

Welcome

This publication provides updates for colleagues and partners across UKHSA and the Overseas Territories.

If you have any queries, feedback or contributions please contact: UKOTs.Programme@ukhsa.gov.uk

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UKOTs Laboratory Strengthening

Gibraltar Strengthens Laboratory Standards

In recent years the Gibraltar laboratory has made great progress in developing quality standards. Medical laboratories play a critical role in the delivery of healthcare services and Gibraltar is working towards ISO 15189 Medical Laboratories accreditation which verifies adherence to international standards. In April, John Lee, UKOT Laboratory Technical and Quality Manager, visited the Gibraltar Pathology Laboratory to work with Mrs Natalie Soiza (Pathology Manager) and Mr Andrew Cavilla (Quality Manager) to undertake a gap analysis to ISO 15189. The success of this work provided a roadmap for Gibraltar's journey to accreditation.



Above: Andrew Cavilla (Quality Manager); John Lee; Tanya Watson (Lead Biomedical Scientist Clinical Microbiology); Natalie Soiza (Pathology Manager)

European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) Global Conference

John Lee presented at the ECCMID Conference in Barleona on the "Implementation of FilmArray Syndromic Testing in Small UK Overseas Territory Laboratories: Strengthening Clinical Outcomes, Biosecurity, and Response". This was a 4-day conference and is one of the largest and the foremost conferences in the field of infection, bringing together over 16,000 colleagues from all over the world. Feedback from the event is shared through established networks with UKOT laboratory colleagues on the latest developments in clinical microbiology.



DuCaPHeN Conference in Sint Maarten

RIVM (the national public health institute for the Netherlands) held its annual Dutch Caribbean Public Health Network (DuCaPHeN) conference in Sint Maarten in March 2024. The conference was attended by CMOs and other health leaders from the Dutch Overseas Countries and Territories, as well as various partners including representation from PAHO and Sunita Sturup-Toft (Consultant in Global Public Health) and Natalie Wright (Head of Programme) from the UKHSA UKOTs programme.

The conference programme touched on a range of topics from those under IHR, including dengue surveillance and vector-borne disease control, to non-communicable disease topics, including findings from STEPs surveys and the rollout of breast cancer screening programmes.

Overall, it was a fantastic opportunity to share learnings and best practice in the region and to continue to build our relationship with partner agencies in the Caribbean.

Well Bermuda Strategy Refresh

On May 6th – 10th Sarah Payne-Riches (Public Health Consultant) and Lara Kontos (Workforce Development Lead) travelled to Hamilton, Bermuda to support the Ministry of Health in the refresh of the Well Bermuda Strategy.

The Well Bermuda Strategy outlines the strategic vision for health improvement in Bermuda. It was first drafted in 2008 and has been implemented by cross-government working groups, underpinning a coordinated effort across a wide range of stakeholders. However, since the initial development the landscape for health improvement has changed due to COVID-19, a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was conducted in 2023 providing data on priority diseases and the Ministry of Health is in the process of implementing Universal Health Coverage – therefore needing to update the strategy to engage more strongly with the current health system and evidence-base.



The purpose of the trip was to conduct interviews with key stakeholders to understand the existing achievements and successes, to reorient the strategy based on recent priorities and to boost the engagement of stakeholders. The aim is to work in collaboration with the Bermuda Ministry of Health team to develop recommendations for the strategy refresh, drawing on data from interviews, to support the development of a refreshed and targeted strategy to provide a roadmap for greater coordination and cross-sectoral planning for a healthy Bermuda.

Gender in Preparedness and Response Toolkit (GENPAR) Workshop

In late- April, four members of the UK Overseas Territories Team, Natalie Wright, Sunita Sturup- Toft, Lara Kontos, and Natalia Rzeszotko, took part in the Gender in Preparedness and Response Toolkit (GENPAR) trainer workshop. The workshop was held across two days with representatives from all programme teams in the UKHSA Global Operations Division in attendance. Social demographer, World Bank Consultant, and lead developer of the toolkit, Rohini P. Pande, facilitated the training, adapting scenarios and practical exercises to the unique contexts of the countries supported by UKHSA Global Programmes.

The GENPAR toolkit was first published in 2022 with the aim to support countries in their integration of gender into preparedness and response. It provides benchmarks, resources, and guidance as to how to incorporate gender into select IHR capacities while moving across the levels of the IHR Gender Equality indicator. The toolkit is made up of a set of adaptable tools which are consistent with the IHR, JEE, and SPAR and provide states with the guidance to move from gaps to solutions, integrating gender as a key component in emergency response. GENPAR is made up of 9 modules which mirror the IHR along with additional chapters such as those on gender-based violence (GBV) and animal health. The modules are complementary. However, they are standalone in the sense that countries have the flexibility to work select which modules they would like to work through and focus on rather than completing the toolkit in its entirety.



Following on from the workshop, UKOTs Programme trainers plan to deliver internal gender- sensitization and GENPAR training while simultaneously supporting technical leads to incorporate aspects of gender into their areas of work. A GENPAR session will also be held at the CMO Conference in June in order to introduce the OTs to toolkit. This will also provide an opportunity to discuss a potential pilot of the GENPAR in OTs as well as to explore how the programme can best support UKOTs in integrating gender into emergency preparedness and response. This is a new and exciting area of work that the team are keen to develop alongside UKOTs leaders and colleagues.

Reflections: Trauma Informed Pilot Training Programme

The UKHSA UKOTs Programme recently commissioned One Small Thing to deliver trauma-informed training to prison staff in St Helena and Montserrat. The purpose of this training was for prison staff to develop an understanding of the dynamics and process of trauma, with a focus on their wellbeing and the development of skills to inform practice and system change. The training finished up in May and here is what training deliverer, Fionnuala Gordon (One Small Thing) and training participant, Ian Rummery (Psychiatric Nurse, St Helena) had to say about the experience!

“One Small Thing recently delivered a pilot training programme for prison staff working in Montserrat and St. Helena to support their senior leaders and officers to become more trauma-informed. The six-week programme offered an introduction to the concept of trauma with a specific focus on the challenges of working in a prison setting. The content included- understanding definitions of trauma, the effects and process of trauma, developing trauma-informed skills, the importance of recognising vicarious trauma and self-care. The aim was to inform practice so staff can become more trauma-aware and informed. We are collating the completed evaluation documents from the programme and will provide feedback in due course.”

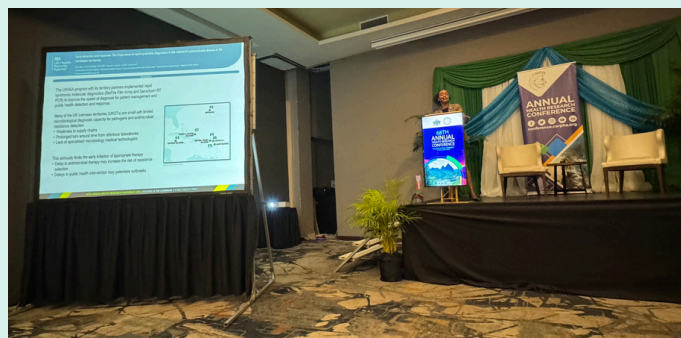
Fionnuala Gordon

“What was very positive about the trauma informed training was that the officers realised that much of the work they do with prisoners now is trauma informed. It is about building relationships, mutual respect and a genuine interest in the lives of those who are detained. Though boundaries have to be maintained the approach that is taken in HMP Jamestown fits the principles of safety, collaboration, trustworthiness, empowerment and choice. The training has not only validated the officer’s current way of caring for prisoners it has also challenged them to see where they can further improve and support other officers in the trauma informed approach.”

Ian Rummery

Media Spotlight

Dr Camille Blake presented at the CARPHA 68th Annual Health Research Conference in St Lucia, on the poster “Early detection and response: The importance of rapid syndromic diagnostics in the control of communicable disease in UK Caribbean territories” with contributions from M Dryden, J Lee, N Wright, M St Hill, T Skerritt, A Siebs, C Blake and A Andrewin.



Local media coverage of the mental health anti-stigma project in the Falklands. Sue Baker from Implemental has been helping the Falklands Public Health Unit deliver focus groups and promoting the project to generate interest and engagement with the project and the surveys that are being sent out.

