEARCH CENTRE

APRIL 2025
EDITION

KHRC FOCUS

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER



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May Edition of CLEAR Climate & Health Research Webinar Series Scheduled for Thursday, 22nd May 2025



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KHRC RECEIVES 'CLINICAL TRIAL FACILITY OF THE YEAR' AWARD AT THE MAIDEN GHANA PHARMA EXCELLENCE AWARDS



The Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) has been honoured with the “Excellence in Pharma Research: Clinical Trial Facility of the Year” award at the maiden edition of the Ghana Pharma Excellence Awards, held in Accra on Friday, April 11, 2025.

This distinguished award recognizes KHRC’s exceptional dedication, innovation, and impact in the field of clinical trial research. As a Centre of excellence under the Ghana Health Service, KHRC has made significant contributions to advancing global health through rigorous, high-quality research that supports the development of new treatments and improves patient care.

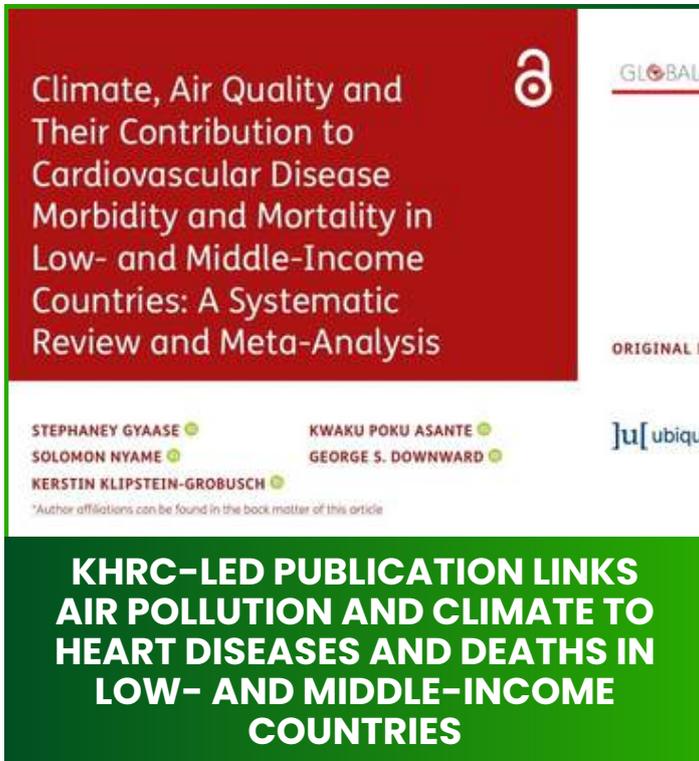
The maiden edition of the Ghana Pharma Excellence Awards was organized by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ghana (PSGH) to celebrate outstanding achievements within the pharmaceutical industry and healthcare sector. The event brought together industry leaders, professionals, and stakeholders to honour excellence in diverse categories such as professional practice, manufacturing, research and development, regulatory compliance, pharmaceutical care, entrepreneurship, and corporate social responsibility.

Over the past three decades, KHRC has successfully conducted Phase I to Phase IV clinical trials for various vaccines and drugs, including the RTS,S malaria vaccine, COVID-19 vaccine candidates, treatments for sickle cell disease and malaria, RSV and Lassa fever vaccines, among others. Many of these interventions have since been approved for global use and are contributing to the treatment and prevention of major diseases. KHRC’s recognition as Clinical Trial Facility of the Year therefore underscores its important role in advancing ethical and impactful research that strengthens healthcare delivery and improves access to quality medical care.

The award was received on behalf of KHRC by Pharm. Elvis Ato Wilson, Senior Pharmacist in the Clinical Trials Department. KHRC expresses its sincere gratitude for this recognition and reaffirms its commitment to ethical, high-quality research that contributes to both national and global public health goals.

[Learn More About KHRC’s Clinical Trials Research](#)





A systematic review led by Ms. Stephaney Gyaase, Principal Biostatistician at Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) and a PhD student at Utrecht University, has revealed that exposures to air pollution and extreme weather conditions are major factors contributing to the rising cases of cardiovascular diseases and deaths in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Published in *Global Heart*, the research paper titled; "Climate, Air Quality and Their Contribution to Cardiovascular Disease Morbidity and Mortality in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," reviewed 7,306 scientific papers. After careful screening, 58 key studies were selected—primarily from Asia, Africa, Iran and Brazil. These studies looked into the relationship between cardiovascular diseases and various air pollutants such as PM2.5 and PM10 (tiny particles in the air), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), ozone (O₃), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), carbon dioxide (CO₂), black carbon (soot),

solid fuels (like charcoal or firewood), as well as temperature changes.

Through their review of the selected research papers, Ms. Stephaney Gyaase and her colleagues found that both short-term and long-term exposure to polluted air, especially fine dust particles (PM2.5), car and factory gases like nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and ozone (O₃), can significantly increase the risk of heart diseases, strokes, and other cardiovascular diseases-related deaths.

They also highlighted the dangers of indoor air pollution from using charcoal, firewood, and other solid fuels for cooking, stressing that breathing in smoke from these fuels regularly can damage the heart. In addition to these, extreme heat and cold were found to worsen heart conditions, especially in communities with limited access to healthcare..

An important finding from the review is that over 70% of the existing research came from mainland China, while there was very little data from African countries, including Ghana—despite the fact that heart disease is growing rapidly across the continent.

Ms. Gyaase and her colleagues therefore recommend that more studies be done in Sub-Saharan Africa, where environmental challenges and health systems are very different, suggesting that future research focus on how specific types of cardiovascular diseases are linked to different kinds of pollution and climate. They also recommend that governments, health agencies, and development partners invest in clean energy, educate health workers, and include environmental health risks in national health strategies.

[Read the Full Publication](#)

KHRC COMMENCES NEW CLINICAL STUDY ON MALARIA PREVENTION FOR SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



The Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC), in collaboration with the University of Maryland and the Research and Development Division of the Ghana Health Service, has begun a new malaria study called “Impact of Early Childhood Malaria Prevention on Malaria Risk at School Entry (ERASE)”.

The study is investigating how early interventions like seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) and the use of malaria vaccine affect the risk of malaria when children start school. This five-year study being conducted in the Kintampo North and South districts of the Bono East Region in Ghana, has started recruiting participants.



The study aims to understand how interventions given early in a child’s life can affect malaria risk as the children grow older. Despite progress in reducing malaria with treatments like insecticide-treated nets and vaccines, school-aged children are still at risk since they no longer receive these interventions after a certain age.

As part of preparatory activities, KHRC trained 24 clinicians and laboratory staff from 12 selected health facilities within the study area, to support the study. The training, held on Thursday, March 27, 2025, covered key topics including the study’s overview, the types of samples to collect from participants, and how to document diagnoses clearly for future reference. These clinicians and laboratory staff will support the study by identifying study participants that show up at the facility and help to perform the study’s activities while at the clinic.



Prior to the training, Prof. Andrea Buchwald, a principal investigator from the University of Maryland, USA, visited KHRC to discuss how the study would be carried out and to check the Centre’s readiness.

Discussions during her visit also centered on the next steps for the study’s implementation.

About ERASE

The ERASE study, which is funded by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) will recruit about 1,950 children and follow them for two years. The children will be enrolled from three groups based on whether they received SMC, the RTS,S vaccine, or neither.



The study will monitor their health through regular checks, including blood, stool, and urine samples to detect malaria and other health issues. The study will also collect data on factors like nutrition and socioeconomic status, which may affect malaria risk.

This research is important for understanding how early interventions protect children as they grow older. The results will also help improve future malaria prevention programmes, especially for children who are at a higher risk after receiving early treatment. It will run until May 2029.

[Learn More About the ERASE Study](#)



MIRNA STUDY ENGAGES COMMUNITIES TO UNDERSTAND MATERNAL VACCINE ACCEPTANCE AND CONCERNS

The Maternal Immunization Readiness Network in Africa and Asia (MIRNA) Study team at Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) has been actively engaging communities through interviews and focus group discussions as part of efforts to better understand what influences vaccine acceptance and hesitancy, especially when it comes to maternal vaccines.

This field activity forms part of one of the work packages of the MIRNA Study, which focuses on using social science methods to explore how informed and prepared women, their families, and communities are to receive new maternal vaccines. The goal is to ensure that when these maternal vaccines are introduced, women are ready and willing to take them.

Since January 21, 2025, the team has been working across the Kintampo North Municipality and Kintampo South District in the Bono East Region. They are holding focus group discussions with pregnant women, women of reproductive age, and mothers to understand what they know and how they truly feel about maternal vaccines.

They are also conducting in-depth interviews with key community members including health workers, household decision-makers, and local opinion leaders.

These engagements are revealing how people who matter most in vaccine decision-making think and feel about maternal vaccines, what concerns they have, what expectations they hold, and what kind of information or support they need to confidently make decisions on whether to receive the vaccines or otherwise.

So far, the team has completed 19 in-depth interviews and held 10 focus group discussions. The fieldwork is expected to continue until May 31, 2025, after which the team will begin analyzing the information collected.

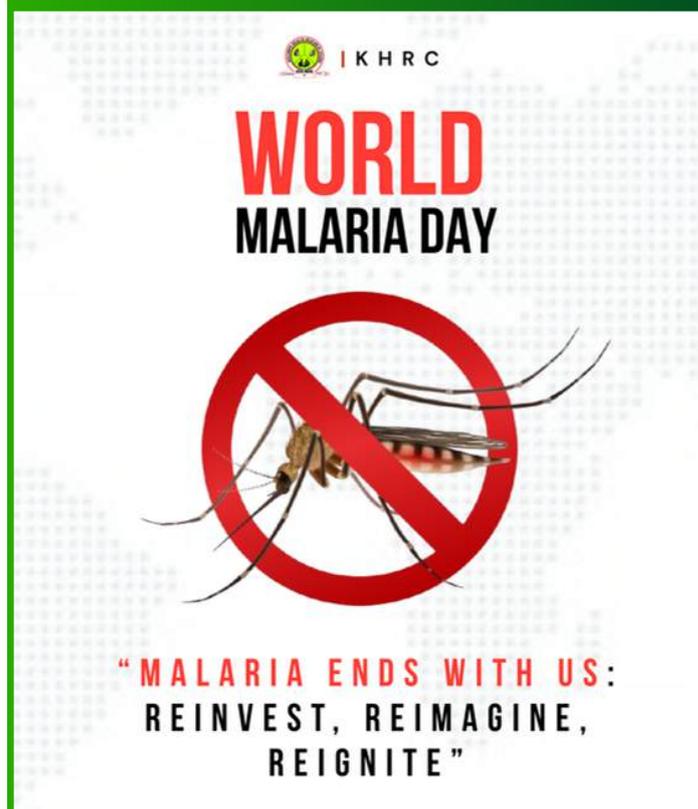
About MIRNA

The MIRNA Consortium was formed to assess how prepared countries are to introduce new vaccines for pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries and explore ways to strengthen healthcare systems for effective vaccine delivery. It is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and coordinated by the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa.

[Learn More About MIRNA.](#)



WORLD MALARIA DAY 2025: KHRC'S KEY ROLE IN VECTOR SURVEILLANCE



As the world marks World Malaria Day, we shine a light on the vital work happening behind the scenes in the fight against malaria.

At Kintampo Health Research Centre's Entomology Unit, the team is leading a Vector Surveillance Programme—trapping mosquitoes overnight, studying their species, testing for insecticide resistance, and analyzing their breeding and biting behaviour.

Vector surveillance helps us understand malaria transmission patterns, including when mosquitoes are most active and where they breed, which are critical for targeted interventions.

[Watch a Short Documentary on KHRC's Vector Surveillance Activities](#)

GLOBAL RESEARCH AGENDA ON MALARIA VACCINE INTRODUCTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OUTLINES PRIORITIES TO GUIDE ROLLOUT

Global research agenda on malaria vaccine introduction and implementation

Technical report



A comprehensive global Malaria Research Agenda has been developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) with technical input and support from the Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) and PATH, to support the introduction and use of malaria vaccines.

The research agenda build upon findings from the pilot implementation of the malaria vaccine in Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi. The pilot rollout showed that the RTS,S malaria vaccine can be safely delivered through routine immunization systems and can significantly reduce severe malaria and hospital admissions among children.

KHRC and PATH led broad stakeholder consultations with malaria and immunization experts to identify key knowledge gaps.

These discussions helped shape the research agenda by focusing on the design, implementation, and optimization of the rollout and scale-up of the malaria vaccine.

KHRC's involvement in malaria vaccine research dates back to its implementation of phase two and three clinical trials to test the effectiveness of the RTS,S vaccine. The success of these trials contributed to the vaccine being added to routine immunization systems in Ghana and other malaria-endemic countries.

The Centre's researchers, Prof. Kwaku Poku Asante, Dr. Samuel Afari-Asiedu, and Dr. Thomas Gyan, played key roles in developing the malaria vaccine implementation research agenda, ensuring that Ghana's experiences and perspectives were captured.

The research agenda covers implementation and operational research (OR and IR) questions related to the deployment of malaria vaccines organized according to six broad themes that focused on (1) how safe the malaria vaccine is, (2) how feasible it is to deliver the vaccine, (3) how people feel about receiving the vaccine, (4) how the malaria vaccine can be combined with other health services or malaria interventions, (5) how effective or impactful the malaria vaccine is, and (6) whether it is affordable and cost-effective for countries to use.

The goal of this research agenda is to provide a shared guide that can help countries make informed decisions as they introduce and scale-up malaria vaccine programmes.

In total, 28 priority research topics across the six thematic areas were identified to guide countries in introducing and scaling-up malaria vaccines effectively and reaching

more children. Given that the introduction of malaria vaccines is estimated to save an additional half a million lives over the next 12 years, periodic review of this research agenda will be useful to ensure its continued relevance and to capture emerging research priorities.

Read the full [Technical Report](#) and [Research Brief](#)

BUILDING A CLIMATE COHORT TO MONITOR HEALTH IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN GHANA

West Africa Centre for Climate & Health Innovation & Resilience
Climate & Health Evaluation For Adaptive Resilience (CLEAR)

PRESENTS
2025 Climate & Health Research Webinar Series

Topic: **Food Security, Climate Change and CO2 Interactions: A Nutritional Lens**

ON THURSDAY
22ND MAY 2025

14:00
GMT

Register Now
<https://shorturl.at/UhCh>

PRESENTED BY
PROFESSOR LEWIS H. ZISKA
Associate Professor,
Environmental Health Sciences,
Columbia University

MODERATED BY
DR. SEYRAM KAALI
Principal Medical Officer,
Kintampo Health Research Centre

MAY EDITION OF CLEAR CLIMATE & HEALTH RESEARCH WEBINAR SERIES TO EXPLORE HOW CLIMATE CHANGE & RISING CO₂ LEVELS INFLUENCE FOOD SECURITY

[HTTPS://KINTAMPO-HRC.ORG/CLEAR/](https://kintampo-hrc.org/clear/)

The Climate and Health Evaluation for Adaptive Resilience (CLEAR) Programme is set to host the May edition of its Climate & Health Research Webinar Series on Thursday, May 22, 2025. This session will feature a presentation on "Food Security, Climate Change and CO₂ Interactions: A Nutritional Lens."

WEBINAR DETAILS



THURSDAY, 22 MAY 2025



14:00 - 15:00 GMT

PRESENTATION

- Food Security, Climate Change and CO₂ Interactions: A Nutritional Lens – **Professor Lewis H. Ziska, Associate Professor, Environmental Health Sciences, Columbia University.**

The webinar will be moderated by Dr. Seyram Kaali, Principal Medical Officer at KHRC.

[Click to Register](#)

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