

Voices for Diagnosis – annual community prize

The Voices for Diagnosis annual community prize was launched by FIND in 2018, to recognize individuals and organizations that implement innovative approaches to improve access to and create demand for timely, cost-effective diagnostic solutions for infectious diseases in low- and middle-income countries.

Patient groups, and health and rights advocacy organizations have a key role to play in promoting diagnostic access. The Voices for Diagnosis prize celebrates and broadens the impact of community initiatives with a view to encouraging best-practice sharing and sparking creative new ideas.

The prize is adjudicated and supported by the **Dx Ambassadors**, an informal network of thought leaders from diverse disciplines who help champion the important role played by diagnostics in global health.

DX AMBASSADORS

Renuka Gadde (Co-ordinating Ambassador), Vice-President, Global Health, Becton Dickinson

Seth Berkley, CEO, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

Daniel Berman, Longitude Prize, Challenge Prize Centre, Nesta

Patricia García, Professor at the School of Public Health at Cayetano Heredia University (UPCH), Peru and former Minister of Health of Peru

Roy Head, CEO, Development Media International

Carol Nawina Nyirenda, Executive Director, CITAMPlus

John Nkengasong, Director of the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

Rosanna Peeling, Professor and Chair of Diagnostics Research and Director of the International Diagnostics Centre (IDC) at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Joseph Tucker, Co-Founder and Chair of the Advisory Committee of SESH (Social Entrepreneurship to Spur Health)

THEME: Get rational: protecting antibiotics by promoting approaches that support evidence-based prescribing

WINNERS



 @nandita_venky
@rhea_lobo

***Bolo Didi (Say Sister)* – led by Nandita Venkatesan and Rhea Lobo, India**

Bolo Didi (Say Sister) is a fledgling sisterhood of women TB survivors who use ubiquitous channels such as social media, WhatsApp and telephone calls to connect, mentor and support people affected by TB in India. The first-hand TB experiences of its *didis* (sisters) inform the support they offer, helping people to receive an accurate diagnosis, adhere to treatment despite the side effects, and fight stigma. Efforts include counselling people throughout the TB testing process (providing information on topics such as what is being tested, what is involved, and how long results will take); recommending specific centres for timely, accurate diagnosis; advocating for use of quality tests that can also detect drug resistance; and offering patient support for ongoing treatment monitoring.

Bolo Didi's founders, Nandita Venkatesan and Rhea Lobo, are prominent TB survivors-turned-advocates who are frequently featured in the Indian media, prompting people affected by TB to reach out to the *didis* via social media channels including Facebook and Twitter, as well as email. Frequently asked questions range from how to find a good doctor, to a break down of what diagnostic tests are required. The *didis* make themselves available on WhatsApp and also offer guidance on the phone when necessary. Future plans include the expansion of services into multiple Indian regional languages.

More information on *Bolo Didi* is available at www.facebook.com/bolodidiTB.



 @hcsmsa

#hcsmsA (healthcare social media South Africa) – led by Vanessa Carter, South Africa

#hcsms – the global hashtag and acronym for healthcare communications and social media represents the ethical, technical and effective use of social media for medicine. The South Africa chapter, #hcsmsA, was established by Vanessa Carter in 2013, following a decade of surgeries and a long battle with drug-resistant MRSA that inspired her to become a patient advocate for antibiotic resistance as well as facial differences. #hcsmsA reflects her belief that the internet has a pivotal role to play in patient empowerment, and that e-Patients should be engaged, educated and empowered to make the best use of available digital technologies.

Online advocacy via #hcsmsA highlights the need for diagnostics ahead of any antibiotic prescription, as well as contributing to patient education by inspiring people to seek out diagnostics sooner, and to be responsible antibiotic users. Internet best practices are also encouraged, such as correct use of hashtags (e.g. #AntibioticResistance) – to help structure online information for optimized searching and to enable data collection for robust analytics.

Alongside convening and moderating a monthly Twitter chat – with transcripts recorded and sent to authorities via Twitter – #hcsmsA has also developed the first CPD Accredited Course in South Africa to teach medical stakeholders, including doctors, nurses, patients, government officials, non-profit organizations and researchers, about e-Patients. Further training on using the web and social media appropriately is now being developed.

More information is available at www.hcsmsa.org (#hcsmsA Twitter chats), www.healthcaresocialmedia.co.za (teaching courses), and www.vanessacarter.co.za (Vanessa's personal advocacy website).



 @Mak_medics

MUMSA (Makerere University Medical Students Association) – led by David Mpaju, Uganda

MUMSA is a student-led network, headed by David Mpaju – an undergraduate medical student at Makerere University. Alarmed by results of a community survey that indicated many people were buying antibiotics over the counter without a prescription or diagnostic test, and that only a handful knew about antibiotics and the danger of their misuse, MUMSA is initiating a project to improve knowledge of antimicrobial resistance among secondary school students in Kampala, Uganda.

While challenges have been observed in health promotion in primary schools, MUMSA believes that secondary school students are at the right age to grasp the concept of antimicrobial resistance, and can pass on that knowledge to the community. They have designed a cohort study in which secondary school students in Kampala will be followed up for 3 years, to determine the increase in their awareness and knowledge about antimicrobial resistance resulting from awareness-raising interventions, such as presentations, outdoor health policy activities (e.g. handwashing activities), projects to write poems and essays, quizzes, debates and plays. The project will serve as a guide for establishing effective approaches that can promote education on antimicrobial resistance and the importance of getting a correct diagnosis before commencing antibiotic treatment. The eventual aim is to bring about behaviour change concerning antibiotic use, sanitation and health-seeking behaviour for infections, not only among the students but also among the wider community. This initiative has also been awarded in the 2018 innovate4AMR competition.

2018/19 prize fund (US\$30,000) donated by
FIND, BD (Becton, Dickinson & Company), and Johnson & Johnson