







EMPOWERING GLOBAL EPILEPSY RESEARCH AND CARE TOGETHER

A WARM WELCOME TO THE CENTRE FOR GLOBAL EPILEPSY NEWSLETTER

We are truly delighted to share this inaugural edition of the Centre for Global Epilepsy newsletter. Since our launch in January 2025, we have been hard at work forging new collaborations, creating capacity-building opportunities and growing a network of professionals dedicated to improving epilepsy care in resource-limited settings.

A key focus over these first months has been shaping a strategy that reflects our ambition. Working alongside researchers, clinicians, people with lived experience and advocates from around the world, we've developed our mission and strategic priorities - anchoring our efforts in shared purpose and global reach.

Our mission: Empowering global epilepsy research and care together.

To achieve this, our work is guided by four strategic priorities:

- Capacity Building & Training: Strengthening skills and resources in resource-limited settings to improve epilepsy care and reduce stigma.
- Research & Innovation: Advancing context-specific solutions, from affordable diagnostics to community-led initiatives that address real-world needs.
- Knowledge Mobilisation & Policy Influencing: Turning evidence into action by informing decision-makers and strengthening epilepsy care systems worldwide.
- Global Collaboration & Engagement: Connecting researchers, clinicians, advocates and communities to share expertise and reduce the global burden of epilepsy.

"Thank you for being part of our growing community and for working with us to empower epilepsy research and care globally."

-Professor Arjune Sen

As we reflect on this exciting first chapter, we are deeply grateful to everyone who has been part of the journey so far. In the months ahead, we have a full calendar - workshops, symposia and new partnerships - plus the continued growth of the **Global Epilepsy**.

Researcher Directory. We invite you to explore it, become part of it, share it and help us connect many more voices to this global conversation. We cannot do this work alone. Please join us and do get in touch about potential ideas, plans and suggestions. We welcome transparent collaboration and are determined to make enduring positive change together.

Thank you for being part of our growing community and for working with us to empower epilepsy research and care globally.

Professor Arjune Sen, Chief Executive

Centre for Global Epilepsy, Wolfson College

IN THIS ISSUE...



Introducing
Our Strategic
Advisory
Board
Page 2



Join the Global Epilepsy Researcher Directory Page 3



Epilepsy Around the World: Zimbabwe Page 6



CENTRE FOR GLOBAL EPILEPSY NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2025







INTRODUCING OUR STRATEGIC ADVISORY BOARD

We have established the Centre for Global Epilepsy Strategic Advisory Board, a group of experienced leaders in epilepsy care, research and global health systems who will provide strategic guidance as the Centre grows. The Board will help shape our direction, identify new opportunities and ensure that our activities remain aligned with our mission.

We are pleased to welcome the following members to the Board, listed alphabetically:



MR ACTION AMOS

International Bureau for Epilepsy Action Amos is based in Malawi and is the International Bureau of Epilepsy (IBE) Vice President-Africa, which has 28 affiliates in Africa.



PROFFSSOR KEVIN MARSH

Africa Oxford Initiative, University of Oxford Kevin Marsh is Professor of Tropical Medicine and Director of the Africa Oxford (AfOx) Initiative at the University of Oxford.



DR ARCHANA PATFI

Boston Children's Hospital and University Teaching Hospital, Zambia

Archana Patel is a Child Neurologist and Paediatric Epileptologist, with a focus on improving access to care for children with neurological conditions.



PROFESSOR LEY SANDER

University College London (UCL)

Ley Sander is Professor of Neurology and Consultant Neurologist at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery.



MS EMILY MINER

Clinton Health Access Initiative Emily Miner is Associate Director at the Clinton Health Access Initiative with a focus on mental health

integration and health system strengthening.



MS MAXINE SMEATON

Founding Chief Executive Officer of the Epilepsy Research Institute

Maxine Smeaton has a background in leading and driving high-profile development and transformation programmes for some of the UK's largest charities.



DR GIFT NGWENDE

University of Zimbabwe

Dr Gift Ngwende has been a Physician and Neurologist since 2008 and is former Chairman of the Department of Medicine at the University of Zimbabwe.



PROFESSOR ROBYN NORTON

The George Institute for Global Health

Robyn Norton is co-founder of the George Institute, Professor of Public Health, University of New South Wales Sydney and Emeritus Professor of Global Health, Imperial College London.



PROFESSOR HELEN CROSS

International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)

Helen Cross is President of the ILAE, Director of the UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health and the Prince of Wales's Chair of Childhood Epilepsy.



MR TAURAI KADZVITI

Epilepsy Support Foundation

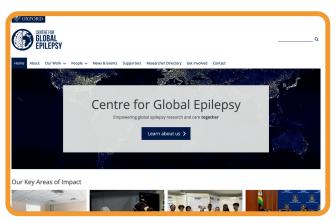
Taurai Kadzviti is Research and Advocacy Officer at the Epilepsy Support Foundation, Zimbabwe.







LAUNCHING THE CENTRE FOR GLOBAL EPILEPSY'S WEBSITE



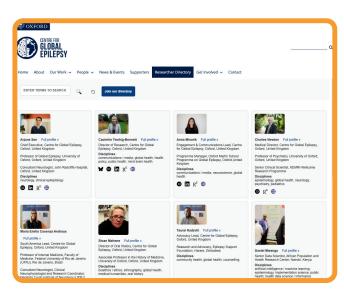
We are excited to share with you the launch of our brand-new website:

www.globalepilepsy.ox.ac.uk

The site offers a comprehensive introduction to the Centre for Global Epilepsy - who we are, the work we do and, importantly, how you can get involved in our mission. Visitors can explore our current research projects, view international partnerships and learn about the training opportunities we provide for clinicians, researchers and community health workers.

On the website you can also find recent news articles, details of upcoming events and ways to get involved in our work - whether through collaboration, attending our seminars or participating in our research. We hope the site becomes a valuable resource for anyone interested in global epilepsy research and care.

INTRODUCING THE GLOBAL EPILEPSY RESEARCHER DIRECTORY



An exciting new feature of our website is the Global Epilepsy Researcher Directory, accessible directly at globalepilepsy.ox.ac.uk/research-directory. This interactive, searchable platform has been created to connect researchers working in epilepsy across diverse global settings from early-career investigators and advocates to experienced experts.

The directory is a growing, living network designed for researchers to find collaborators, exchange expertise and learn from one another's work. By mapping the global epilepsy research landscape, we aim to make it simpler to identify shared priorities, spot gaps in knowledge, and avoid duplication of effort, particularly in resource-limited contexts.

Through the directory, we hope to:

- **Encourage collaboration** by linking researchers with complementary skills and interests
- Facilitate knowledge mobilisation and sharing of opportunities
- Reduce duplication of effort by making it easier to see who is working on what, and where

Whether you are actively engaged in epilepsy research or simply want to connect with others in the field, we encourage you to add your profile and explore the network. You can do this easily by scanning the QR code below or by visiting globalepilepsy.ox.ac.uk/research-directory. Together, we can strengthen global connections and empower global epilepsy research and care.



SCAN THE QR CODE
TO EXPLORE THE
DIRECTORY AND ADD
YOUR OWN PROFILE







RECENT ACTIVITIES: BUILDING MOMENTUM ACROSS THE NETWORK

DELIVERY OF THE SOLVING STIGMA IN EPILEPSY COURSE & ETAM COURSE IN ZIMBABWE | FEBRUARY 2025





In February 2025, working with the International League Against Epilepsy and supported by an AfOx Catalyst Grant, the Centre for Global Epilepsy helped to deliver a week of coordinated training in Harare, reaching 104 healthcare professionals. The Epilepsy Training in Adult Medicine (ETAM) course aims to equip healthcare professionals with essential knowledge and skills to improve adult epilepsy care. Two ETAM courses provided practical, case-based education in epilepsy diagnosis and management for clinicians working in resource-limited settings. A Train-the-Trainer programme equipped 17 Zimbabwean clinicians with skills in adult education and faciliation. Local faculty independently led and delivered the second ETAM course.

We also launched the first Solving Stigma in Epilepsy course, developed by Professor Sloan Mahone, which explored clinical, cultural and historical dimensions of stigma. These activities deepened collaborations with the University of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe League Against Epilepsy, the Epilepsy Support Foundation and the Centre for Global Epilepsy, laying strong foundations for future rural training and co-produced research.

CENTRE FOR GLOBAL EPILEPSY AT THE AFRICAN EPILEPSY CONGRESS IN ZAMBIA | MAY 2025

The Centre for Global Epilepsy had a strong presence at the 5th African Epilepsy Congress, held in Lusaka this May. Our team contributed to a range of high-impact sessions, including: a workshop on the use of data and Al in epilepsy research, Professor Sloan Mahone chairing a session on epilepsy-related stigma, Professor Charles Newton presenting findings from the Epilepsy Pathway Innovation in Africa (EPInA) project and Mr Sam Bailie sharing updates from the Oxford Martin Programme on Global Epilepsy. We hosted a stand showcasing our research, training and partnerships across the continent.







DIAGNOSTICS FOR LMICS CONFERENCE REUBEN COLLEGE | JULY 2025

The Centre for Global Epilepsy was proud to take part in this conference on global diagnostics across healthcare in LMICs. Speakers included experts from economics, engineering and big data and a keynote presentation on diagnostic innovation in epilepsy in low-resource settings.







INNOVATIONS IN EPILEPSY DIAGNOSIS KENYA-OXFORD TALKS | JULY 2025

As part of the University of Oxford's Harnessing Innovation in Global Health for Quality Care Exchange (HIGH-Q) Webinar Series, Symon Kariuki from the KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme in Kenya joined Arjune Sen to lead a discussion on collaborative research in epilepsy diagnosis in Kenya.







BUILDING CAPACITY: INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL EPILEPSY RESEARCH

This summer, the Centre for Global Epilepsy was delighted to host two internships and a Visiting Fellow. Investing in early career researchers in both the UK and internationally is a vital part of building much needed capacity in global epilepsy research and care.

RETHINKING EEG: INCLUSIVE TECH FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES VISITING FELLOW: FADZAI SARAVOYI, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Electroencephalograms (EEGs) are essential for diagnosing epilepsy, yet access remains limited in many regions. Portable EEGs could help close this gap, particularly in resource-limited settings, but their design must consider the cultural and physical diversity of patients worldwide. Most current systems have been developed for individuals with straight, short hair, resulting in poor signal quality for those with tightly curled, braided, or densely textured hair. This is a serious barrier in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, where up to 95% of people have tightly curled hair and the epilepsy treatment gap is greatest. Inaccurate readings or the need for burdensome measures - like straightening or shaving hair undermine patient comfort and diagnostic accuracy.



Overcoming this challenge is essential to creating truly inclusive, effective EEG solutions. Fadzai Saravoyi, a biomedical engineering master's candidate at the University of Cape Town, brings expertise in signal processing, hardware design and engineering principles. Generously supported by the Oxford Martin School, this Visiting Fellowship with the Centre for Global Epilepsy focuses on optimising portable EEG devices to work effectively across all hair types and styles. As part of this fellowship, Fadzai will contribute to enhancing the current Oxford EEG system by developing an impedance-checking feature to help ensure stable and reliable signal quality during testing.



ORAL HISTORY: INTERVIEWING THE INTERVIEWER UNIQ+ INTERN: JÚLIA NORMAN, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Júlia Norman is a history graduate from the University of Edinburgh undertaking a UNIQ+ Research Internship with the Centre for Global Epilepsy. As part of this project, which is supervised by Professor Sloan Mahone, Júlia is conducting interviews with several contributors to the Oral History and Epilepsy Project. These conversations focus primarily on the interviewees' experiences with oral history and its potential impact on healthcare. Júlia has a strong interest in women's history, so questions also explore gendered perspectives of people living with epilepsy. The interviews have provided valuable insights into the therapeutic value of oral history, including the ways masculinity and health intersect.

WIKI WITHOUT STIGMA: REFRAMING EPILEPSY UNIQ+ INTERN: WILLIAM PARMAN, UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

William is a final year English student at the University of Exeter who has been completing a UNIQ+ Research Internship with the Centre for Global Epilepsy. William's project, which is also supervised by Professor Sloan Mahone, examines how Wikipedia contributes to the global stigma surrounding epilepsy, with a particular focus on low- and middle-income countries. Core epilepsy pages exist on Wikipedia in up to 124 languages, each with unique content rather than direct translations from a single, authoritative source. Many pages are outdated and use stigmatising language such as "epileptic," alongside insensitive, early twentieth-century photographs. The aim of this project is to develop a toolkit to improve Wikipedia's epilepsy content, ensuring it is respectful, accurate and inclusive. This toolkit could then support global edit-a-thons to drive meaningful change and help combat stigma worldwide.







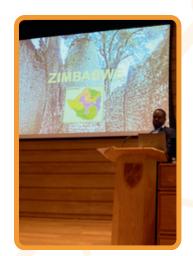


EPILEPSY AROUND THE WORLD: TAURAI KADZVITI, ZIMBABWE

TAURAI KADZVITI IS A RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY OFFICER WITH THE EPILEPSY SUPPORT FOUNDATION ZIMBABWE. TAURAI HAS BEEN A LONGSTANDING COLLABORATOR WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD AND WAS RECENTLY APPOINTED TO THE CENTRE FOR GLOBAL EPILEPSY'S STRATEGIC ADVISORY BOARD.

I'm Taurai Kadzviti and I am from Zimbabwe. I'm a member of the Zimbabwe League Against Epilepsy and work at the Epilepsy Support Foundation Zimbabwe as a Research and Advocacy Officer. I also have epilepsy. This dual perspective, as both a professional and a person with lived experience, gives me a unique insight into the challenges people with epilepsy face every day in my country.

One of the biggest challenges we see at the Epilepsy Support Foundation Zimbabwe, is that people often turn to traditional or faith healers before seeking medical care. By the time they do see a doctor, they may already be dealing with secondary or more extreme health issues. It's clear that raising awareness and providing accurate information is crucial – but there's another problem: we just don't have enough reliable data. Different sources give wildly different numbers. Some say only 1% of people in Zimbabwe have epilepsy, others 2%, whilst our estimates even go up to 10%. On top of that, many primary healthcare workers struggle to classify different types of epilepsy, which makes diagnosis and treatment even harder.









I've experienced this firsthand. I was misdiagnosed and even placed in a psychiatric ward - not because the medical staff didn't care, but because they lacked specialist knowledge of epilepsy. Sadly, people with epilepsy are rarely involved in the decisions that affect us, even though our insights could make a real difference.

It has been an honour to bring my personal and professional experiences with epilepsy into research with the University of Oxford. I have contributed as part of the Zimbabwe team for the Oxford Martin School on Global Epilepsy, providing on the ground support and coordination. In January, I had the privilege of speaking about my work and experiences at the launch of the Centre for Global Epilepsy in Oxford and was recently appointed to the Centre's Strategic Advisory Board.

What I hope to see is a future where people with epilepsy, their carers and healthcare professionals work together. Whether it's a nurse or a doctor, a primary healthcare worker, an advocate, a person with epilepsy or their family - collaboration is key. After all, I am the storyteller of my own journey. Meaningful involvement and engagement can help tackle misconceptions, improve care and ensure that people with epilepsy are truly heard.







UPCOMING EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL EPILEPSY CONGRESS: 30th August-3rd September , Lisbon, Portugal

This major biennial event will bring together over 4,000 epilepsy professionals from across the globe to discuss the latest research and advance the field of epileptology. The Centre for Global Epilepsy has a stand at Table 18 in 'Association Avenue' in the Exhibition Hall. Please visit us there! We are proud to be co-hosting a reception with Partners Against Mortality in Epilepsy (PAME) during the conference.





DPHIL STUDENTSHIP: EPILEPSY IN RWANDA

The first DPhil (PhD) studentship affiliated with the Centre for Global Epilepsy will begin in Oxford 2025. We are delighted to welcome Gloria Charite, Rwanda's first female Rhodes Scholar, to the University of Oxford. LMICs often have limited access to diagnostic facilities, meaning that specific types of epileptic seizures are poorly understood. Epilepsy can associate with multiple comorbidities, including cognitive difficulties. The relationships between cognitive impairments and age at epilepsy onset, seizure type and frequency are, though, unclear. Additionally, there are higher incidences of seizures in people living in war zones, disaster-prone regions and settings replete with forced displacement. But how exposure to such psycho-traumagenic events increase epilepsy vulnerability remains underexplored. The goal of the DPhil project is to address these research gaps.

ILAE BRITISH BRANCH CONFERENCE: 15th - 17th September, Bournemouth, UK

We are delighted to be attending the annual ILAE British Branch Annual Scientific Conference from 15–17 September. This meeting brings together healthcare professionals with an interest in epilepsy from across the UK and Ireland. The Centre for Global Epilepsy will have a stand in the main exhibition area. Come say hello and learn more about our work and ways to get involved. Arjune will also be speaking about the Centre at 12.10pm on Day 1 of the conference.



WEBINAR SERIES LAUNCH

We are preparing to launch a new webinar series dedicated to exploring key topics in global epilepsy. This series will bring together leading clinicians, researchers, advocates and people with lived experience to share insights and discuss challenges in epilepsy research and care worldwide.



CONTINUED TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

Following the success of our recent Solving Stigma in Epilepsy course, we are currently planning additional training in rural Zimbabwe in collaboration with our local partners.







CENTRE FOR GLOBAL EPILEPSY NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2025

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

JOIN THE GLOBAL EPILEPSY RESEARCHER DIRECTORY



SCAN THE QR CODE
TO EXPLORE THE
DIRECTORY AND ADD
YOUR OWN PROFILE

The Global Epilepsy Researcher Directory is now live. This searchable online network links researchers across the globe to share expertise, spark collaborations and avoid duplication - especially in resource limited settings.

Add your profile and explore the directory by scanning the QR code or visiting: globalepilepsy.ox.ac.uk/research-directory

VISITING SCHOLARS PROGRAMME

Our Visiting Scholars Programme brings clinicians and researchers from resource-limited settings to Oxford for six to eight weeks of training, collaboration and hands-on experience in global epilepsy research and care. Scholars gain skills, build networks, share their insights through public lectures and return home equipped with additional skills to create lasting impact in their own countries. Applications are currently closed, but please contact us if you're interested discussing future opportunities at globalepilepsy@wolfson.ox.ac.uk.





MAKE A GIFT TO THE CENTRE FOR GLOBAL EPILEPSY

If you are interested in supporting the Centre for Global Epilepsy, your gift will help drive capacity building initiatives, fund Visiting Scholars from resource-limited settings and develop culturally contextualised diagnostic tools. Through such work, your gift will improve the diagnosis, treatment and outcomes for people living with epilepsy in under-privileged settings. You can make a gift to the Centre for Global Epilepsy here.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- 1. Classification of the Epilepsies: Evolving with Time, Science, and Knowledge. Practical Neurology. Sen, A., & Zuberi, S. M. (February 2025).
- 2. **Epilepsy in Low- to Middle-Income Countries**. Current Opinion in Neurology. Sen, A., Newton, C. R., & Ngwende, G. (February 2025).
- 3. Prioritising questions and topics for the development of guidelines and consensus-based recommendations supported by ILAE: A scoping review and proposal of prioritization criteria. Epilepsia. Lin, K., Eyal, S., Demarchi, I. G., Ben-Shushan, T., Auvin, S., Khoo, C. S., Al-Baradie, R., Sen, A., et al. (May 2025).
- 4. Disentangling Epilepsy and Dementia: More to do, together. Brain. Sen, A. (July 2025).

STAY CONNECTED







Follow us on LinkedIn



Join our <u>Researcher</u> <u>Directory</u>



Follow us on BlueSky