



EMBLEM Newsletter

A monthly means to inform and inspire our TEAM

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EMBLEM Study Manager Ben Emmanuel "432" in Chicago Marathon

"We Must Run While They Walk"

....Former Tanzania President Julius Nyerere, exhorting his people, more than 30 years ago, to run (work) hard to catch up with the West.

The analogy of a footrace that Nyerere used appeals even today, as African runners dominate the winners' circles of most international Marathon sporting events.

Is Africa running in other ways? Is it closing the infrastructure, knowledge, and research gap with the West? And is the West even walking by comparison? Has it become overconfident of victory at the finish line like the hare over the tortoise? Or is it still running, with no sign of slowing down?

The EMBLEM study does not have to answer these questions, because the analogy to a footrace with winners and losers is no longer applicable. Westerners now live and work based in Africa. Africans now live and work based in the West. Our image is the TEAM, "Together Everyone Achieves More". Mass communications and shared technology mean that we are running this race together, and that no country or person will run this race in vain.

Dr. Esther Kawira, editor

EMBLEM TANZANIA

Final preparations were made in the EMBLEM Bugando laboratory in Mwanza, including adding extra wall sockets. The freezer was turned on and proved to be working well, quickly cooling down to the required minus 80 degrees Celcius. Temperature monitoring was begun, including a twice daily manual reading, plus a continuous chart recorder. The working hood, microscope with mounted camera, and centrifuge also were tested and worked well. The QBC machine proved to be defective and the manufacturer is being consulted about possible replacement.

At the Shirati EMBLEM unit, locally built desks and a conference table were finished and installed in the offices. A refrigerator was purchased and installed in the laboratory. Further laboratory equipment is in the pipeline from the US and Germany. A Toyota Landcruiser has arrived at the port in Dar es Salaam, and is undergoing clearance.

EMBLEM UGANDA

EMBLEM continues to enroll cases of Burkitt's lymphoma at St. Mary's Hospital Lacor. The cumulative count now stands at 72 (49 males and 23 females). Some of the cases come from Kuluva Hospital in Arua. Last month 3 cases were sent from Kuluva but only one was eligible as the other 2 were not Burkitt's lymphoma.

On 5th February 2012 we received the EMBLEM team from Homabay, Kenya. The team was comprised of 4 laboratory technologists, 2 radiologists, 2 nursing officers and 1 pediatrician. The team was first received in Kampala where they were hosted and oriented at IDI Mulago by Samuel Kirimunda. The team then traveled to Gulu and underwent an intense training through presentations and hands on practice at St. Mary's Hospital Lacor. They were hosted and trained by the EMBLEM team in Uganda before the team traveled back on February 10th. They managed to get some time off to visit Sir Samuel Baker fort in Patiko, Gulu, a famous tourist site that tells the tales of Sir Samuel Baker fighting slave trade in Northern Uganda.

Samples were transferred from St. Mary's Hospital Lacor to Mulago Medical School from where they will then be taken to UVRI as soon as the freezer temperatures there are satisfactory. Samples transferred included 5 boxes each of plasma and saliva and 2 boxes each of buffy coat and red blood cells, making a total of 14 boxes transferred on February 9th. Samples were transferred in liquid nitrogen under the close supervision of Samuel Kirimunda.

Enrollment of controls has also resumed. Lalwal in Kitgum will be the first village this year, and if the season continues to be dry, Amolatar and Dokolo will follow.



Samples ready to go

EMBLEM KENYA

Of the total of 19 patients spotted so far, 4 were BL cases and 3 of those were eligible for enrollment. Five EMBLEM Kenya staff and the Tanzania team had a joint SOP training in Mwanza in late January. Ten EMBLEM Kenya Staff spent 2 days in Mulago and 4 days in Gulu, Uganda for mentorship and SOP training. One EMBLEM Kenya investigator is currently in France attending the IARC meeting.

Community mobilization is targeting health workers in the rural health facilities, being supervised by the Homabay District Hospital. Staff visited 13 facilities where 130 health workers were sensitized to the obvious signs and management of BL and were given an overview of EMBLEM study objectives. The facilitators were the EMBLEM investigators and Homabay District Hospital senior staff.

EMBLEM Newsletter is a monthly on-line publication based on contributions of the EMBLEM Study staff.

Editor: Dr. Esther Kawira, elkawira@gmail.com

Reporters:

EMBLEM Uganda – Hadija Nabelende

EMBLEM Kenya – Pam Akinyi Were

EMBLEM Tanzania – Josiah Magatti



Group Photo during the Launching Activity