

UM SA Exchange Program- Aging and HIV funding report 2016

Enid Schatz, Univeristy of Missouri

Lucia Knight, University of Western Cape

In August 2015, Schatz and Knight applied for funds to begin a project on older persons' living with HIV, with a specific focus on their antiretroviral (ART) access and adherence, as well as their access to social welfare and support. Our preliminary findings show important new policy-relevant information about the experiences of older persons living with HIV in the Cape Flats. Dr. Knight and I have successfully established the foundation of our collaboration by combining our expertise to begin to examine the barriers and facilitators of older persons' antiretroviral [ART] access and adherence. We have taken the initial steps on a systematic review, initiated fieldwork in the Cape Flats, and met on three occasions to analyze preliminary data, discuss the progress of our work and outline where it is headed. In addition, since our initial UMSAEP funding, I have been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to spend June-December 2017 at UWC working with Dr. Knight.

Due to disruptions on both campuses in Fall 2015, we were delayed in starting our project. Thus, our progress over the past year was not as fast as we had hoped. Additionally, we had difficulties identifying sufficient and diverse respondents from our original sampling list (making use of the Prospective Urban and Rural Epidemiological (PURE) Study. The selection of participants that fit within the study criteria was challenging because fewer than expected older PURE participants reported being HIV positive, a dearth of men fulfilled the criteria, and of those who qualified the majority over 60 years of age had died. However, we have a strong plan for moving forward that we hope UMSAEP will continue to support. We are expanding our research from Langa to also include Khayelitsha, and are planning a new sampling strategy to find additional respondents with a focus on those over age 60, particularly men.

Knight and Schatz first met at the Trilateral Ghent-UWC-MU Meeting in October 2015. Schatz's first visit to UWC (primarily funded through matching funds) was in December 2015. During this visit we met with PURE staff to assess the likelihood of finding participants, and plan the project and activities. Schatz visited UWC a second time in July/August 2016 to meet with new team members, analyze collected data, move the Systematic Review paper forward, and plan future activities, including writing and submitting a second UMSAEP proposal for Aug 2016.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Despite the challenges outlined above, to date this team has (1) conducted a number of in-depth interviews with older people in Langa identified through PURE, (2) had these interviews translated and transcribed, (3) begun the analysis of these preliminary data, (4) identified three key themes to address in further interviews, and (5) outlined three key publication outputs from this research. More details in bulleted list below specifying how funds allocated to UWC have been spent.

We also have taken the initial steps on a Systematic Review on ART interventions accessed by older persons in sub-Saharan Africa. Queries have been run on MEDLINE, ERIC and SCOPUS for the systematic review of older persons' participation in ART interventions in sub-Saharan Africa. We have also recruited a PhD student from UWC to work on the Systematic Review and will further incorporate him into the study work and as a co-author on publications.

Future plans for 2016-2017:

- Submission of proposal for extending the project to 2017- SA lead—Submitted Aug 2016.
- Submit two abstracts to Population Association of America Annual Meeting 2017 (Systematic Review and paper on Silo-ed care) – Abstracts due September 2016; request Travel Grant for Knight and UWC PhD Student.
- Completion of Systematic Review for submission to journal—December 2016.
- Funds requested in 2016 to support ongoing field and research activities to collect key informant interviews about services, perceptions of and experience of working with older people with HIV and to identify future avenues to sample those over the age of 60 and HIV-positive, in order to facilitate writing an external grant proposal.
- Schatz to spend June-Dec 2017 at UWC on Fulbright Fellowship.

With the additional support of the Fulbright Fellowship, allowing me to be at UWC from June-December 2017, this collaboration is clearly just in its beginning stages. Our project going forward had the potential to draw in other UWC researchers and students. And, importantly, the results of our initial pilot as well as the study for which we plan to seek NIH funding, has the potential to improve the wellbeing of a particularly vulnerable group of older Africans—South Africans aged 60 and over, living with HIV.

Funding Report

In the original Award, Schatz was allocated \$6000, and \$4000 was to go to Knight at UWC to cover fieldwork expenses.

MU FUNDS

On the first trip in December 2015, UMSAEP contributed **\$561.81** to the trip costs. This allowed Schatz to travel from Johannesburg to Cape Town, and to meet with Knight for 3 days while Schatz was in South Africa for a conference in Pretoria. The second trip, 10 days, took place in July/August 2015. Total funds paid by UMSAEP were **\$2656.80**. Since our work is ongoing and we did not spend the full amount allocated, we have requested a no-cost extension on the **\$2,781.39 remaining** in order to facilitate future meetings between Knight and Schatz in 2016-17.

UWC FUNDS

We have hired Ms. Nomazizi Cishe part-time over a period of 5 months ongoing (4 months almost complete) for the location, selection, enrolment and interview with HIV-positive participants from Langa over the age of 50.

Work completed as of 24/08/2016 as covered by funding received to date:

- Using PURE questionnaires to locate people over the age of 50 years of age who report being HIV-positive to come up with a list of 10 possible candidates for the study
- Interaction with PURE team to locate the addresses of all candidates and check if they are still alive and living in Langa- exclusion of 4 people because they are dead or have relocated (Given the small numbers of HIV-positive people identified the plan to conduct focus groups discussions was shelved in favour of in-depth interviews).
- Ms Cishe introduced to all of the potential candidates in Langa by the PURE team, to facilitate easy access to the households and link with PURE without inadvertent disclosure of HIV status.
- Completion of 6 in-depth interviews with all potential candidates. Each interview took between 1.5 and 2 hours to complete.
- Transcription and translation of all interviews. Completed by the 15th August 2016.
- Informal meetings with PURE staff working in Langa, representatives of the clinic committee and a social worker representing the Department of Social Development in Langa to identify potential key informant interviews.
- Introductory informal meeting with clinic staff at Site C in Khayelitsha to ascertain appropriateness of the site for anticipated further research.