



In Search of Better Health

Press Release

MITS Van Study Explains Causes of Under Fives in Kisumu & Siaya Counties

Kisumu: Wednesday, 28th, February 2024.

KEMRI has been piloting a research programme that provides the first of its kind in Africa Mobile Mortuary services for the purpose of researching on the cause of death in Siaya and Kisumu counties as part of Child Mortality Studies.

Initial preliminary results from the study supported by this van clearly explain the actual cause of most deaths among children under 5 years in Kisumu and Siaya Counties.

This unique Mobile facility was launched this morning at KEMRI Center for Global Health Research (CGHR) by the Acting Director General Prof. Elijah Songok.

The **Minimal Invasive Testing Sampling (MITS)** procedure Van will be used for **Child Health and Mortality Prevention Surveillance (CHAMPS)** study that collects, analyzes, and shares evidence needed to design more effective and targeted interventions for prevention of child mortality in regions where it is highest such in our setting.

So far, the 6-year study has been funded for over **USD. 6 million** by the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** whose CEO Mr. Bill Gates visited KEMRI recently to review the progress of this unique and innovative study in the world. The cost of MITS Van and accessories is estimated at the cost **USD. 70,000**. The study will give evidence based targeted interventions and resources where they are needed most in terms of management and treatment of diseases.

The MITS Van concept emanated from the challenges encountered in the process of enrolling community deaths such as the need for quick burials, transportation challenges

among others. KEMRI worked with the community and partners, to introduce an innovation where MITS is done in a Van within the community setting where death occurs within the required 24 hours. MITs sample testing, clinical records, and verbal autopsy data are reviewed by a panel of experts Deciding Cause of Death (DECODE) composed of a pathologist, an epidemiologist, a pediatrician, a microbiologist, a neonatologist amongst others to decide on the cause of death for each death.

Preliminary results are showing that the leading and surprising pathogen causing death in children regardless of age is ***Klebsiella Pneumoniae*** which has never been appreciated as an important cause of death in previous studies. Regardless of age, some of the leading cause of death among infants and children in Kenya's study site are **Malnutrition, Malaria, HIV infections and disease, congenital malformations (birth defects), Pneumoniae and Sepsis**. Other important causes of death in children include **Sickle Cell, Low Birth Weight, diarrhea**.

The project is being implemented by KEMRI in collaboration with Ministry of Health, County health management team, Henry Jackson Foundation (HJF) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with support from CHAMPS Network Program Office based at Emory University.





For more information, please contact, **Wodera James** on Email: jwodera@kemri.go.ke 0722767682 or **Patronilla Goren** on Email: pgoren@kemri.go.ke ,0728641515