

FIND ANNOUNCES VOICES FOR DIAGNOSIS COMMUNITY PRIZE WINNERS

- **Bolo Didi (Speak Sister), #hcsmsa (healthcare social media South Africa) and MUMSA (Makerere University Medical Students Association) will each receive US\$10,000 to advance their work in support of diagnostic access to address antimicrobial resistance**
- **Voices for Diagnosis prizes will be awarded at an event on the sidelines of the 72nd World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland**

Geneva, Switzerland – 21 May 2019 – The Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) announced today that the 2018/19 Voices for Diagnosis community prize winners are Bolo Didi (Speak Sister), #hcsmsa (healthcare social media South Africa) and MUMSA (Makerere University Medical Students Association). Each winner will each receive US\$10,000 to advance their work in support of diagnostic access within their communities.

Voices for Diagnosis was established in 2018 by FIND, 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. Prizes are adjudicated and supported by the Diagnostics Ambassadors, an informal network of thought leaders from diverse disciplines who help champion the important role played by diagnostics in global health.

For 2018/19, the theme was: *Get rational: protecting antibiotics by promoting approaches that support evidence-based prescribing*. The US\$30,000 total prize fund has been contributed by FIND; [BD, Inc](#); and [Johnson & Johnson](#).

The three winning initiatives have all taken innovative approaches to decrease the inappropriate prescription of antibiotics through better use of diagnostics:

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

Bolo Didi (Speak 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 (healthcare social media South Africa) – led by Vanessa Carter, South Africa

#hcsms – the global Twitter hashtag for “healthcare social media” – uses social media and the web ethically and effectively to promote healthy living. 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).

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.

Information on the 2019/20 Voices for Diagnosis prize will be available soon at www.finddx.org/voices.

The 2018/19 Voices for Diagnosis prize fund was donated by FIND (awarded to Bolo Didi), BD (awarded to #hcsmsA) and Johnson & Johnson (awarded to MUMSA).

About FIND

FIND is a global non-profit organization that drives innovation in the development and delivery of diagnostics to combat major diseases affecting the world's poorest populations. Our work bridges R&D to access, overcoming scientific barriers to technology development; generating evidence for regulators and policy-makers; addressing market failures; and enabling accelerated uptake and access to diagnostics in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Since 2003, we have been instrumental in the development of 24 new diagnostic tools. Over 50 million FIND-supported products have been provided to 150 LMICs since the start of 2015. A WHO Collaborating Centre, we work with more than 200 academic, industry, governmental, and civil society partners worldwide, on over 70 active projects that cross six priority disease areas. FIND is committed to a future in which diagnostics underpin treatment decisions and provide the foundation for disease surveillance, control and prevention. For more information, please visit www.finddx.org

About the Diagnostics Ambassadors

The Diagnostics Ambassadors (Dx Ambassadors) are an informal network of high-profile thought leaders from diverse disciplines, who help champion the important role played by diagnostics in global health. Expertise of the Dx Ambassadors is central to FIND's ongoing efforts to demonstrate the value of diagnostics. The Dx Ambassadors network is co-ordinated by Renuka Gadde (Vice President, Global Health, BD), supported by Sarah-Jane Loveday (Head of Communications, FIND). Members are agreed by FIND's Board of Directors. For more information, please visit www.finddx.org/dx-ambassadors

Media contact

Sarah-Jane Loveday, Head of Communications

T: +41 (0) 22 710 27 88

M: +41 (0) 79 431 62 44

media@finddx.org

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