

NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE CORE PROGRAMME

NOVEMBER 2023

VOL. 1

IN THIS ISSUE

Meet the Team - P2

Main Activities - P3

Community Mapping Pilot - P4



Aguas Claras' School, Ocaña: Visited during community mapping exercise in Colombia

THE CORE PROGRAMME

CORE (Community-Focused, Oral-Health Research for Equity) is a four-year research programme funded by the UK National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to address the neglect of oral diseases in four middle-income countries - Colombia, Kenya, India and Brazil.

The specific programme aims are:

i To develop and undertake a programme of research on oral diseases, their causes and prevention to inform the co-production and feasibility testing of public health interventions to reduce oral health inequalities and promote oral health, and to reform and strengthen oral health systems in each country.

ii To build and develop dental public health research capacity and collaborative networks amongst early career oral health researchers in each country through postgraduate training, short courses (both in person and online), and mentoring opportunities.

iii To establish and develop meaningful engagement with local communities in each country, particularly those from excluded and marginalised groups to better understand community and lived experiences of oral diseases and use of dental services, and the best ways ahead of promoting sustainable community engagement and involvement in oral health service delivery, policy and research.

iv To engage and advocate with key local stakeholders in each country, including policy makers, senior clinicians and leaders of health professional organisations, public health agencies and community organisations on the public health importance of oral diseases and the need for a sustainable oral health policy and research agenda focused on addressing population oral health needs and tackling oral health inequalities.



FUNDED BY

NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

This programme is funded by the NIHR Global Health Research Units and Groups Programme NIHR132731. The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR.

MEET THE TEAM



Left to right: Michelle Stennett, Dr Carol Guarnizo-Herreño, Prof. Abhishek Mehta, Dr Alastair Ross, Dr Mirai Chatterjee, On screen Prof. Paulo Goes, Prof. Richard Watt, Prof. Regina Mutave, Prof. David Conway, Chantelle Diagne, Louise Gregory, Prof. Manu Mathur.

Dr Carol Guarnizo-Herreño is a public health dentist and researcher at National University, Colombia. Richard Watt is a professor of dental public health at UCL. As co-leads Carol and Richard will share overall responsibility for planning and managing the research programme and will jointly lead the overall evaluation and monitoring of the research, training and community engagement activities. Carol will also lead the programme activities in Colombia.

Michelle Stennett (Clinical Research Fellow, UCL) will support the design and development of research activities. Chantelle Diagne (Programme Manager, UCL) will manage the programme planning and finances. Louise Gregory (Programme Coordinator, UCL) will coordinate the programme.

Research activities in India will be led by Abhishek Mehta, a professor and head of the Department of Public Health Dentistry at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Supporting the research in India is Manu Mathur a public health dentist and professor at Queen Mary University, London. CEI activities in India will be led by Mirai Chatterjee, the Director of the Social Security Unit at Self-Employed Women's Association, (SEWA). Mirai will also use her extensive experience to support the CEI activities in Brazil, Kenya and Colombia.

In Brazil, programme activities will be led and coordinated by Paulo Goes (Professor, Department of Preventive Dentistry at the Federal University of Pernambuco). In addition, Aluisio Barros a professor at Universidade Federal de Pelotas, Brazil and an expert in health equity will lead work package 1.1 (Mapping patterns of socioeconomic inequalities in oral health).

Programme activities in Kenya will be led by Professor Regina Mutave, the former Dean of the School of Dental Sciences, University of Nairobi.

Dr Alastair Ross (Staffordshire University) will support the development of the Theory of Change and supervise qualitative data collection and analysis. Professor David Conway (University of Glasgow) is jointly responsible with Prof. Mathur for data management, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Senior researchers from Radboud University (Prof. Stefan Listl), National Dental Research Institute Singapore (Prof.. Marco Peres), University of Melbourne (Dr Ankur Singh), The Australian National University (Prof. Sharon Friel), University of California San Francisco (Dr Cristin Kearns) and, Trinity College Dublin (Prof. Blánaid Daly) will support the research by providing expert input to the various work packages. They will also be involved in the training and capacity strengthening component by delivering short courses and participating in the mentorship programme.



MAIN ACTIVITIES

The programme will comprise of three distinct but interconnected work packages:

WP1 Oral health inequalities

WP2 Commercial determinants

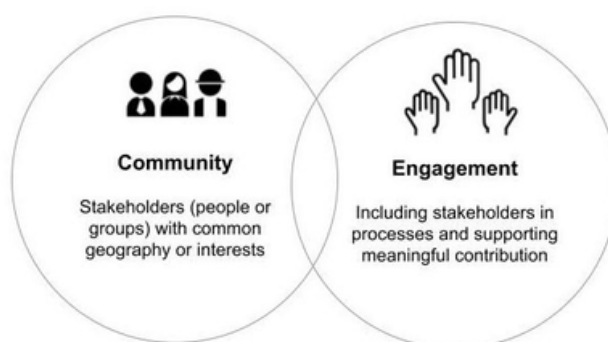
WP3 Oral health system reform & innovation

WP1: This work package aims to better understand the patterns and impacts of oral health inequalities in each country to inform the development of public health interventions to promote oral health equity.

WP2: This work package aims to uncover the strategies used by transnational food and drink, and tobacco corporations to promote their products and influence oral health policy in each country.

WP3: The work package aims to assess the barriers to accessing dental services amongst disadvantaged populations in each country and, to determine the economic burden of oral diseases on marginalised groups. Opportunities for future financing mechanisms for oral health care and the closer integration of oral health in broader health and development programmes will be identified and tested in exploratory field studies.

Community Engagement and Involvement (CEI) is a critically important component of this global oral health research programme. One of the key limitations with existing oral health interventions/policies is that they have been developed almost exclusively based on professional views with minimal or no input from a community perspective. As a consequence, they are often poorly aligned with community needs and priorities leading to ineffective and poorly sustained outcomes. In this research programme CEI will provide input to all aspects of the planned research. The process of community engagement, empowerment and co-production with community groups and civil society organisations will be central in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the planned research activities.



The training activities that will be developed in this programme are:

- Four MSc scholarships – Two in Dental Public Health at UCL and two in Public Health studentships at the University of Glasgow.
- Online short courses covering relevant topics
- Two one-week short courses delivered in each LMIC setting
- Online mentorship programme to provide guidance and support to early career researchers in each of the LMIC partner countries.
- One-day training events offered to community members who are interested in becoming more involved in research (linked to the CEI component)

A Responsive Research Fund will be established in each country to support local research studies linked to the overall aims and objectives of the research programme. Established and early career oral health researchers will be encouraged to apply for funding.



Primary Health Care Centre in Ahmedabad: Visited during the piloting of the community mapping tool

COMMUNITY MAPPING PILOT

To kick-start the CEI activities, we plan to conduct a detailed mapping exercise in each country to assess the nature of their local communities and existing engagement mechanisms and resources. A community mapping tool was developed to collect relevant data on the target communities. This tool will collect demographic data on the target communities and information on the groups and organisations within these communities. It will list their leaders, the dental services and health care available, educational institutions and government agencies in the community, and the research and public health programmes in operation.

To test the feasibility and acceptability of the tool our colleagues at Self-Employed Women's Association, (SEWA) conducted a three day community mapping exercise in August 2023 in three areas (rural, urban and tribal) in Gujarat, India. They met with community members, leaders, village administrators, dentists, staff at public health clinics and school teachers. They were also able to visit local pharmacies to see the oral health medication and ayurvedic products sold to the communities.



Poster from a village in Ahmedabad: Visited during the piloting of the community mapping tool

Subscribe Now

**Keep informed of CORE
progress by subscribing to our
quarterly newsletter**

**Email Chantelle below to be added to
the mailing list**

CONTACT US

Professor Richard Watt
Joint Programme Lead
Email: r.watt@ucl.ac.uk

Dr Carol Guarnizo-Herreño
Joint Programme Lead
Email: ccguarnizoh@unal.edu.co

Chantelle Diagne
Programme Manager
Email: c.diagne@ucl.ac.uk

Louise Gregory
Programme Coordinator
Email: louise.gregory@ucl.ac.uk

