

VACANCY	
Job title:	Research Assistant x 2
Type:	12-month fixed term (renewable)
Main purpose of the job:	Clinical Study Site Coordination and Patient Enrolment: Overseeing the day-to-day aspects of field operations and processes to ensure that the outputs are delivered on time with the desired outcomes. Duties will include participant recruitment and enrolment, clinical research procedures (clinical examination, ultrasound, biomarker collection), data capturing and QC, participant follow-up
Location:	Themba Hospital, Kabokweni (near White River), Mpumalanga
Closing date:	26 August 2024
Submit a detailed CV to:	Weekend.Khoza@wits.ac.za /vacancies32@witshealth.co.za
Advert reference number:	Agin_001_RA
In accordance with our Employment Equity goals and plan, preference will be given to suitable applicants from designated groups as defined in the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 and subsequent amendments thereto.	

The **MRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit (Agincourt)** is an exceptional health and population research centre in the Wits School of Public Health. The Unit supports a major research infrastructure underpinned by a health and socio-demographic surveillance system (HDSS), a form of longitudinal population registration, covering a substantial portion of the Bushbuckridge sub-district of rural Mpumalanga Province adjacent to Mozambique that has been in operation since 1992 coupled with observational and interventional studies along the life course.

The Wits-Agincourt Unit will participate in an EDCTP-funded project addressing the management of **Paediatric Pneumonia** (a significant contributor to under 5 mortality) and **Antimicrobial Resistance**. This is a multi-PI, **Pan-African-EU consortium**, anchored by the Wits-Agincourt Unit. The project will deploy cutting-edge technology (mobile phone/tablet-based Ultrasound devices) in low resource settings (in South Africa, Tanzania, and Senegal) to bridge gaps in access to **medical diagnostics**. It will also address skills gaps through development of **AI tools** for ultrasound interpretation as well as clinical decision making. The project will establish a Randomised Controlled Trial, followed by an Implementation Research Project, as well as concurrently run an Economic Evaluation of the Intervention.

The project will be undertaken by a diverse consortium, including Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (**MUHAS**), Ifakara Health Institute (**IHI**), University of Dakar (**UCAD**), African Institute of Mathematical Science (**AIMS**), University of Stellenbosch (**SUN**), Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (**SwisSTPH**), University of Bern (**UBern**), University of Rotterdam, **EPFL**, and **Yale** University. The successful candidate will join a talented and hardworking team addressing some of the country and region's most pressing health and development challenges. We offer an **intellectually rich working environment** with excellent opportunities for academic and professional growth.

This position will suit an individual with insight into the above-mentioned research fields, good report writing skills, good interpersonal communication skills and sound managerial experience.

The appointed individual will be based at one of the RCT sites, either Tintswalo Hospital or Themba Hospital (Ehlanzeni District), Mpumalanga. Reporting will be to the Wits-PI/Project Coordinator.

Key performance areas:

Clinical skills

- Undertake rigorous, project-specific training on point-of-care Lung Ultrasound acquisition and interpretation, as well as specimen retrieval and storage.
- Properly undertake Lung Ultrasound acquisition, interpretation, and specimen collection (blood, nasopharyngeal swab, dried blood spot) using specific study protocols.
- Liaise with senior team members and a panel of experts for clinical support to maintain a high quality of data collection and image interpretation.
- Assist in capturing medical data from participant folders and assist in the translation of hospital records into reliable study data.
- Coordinate with the laboratory team with regard to on-site specimen storage and shipment to the Wits-Agincourt Lab for processing.
- Support team members in communicating procedures and research findings to treating clinicians (where indicated), patients, and potentially community members.
- Convene and moderate a panel of experts to determine likely diagnoses of participants based on collected data (e.g., clinical findings, radiography, ultrasound, biomarkers etc)
- Liaise with relevant local health authorities, including the local hospital and Department of Health staff.

Project Site Management & Administration

- Supervise a field team with varying skills, including planning daily activities to meet recruitment and follow-up targets.
- Assist with on-site data quality monitoring – running regular checks for consent forms, missing/unexpected data, and working with the Data Manager to identify and resolve any problems that arise.
- Maintain site documentation in keeping with good clinical practice (GCP).
- Write and update working instructions and ensure compliance.
- Schedule and lead regular project meetings.
- Draft, review and assist with submitting ethics applications and other relevant study documents.
- Support ongoing work with the MRC/Wits-Agincourt Unit by responding to all reasonable requests made by Unit scientists, including organising meetings, responding to queries, and participating in day-to-day activities within a world-renowned research unit.

Communication

- Update the study investigators and Agincourt field managers on the study progress – including regular written reports.
- Meet regularly with Unit scientific staff.

Scientific output

- Collate project statistics regularly.
- Present project progress at weekly study meetings.
- Participate, and where applicable, lead the production of manuscripts emanating from the research.

Desirable additional education, work experience, and personal abilities



- Degree in clinical sciences (preferably BCMP) is required, though other clinically relevant degrees with proven clinical experience will be considered.
 - Clinical and/or research management proficiency, with at least 2 years of experience strongly recommended.
 - Computer skills with knowledge of MS Office suite of programs
 - Exceptional interpersonal and leadership skills
 - Ability to work with and manage a diverse team.
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- Excellent report-writing skills
 - Effective time management skills and ability to work independently and under pressure.
 - Driver's license with experience driving (owning a car, preferable).
 - Willingness to relocate to the Mpumalanga area is **essential**.

Required minimum work experience

Minimum 2 years clinical experience

Some demonstrated managerial experience

Demands of the job

Will be required to be onsite at the clinical field site everyday (no remote work possible)

Ability to work in a high-pressured environment with overlapping priorities.

Must be able to handle stress with tact and empathy.

Will be required to be available outside of traditional working hours to provide support for the project if needed.

To Apply:

Should you be interested in applying for this vacancy, please send an email to:

Weekend.Khoza@wits.ac.za/vacancies32@witshealth.co.za

The subject heading of the email must read **Agin_001_RA** and the job title of the position applying for.

Please include the following documentation:

- A cover letter (maximum one page) that clearly states which vacancy you are applying for and includes:
 - Scholarly achievements in related field.
 - Experience in building key partnerships and maintaining positive relationships to achieve successful outcomes.
 - Prior clinical and research experience.
 - Previous experience in leadership and management abilities.
- A detailed CV
- Certified qualifications and transcript
- Certified ID copy and driver's license

Short-listed applicants must be willing to undergo a competency exercise as well as interview as part of the selection process.