

## Events and Meetings

# The Pan African Society of Cardiology and its commitment to clinical research training

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African cardiologists first conceived the idea of forming a Pan African Society of Cardiology (PASCAR) in the 1970s, as the focus of the World Congress of Cardiology was solely on Europe and North America. In 1979, the president of the Nigerian Cardiac Society, Prof. Ayodele Falase, created the Pan African Congress of Cardiology, which later became PASCAR. The first PASCAR conference was held in Badagry, Nigeria, in 1981. Over 120 delegates from 15 different countries participated in the conference. International collaboration on this scale meant that doctors and scientists could exchange ideas, and discuss their successes, challenges, and discoveries. To date, PASCAR's influence on the continent has continued to grow, and PASCAR is now Africa's foremost umbrella organization for national professional societies in cardiovascular medicine and surgery.

Pan African Society of Cardiology is committed to the four primary objectives (i) to promote the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases, (ii) to promote the education and training of medical and paramedical personnel in cardiology, (iii) to educate the public on cardiovascular health problems, (iv) to form the PASCAR Foundation to encourage, fund, and coordinate continental research activities. Task Force Groups are responsible for developing and defining political, scientific, and research policy for the society in specific areas.

At the 15th PASCAR Congress in association with the Kenya Cardiac Society held from 22 to 25 November 2021 in Mombasa, Kenya, the PASCAR Governing Council took the strategic decision to form the PASCAR Task Force Clinical Research Training and appointed two strong clinician scientists chair persons: Prof. Friedrich Thienemann from the University of Cape Town, South Africa and University of Zurich, Switzerland; and Prof. Mahmoud Sani from the Bayero University Kano, Nigeria—both with extensive cohort study and clinical trial experience across Africa. This strategic

decision was made to support the clinical research activities across the African continent with a special focus on areas where knowledge on clinical research methods is scarce and clinical and epidemiological research data are often lacking. The goal of this programme is to convey information and skills necessary to successfully conduct clinical research such as cohort studies and clinical trials in the Africa context with a special focus on low-resourced settings. The programme provides training to develop profound knowledge on the aspects of formulating clinical research questions, study design, good clinical practise, and key ethical aspects of conducting research involving human participants, teaches the regulatory and legal requirements of performing clinical studies, data collection, statistical considerations including sample size calculation and finally thoroughly insides into the planning and performance competences of conducting clinical trials.

The first training took place during the Pre-Congress Workshop at the 15th PASCAR Congress in Mombasa (*Figure 1*). The clinical research training course on 'Research in Africa—What you need to know' facilitated by Prof. Friedrich Thienemann and Prof. Anastase Dzudie with speakers from South Africa (Dr Sandra Mukasa, Prof. Karen Sliwa, Mrs Antoneta Mashinyira), Switzerland/South Africa (Prof. Friedrich Thienemann), Cameroon (Prof. Anastase Dzudie), Democratic Republic of Congo (Dr Patrick Katoto) and USA (Dr Lori Dodd) was attended by 77 junior doctors from more than 10 African countries. During this Pre-Congress Workshop Prof. Friedrich Thienemann introduced the Pan African Pulmonary Hypertension Cohort Study (PAPUCO) II, the second phase of the successful PAPUCO study (2011–15) led by Prof. Karen Sliwa and Prof. Friedrich Thienemann (*Figure 2*)<sup>1,2</sup>. The focus of PAPUCO II will be on the interaction of infectious diseases (HIV, tuberculosis, schistosomiasis, and rheumatic fever) and pulmonary vascular disease.

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Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of European Society of Cardiology 2022.

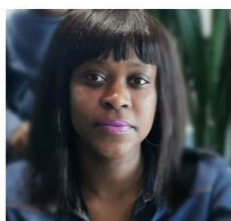


## Session on Cohort Studies in Africa



0900 – 0920	Develop a research question	Friedrich Thienemann
0920 – 0940	Study Design	Anastase Dzudie
0940 – 1000	Cohort studies in minors and pregnant women	Karen Sliwa
1000 – 1020	GCP and regulatory aspects	Sandra Mukasa
1040 – 1100	Data collection	Antoneta Mashinyira
1100 – 1120	Sample size considerations	Lori Dodd
1120 – 1140	Statistical and critical analysis of your data	Patrick Katoto
11.40 – 1200	Discussion & Wrap-up	Friedrich Thienemann

*research in  
Africa -  
what you need  
to know*



**Figure 1** The Pre-Congress Workshop at the 15th Pan African Society of Cardiology Congress in Mombasa and clinical research training course was attended by 77 junior doctors from more than 10 African countries (top). The course with the title 'Research in Africa—What you need to know' was facilitated by Prof. Friedrich Thienemann and Prof. Anastase Dzudie (bottom). Online speakers (from left) are Prof. Anastase Dzudie (Cameroon), Dr Sandra Mukasa and Mrs Antoneta Mashinyira (both from South Africa), Dr Lori Dodd (USA), and Dr Patrick Katoto (Democratic Republic of Congo).

Prof. Mahmoud Sani moderated the third part of the Pre-Congress Workshop, the PASCAR Heart Failure Course, facilitated by Prof. Mahmoud Sani, Prof. Zaheer Yousef, Prof. Albertino Damasceno, Prof. Yacoub Musa, Prof. Anders Bararsa, and Prof. Karen Sliwa. In addition, the European Heart Journal held a 2-h joint session with the Kenyan Cardiac Society and PASCAR on general controversies in cardiology. This session was chaired by Prof. Harun Otieno and Prof. Karen Sliwa. It

included the pros and cons discussion on several contemporary controversies such as ST-elevation myocardial infarction care, especially in the context of limited resources: thrombolysis as 1st line reperfusion in post-Covid era; low carb diet for all CVD risk groups; computed tomography angiography to be used in coronary imaging, angiotensin receptor neprilysin inhibitor, and sodium-glucose linked transporter 2 inhibitors prescribed in all patients with reduced ejection fraction in the Sub-Saharan



**Figure 2** Launch of the Pan African Pulmonary Hypertension Cohort Study II at the 15th Pan African Society of Cardiology Congress in Mombasa. Pan African Pulmonary Hypertension Cohort Study II will examine the interaction of infectious diseases (HIV, tuberculosis, schistosomiasis, and rheumatic fever) and pulmonary vascular disease.

Africa. The speakers were senior cardiologists and leaders in the field from Kenya with expert discussants Prof. Bernard Gersh, Prof. Fausto Pinto, Prof. Awad Mohammed, and Dr Vinesh Vaghela. The session led to very active participation by the expert panellists and the audience.

**Conflict of interest:** none declared.

## References

1. Thienemann F, Dzudie A, Mocumbi AO, Blauwet L, Sani MU, Karaye KM, et al. The causes, treatment, and outcome of pulmonary hypertension in Africa: insights from the Pan African Pulmonary Hypertension Cohort (PAPUCO) Registry. *Int J Cardiol* 2016;**221**:205–211.
2. Thienemann F, Dzudie A, Mocumbi AO, Blauwet L, Sani MU, Karaye KM, et al. Rationale and design of the Pan African Pulmonary hypertension Cohort (PAPUCO) study: implementing a contemporary registry on pulmonary hypertension in Africa. *BMJ Open* 2014;**4**:e005950.