

## Centre Connect

Welcome to the February edition of Centre Connect. Please see below exciting news and events that the Centre colleagues have taken part in over the past month.

### Acknowledgement

We would like to thank **Ms Syeda Nadia Bokhari**, Comms Coordinator, AKU who has been our Guest Editor for Centre Connect for the months of December 2023, January to February 2024. Special appreciation to **Dr Harriet Evans Tang** for elevating the layout, and thanks to **Ms Jenny Westad** for her continuous support. Your contributions have greatly enriched our communication efforts.

### Latest news from the research team

#### Pilot Qualitative Interviews at BIDE



Pilot qualitative interviews being conducted for EMPOWER-D at BIDE.

Pilot Qualitative interviews for the EMPOWER-D initiative were conducted at BIDE from February 14-19, 2024. The sessions were thoughtfully organized to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives on diabetes. Interviewees included people without diabetes, community representatives, carers of individuals with diabetes, and those living with diabetes, thus providing great insights about diabetes.

#### Ramadan and Hajj Diabetes Doctors Training Program Organized by BIDE

The Ramadan and Hajj Diabetes Doctors Training Program was held on February 10th, 2024, in Peshawar. A total of 50 participants attended the session. Experts covered topics including dietary considerations, medication adjustments, and

patient education for managing diabetes during fasting. The event facilitated networking among healthcare professionals, promoting collaboration for better patient care.

## FGD Focussing Male Participants at BIDE



Focus group discussion for EMPOWER-D being conducted by BIDE.

On February 25th, 2024, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for the EMPOWER-D was conducted with male participants, focusing on the topic "From Community without Diabetes." The session took place in the comfortable setting of one of the participants' homes, providing a relaxed and conducive environment for open discussion. Ten individuals actively participated in the FGD, contributing a diverse range of perspectives and experiences.

## The Primary Care Diabetes Association Hosts Symposium on Access to Diabetes Education

The Primary Care Diabetes Association organized an international symposium titled "Access to Diabetes Education" on February 17th and 18th, 2024. The event attracted over 510 delegates from across Pakistan. Distinguished national and international speakers and panelists delivered cutting-edge lectures. The poster presentation session showcased the work of emerging researchers. Prof. Abdul Basit and Prof. Zia ul Haq, the diabetes theme leads, honored the first session with their state-of-the-art lectures as guests of honor. The association annually organizes these events mainly for physicians managing primarily diabetes at primary care.

## What's new from the community & beyond?

### Transforming Cities: A Collaborative Initiative for Tobacco-Free Urban Spaces in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Vietnam

The University of York in collaboration with Aga Khan University, Pakistan, University of Melbourne, ARK Foundation and Hanoi University of Public Health have been successful in their proposal to GACD/UKRI for a multi-city project: 'Tobacco-Free Cities: Implementation research with city governments in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Vietnam'. The project will use action-research and implementation science methodologies. The initiative aims to collaborate with city stakeholders in Karachi and Dadu, guiding them in the effective implementation of smoke-free strategies in public places.

In Pakistan, the project will be led by Dr Romaina Iqbal and Prof Javaid Khan, AKU, Prof Rumana Huque, ARK Foundation, will be spearheading the project in Bangladesh, the Hanoi University of Public Health will be taking a lead in Vietnam, whereas Prof Helen Eley along with co-Is, Prof Kamran Siddiqi, Prof Simon Walker, and Dr Noemia Sequiera will be leading the project in York. This collaborative initiative is a great opportunity to build synergies among the C4I collaborators.

If you would like to know more about the Tobacco-Free Cities project, please contact Dr Helen and/or Dr Romaina.

### Digital Insight: Aga Khan University and Gallup Pakistan's NCD Survey in Pakistan



Aga Khan University and Gallup Pakistan are collaborating to conduct a novel national digital survey using mobile phones to collect data on health status and risk factors of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Pakistan to help fill the gap in health research and improve public health outcomes.

Visit the [CITRIC Health Data Science Centre website](#) for information on this groundbreaking collaboration.

### **UoY and South Asian Partner Institutions Successfully Obtain Funding for the SCIMITAR-South Asia (SA) Global Health Research Programme**

The University of York and South Asian partner institutions have been awarded the four-year SCIMITAR-South Asia (SA) Global Health Research Programme by NIHR, beginning in July 2024. The multi-disciplinary programme aims to address tobacco use among people with severe mental illness in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan and will create new evidence on the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of behavioural interventions to quit tobacco, delivered in mental health facilities. Under its capacity-building initiative, SCIMITAR-SA will include formal training opportunities (PhD studentships) to develop research expertise in South Asia. It will also design and deliver training for clinicians to deliver treatments to address tobacco use and support policymakers in using research findings in practice.

### **Upcoming: AKU's Adolescent Health Conference "Healthy Futures - Preventing NCDs in Young Hearts and Minds"**

AKU looks forward to hosting a three-day adolescent health conference "Healthy Futures - Preventing NCDs in Young Hearts and Minds" from June 6-8, 2024. The conference aims to share knowledge on NCD risk factors in adolescents in LMICs with sessions on Tobacco use, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Screen Time, and Mental Health. The event features invited talks, free papers, a poster session, and a concluding panel discussion on funding challenges in NCD risk reduction for adolescents.

International Conference

# Healthy Futures: Preventing NCDs in Young Hearts and Minds

Conference Highlights


- Pre-conference Workshops
- Keynote Speakers
- Oral Presentations
- Poster Gallery Walk
- Panel Discussion
- Networking Opportunities
- International Collaboration
- Grand Inauguration and Stage Drama Performance

Who should attend

- Healthcare Professionals, Researchers and Academics
- Government Officials and Policy Makers
- Public Health Professionals
- NGOs and Advocacy Groups
- Educators and Students
- Industry Representatives
- Media Representatives

**Save the date**  
June 6 - 8, 2024 | Aga Khan University

For more information  
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## Another Feather in the Cap!

- Participants from the recent Blog Writing Workshop organized by UoY and conducted by The Mental Elf published a blog on 'Tuberculosis and depression: multimorbidities are a global health challenge' - congratulations to Aliya Ayub, Asima Niazi, Nida Afsheen, Tooba Seemi, and Badur un Nisa!

## Call for Abstracts: Health Systems Global Conference 2024

The 8th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research will be held in Nagasaki, Japan from 18-22 November 2024. The theme of the symposium is Building Just and Sustainable Health Systems Centring People and Protecting the Planet. Deadline for Individual abstracts submission is March 20, 2024. Interested individuals can visit the following link for more details: <https://healthsystemsglobal.org/hsr2024/>

## Ninth GACD Funding Call – Management of Multiple Long-Term Conditions

The GACD will be hosting a webinar for prospective applicants, on Thursday March 21, 2024. All interested can click on the following link for more details: [Management of Multiple Long-Term Conditions | GACD](#)

## Global Health Policy and Systems Research (HPSR) Projects Funding Call

NIHR have released details of their Global Health Policy and Systems Research funding call. A pre-application webinar will be held on Tuesday 26 March, and you can find all the details [on the NIHR website](#).

## Welcome Aboard:

Mr Adeel Sabir has joined AKU as Grants Manager and will be overseeing all Centre for Impact Grant-related activities.

## Research Communications Coordinators

To make it easier to get your research out there we are establishing a team of locally based research communication coordinators. The coordinators also meet monthly as a team to share knowledge and build skills. Writing Centre Connect is going to be one of their regular jobs. If you have questions, please get in touch with them directly. So far, we have

## Looking Forward

### What's happening in March?

- **SPIRiT-D (Collaborative care) Stakeholder consultations** are expected by the end of February.
- **COBRA Plus Intervention Phase-1 second round** of workshops planned to be held at Matiari and Thatta to explore possible solutions to the barriers identified in the first round of the workshops.
- The **'Qualitative Inquiry: From Research to Practice'** online course, organized by AKU for members of the Centre for Impact, will conclude in March.
- **2nd Community Advisory Panel (CAP) for CVD theme** meeting planned for March 2024.
- **NIHR Global Health Research Centres Symposium:** The NIHR Global Health Research Centres Symposium is scheduled to take place from March 4-7 March 2024, at the Westin, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The aim of this symposium is to foster collaboration and discuss progress, challenges and lessons learnt from the NIHR Centres across the NIHR Global Health Research Centres, the NIHR, DHSC, and various stakeholders.

## Socials

### X, formerly known as Twitter- @IMPACT\_NIHR

- Tuberculosis and depression: multimorbidities are a global health challenge.



- NIHR Global celebrates Dr Zainab Samad, Director Centre for Impact as #NIHRWomen #WomenInScience.



“It is through research that we can identify and focus on health-related issues that are specific to women or that women may be more prone to or have worse outcomes. In our research, we are intentional about capturing data to answer some of these questions.”

Professor Zainab Samad, Director of the NIHR Global Health Research Centre for Improving Mental and Physical Health Together



**YouTube** - <https://www.youtube.com/@Centre 4IMPACT>

- Wiktoria Tafesse - [Turning data into evidence: micro-economics and global health](#) (YorkTalks 2024). And more information on this year's YorkTalks is available: [YorkTalks 2024](#)
- Sign-up to [The Initiative YouTube Channel](#) to watch the Cloud of Depression videos, leave a comment and share.

## Upskilling

### AKU Organizes Qualitative Course for Centre for Impact Members

AKU has organized a qualitative research course titled "Qualitative Inquiry from Research to Practice," consisting of eight sessions. Currently underway, the course is attended by 25 participants from the Centre for Impact. Two insightful sessions have been conducted thus far, with the first providing an introductory tour of qualitative research fundamentals, and the second exploring critical aspects of Reflexivity, covering paradigms and frameworks in qualitative research. The course commits to ongoing exploration of qualitative methodologies under the guidance of Dr. Rubina Barolia and the collaborative ethos of the Centre for Impact.



## Latest Publications

**Recent publications from Centre colleagues:**

- [A core outcome set for trials evaluating self-management interventions in people with severe mental illness and coexisting type 2 diabetes](#) Carswell C, Taylor J, Holt RI, Brown JV, Ajjan R, Böhnke JR, Doran T, Kellar I, Shiers D, Wright J, Siddiqi N. A core outcome set for trials evaluating self-management interventions in people with severe mental illness and coexisting type 2 diabetes. *Diabetic Medicine*. 2024 Jan 18:e15288.

- [An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the lived experience of people with multimorbidity in low- and middle-income countries](#) Tran PB, Ali A, Ayesha R, Boehnke JR, Ddungu C, Lall D, Pinkney-Atkinson VJ, van Olmen J. An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the lived experience of people with multimorbidity in low- and middle-income countries. *BMJ Global Health*. 2024 Jan 1;9(1):e013606.
- [Self-management of chronic, non-communicable diseases in South Asian settings: A systematic mixed-studies review](#) Siddiqui F, Hewitt C, Jennings H, Coales K, Mazhar L, Boeckmann M, Siddiqi N. Self-management of chronic, non-communicable diseases in South Asian settings: A systematic mixed-studies review. *PLOS Global Public Health*. 2024 Jan 8;4(1):e0001668.
- [Depression care integration in tuberculosis services: A feasibility assessment in Pakistan](#) Afaq S, Ayub A, Faisal MR, Nisar Z, Zala, Rehman AU, Ahmed A, Todowede O, Siddiqi N. Depression care integration in tuberculosis services: A feasibility assessment in Pakistan. *Health Expectations*. 2024 Feb;27(1):e13985.

Please share any outputs for the next Centre Connect digest by completing [the Centre's dissemination form](#) OR by emailing [Jenny Westad](#)

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