



Moments of great joy as National Blood Service Zimbabwe (NBSZ) joined in celebrating the double success of employee, T-REC PhD Student, Tonderai Mapako who had his article accepted for publication in one of the highest rated international blood transfusion journal TRANSFUSION. The article on ***“Human immunodeficiency virus prevalence, incidence, and residual transmission risk in first-time and repeat blood donations in Zimbabwe: implications on blood safety”*** was submitted for publication on 7th of January 2013 and revisions were submitted on 8th of May 2013. The good news on the acceptance of the paper for publication was received on the 13th of May 2013 and the article has since been published online on 23rd of June 2013 and the abstract can be accessed through the <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/trf.12311/abstract>.

According to Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine UK, T-REC Scientific Coordinator, Prof. Imelda Bates on her visit to NBSZ in June 2013, indicated that Tonderai is the **FIRST** among the 4 PhD students under the T-REC programme to attain this level of achievement. Tonderai is registered with the University of Groningen, Netherlands which is a beneficiary of the EU funded Transfusion Research Capacity (T-REC) Project. The PhD programme requires students to publish at least four publications in the relevant peer-reviewed international journals. Tonderai’s publication is the first from the four that are required.

The Transfusion Research Capacity (T-REC) Project is a brainchild of a workshop held in Mombasa Kenya in 2008, where transfusion service stakeholders from Africa identified and prioritized the research needed to generate evidence that was specific for the needs of Africa's transfusion services. Zimbabwe and Ghana are the two countries nominated in Africa to benefit from the European Union research grant which is to the tune of Euros **1,698,368** (4 years). The T-REC is also supporting PhD students, Diploma in Project Design and Management (DPDM) students and offering bursaries to undergraduate and master's students undertaking blood transfusion related research projects.

The T-REC project was launched in Zimbabwe in October 2011 by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health & Child Care; Brigadier General (Dr) Gerald Gwinji. In his speech, Brigadier General (Dr.) Gerald Gwinji highly commended this project and thanked the EU and Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine for the research grant.

“The area of blood transfusion is a hugely important issue for all health services as life is in the blood, meaning we have to get it right. The only way to get it right is through continuous research in order to obtain evidence for policy making and policy changes. We have relied on research done by Western countries in developing policies on blood transfusion in Africa. It is true that not all these policies are appropriate for our countries or current socio-health status of our people” he said.

The Dutch are a society that is known to take pride in their traditional etiquette. Publication successes are celebrated through what is called a “Cake Ceremony” to honour such great achievements. Dr Marinus Van Hulst Tonderai's daily PhD supervisor encouraged him to celebrate this success in this Dutch fashion. To honour this great Dutch tradition, on the 19th of September 2013, T-REC Management team in Zimbabwe in collaboration with the PhD student and NBSZ Executive Management hosted a Publication Cake Ceremony in honour of Mr Mapako's great achievement.



Jubilee and celebration as the NBSZ family was overjoyed with this great level of success, which is not only important to the student, the Nation of Zimbabwe but also to the entire international scientific community. Tonderai's publication comes after more than ten years without a major publication in international journals by NBSZ staff. Thus, the T-REC programme has managed to revive and elevate the research and scientific position of NBSZ and Zimbabwe. In Africa, Zimbabwe is well known for having one of the highest level of literacy rates which is something that the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Commander In-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces; His Excellency President Robert Mugabe a learned man himself, takes pride of and encourages all Zimbabweans to invest in a good education.

In his speech on behalf of the CEO, Mr David Mvere, NBSZ Finance and Administration Manager; Mr Zamile Musekiwa, congratulated Tonderai for making NBSZ proud and encouraged him to maintain this high level of achievement.

Tonderai thanked the entire NBSZ staff and also expressed his heartfelt gratitude to his supervisors, NBSZ CEO; Mr. David A. Mvere, NBSZ Medical Director; Dr McLeod E. Chitiyo, Professor Simbarashe Rusakaniko, Professor Maarten J. Postma (Netherlands) and Dr Marinus van Hulst. Not to be left out are the entire T-REC consortium (LSTM, Ghana BTS, NBSZ, AfSBT, Gronigen University and Copenhagen university in Denmark) lead by Prof. Imelda Bates from Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK for their continued support. The international partners cannot go without mention such as ISBT who provided funding for Tonderai to attend the 2012 ISBT international Congress in Cancun, Mexico where the preliminary work on this research was presented.

For more information on the T-REC Project, please visit the website on www.t-rec.eu

For your questions and answers, please write or contact; Esther Massundah; Public Affairs Manager on 251851, 251854 / 251855-6, 0772162279, 0772162280, 0772162281, 0772162282, 0772162283, 0772162284, 0772162285 or email emassundah@bloodbank.co.zw emassundah@gmail.com