



NEWSLETTER



WANECAM 2 Congress and Project Management Board Meeting in Libreville, Gabon

The annual WANECAM 2 congress, combined with a Project Management Board meeting, took place on December 4-5, 2024, at the Hôtel Boulevard in Libreville, Gabon. The event was attended by Prof. Abdoulaye Djimdé, coordinator of the consortium, Dr. Rella Manego, principal investigator for the Gabonese site, and Prof. Ghyslain Mombo-Ngoma, Prof. Martin Grobusch and other members of the consortium both live and online.

Highlights of the Meeting

1. Research Progress

- Investigators from research sites in Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, and Niger presented updates on their work, particularly regarding recruitment for the ongoing KALUMA study.
- Preliminary results of the KALUMI study were shared at the African Society of Parasitology (SoAP) congress in a symposium format, hosted by the Gabonese Society of Parasitology-Mycology and Tropical Medicine (SOGAPAMME).

AGENDA

1. *WANECAM 2 Congress and Project Management Board Meeting*
2. *Ganaplacide Symposium during ASTMH 2024 in New Orleans, LA, USA on 15 November 2024*
3. *Community involvement activities*
4. *Progress made by WANECAM 2 research sites*
 - *Capacity building, community involvement and Impacts of the Infrastructure Implemented by WANECAM 2 at the End of the Project*
5. *Word of thanks*

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Ganaplacide Symposium during ASTMH 2024 in New Orleans, LA, USA on 15 November 2024

2. Site Reports:

- **CERMEL (Gabon):** A total of 127 participants were recruited, with analyses revealing cases of reinfection from day 29 and mild to moderate side effects, including respiratory and gastrointestinal symptoms.
- **GRAS (Burkina Faso):** 160 patients were screened, but challenges arose due to the seasonality of malaria and inclusion criteria. Additional efforts were made to recruit younger participants.
- **INSTech (Mali):** 15 participants were randomized despite difficulties in sample collection and participant understanding of study requirements.
- **AMU (Niger):** A research center at the Faculty of Health Sciences in Niamey has been equipped for biomedical studies but faced delays due to the expiration of supplies.
- **Bougoula Hameau (Mali):** A total of 264 participants were recruited across multiple sites, with exclusions primarily due to vomiting and abnormalities in biological parameters.

3. Challenges and Solutions

- Recruiting young children was hindered by preventive campaigns.
- Logistical issues included sample transportation and staff turnover.
- Efforts to increase participant awareness about hospitalization protocols and sample collection were emphasized.

Outlook and Commitment

This congress provided a platform to share valuable lessons and identify innovative solutions to address the challenges encountered. The collective efforts of the WANECAM 2 consortium will continue to strengthen local capacities and advance the fight against malaria in Africa.

Co-chaired by Professors Abdoulaye Djimdé and Martin Grobusch, the symposium provided an overview on past and current malaria treatment options presented by Prof. Issaka Sagara before zooming in on the work done by the WANECAM2 consortium. Dr Rella Manego provided detailed insight into one of the consortial capacity building activities regarding the assessment of transmission-blocking activities of ganaplacide within the KALUMI trial. This was followed by Prof. Colin Sutherland's talk detailing methods to assess *P. falciparum* dynamics of selection for drug resistance markers for ganaplacide as one example for the accompanying scientific activities around the KALUMI trial activities. The symposium culminated in Dr. Cornelis Winnips' detailed presentation on the KALUMI trial results, highlighting the prospects for further progression through all the steps needed to approach registration. The lively discussion and feedback received from the auditorium after the event demonstrated that participants valued this state-of-the-art-overview highly.

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Training on Writing Scientific Articles: A Stepping Stone for Academic Publication



From October 28 to 31, 2024, an enriching training on writing scientific articles was held in a hybrid format at the DELGEME Plus training center in Point G. This initiative brought together 60 participants, all eager to enhance their scientific writing skills and tackle the challenges associated with scientific publication.

A Training Focused on Participants' Expectations

At the outset, Professor Abdoulaye Djimdé conducted an interactive survey to better understand:

- The participants' expectations for the training.
- The number of individuals who had already published a scientific article.
- The main challenges faced by those who had published.

These discussions helped tailor the content to meet the specific needs of the participants.

Clear and Ambitious Objectives

The main objective of the training was to help participants:

- Master scientific writing techniques.
- Identify funding and scholarship opportunities.

- Understand how to avoid plagiarism through transversal techniques.

These key topics were addressed through interactive presentations, allowing participants to become familiar with the various stages of scientific writing.

Experts Leading the Training

Several experts led this training, including:

Professor Abdoulaye Djimdé, project coordinator, who shared his expertise on scientific writing.

Dr. Mamadou Tekteté, deputy of the ASSAP project (PI Mali), and Dr. Bakary Fofana, PI of the WANECAM 2 consortium, who presented strategies for successful publication.

Moussa Djimdé, biostatistician, who provided in-depth insights into study design and statistical analysis.

A Closure Marked by Motivation and Recognition

The training ended on a positive note, with encouraging words from the trainers and the distribution of participation certificates. Participants now leave better equipped to face the challenges of scientific publication and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in their respective fields.

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WANECAM 2's participation in the 17th edition of World Malaria Day



On Thursday, April 25, 2024, WANECAM 2 in partnership with the National Malaria Control Program celebrated World Malaria Day under the theme: Promoting health equity, gender equality and human rights. Highlighting the disproportionate effect of the malaria endemic on women and girls, as care providers and patients affected by the disease.

The event took place at the CALCIO field in Quinzambougou, commune II of the District of Bamako, and attendees were constituted of numbers of key figures in the field of health science and research, including the General Secretariat Ministry of Health and Social Development, the Director of the PNLP, the US Ambassador, the WHO Representative in Mali, and the UNICEF Representative in Mali.

The event provided an opportunity to take stock of progress made in the fight against malaria.

The WANECAM 2 stand was honored by a visit from the authorities, with Associate Professor Aminatou Koné, presenting the WANECAM 2 project and its progress in research.



She spoke about the progress of WANECAM 2 on drug development and drug efficacy in clinical trials in Mali and highlighted the importance of new molecular biology tools, including next-generation sequencing, in the molecular monitoring of malaria.

She also presented the establishment and capacity-building of MRTC-Parasito in relation to its tools as technical support to the NMCP.

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Burkina Faso:

Progress Achieved:

- Site development and acquisition of the biomedical equipment necessary to upgrade the site for the project's implementation.
- To date, 11 participants have been pre-screened, of whom 3 have received the experimental product.
- Between February and August 2024, 2 patients were included but classified as screen failures (exclusion due to non-eligibility).
- Currently, no participants are in the follow-up phase.

Capacity Building:

- Organization of community meetings with Community Health Workers (CHWs) and local leaders to raise awareness about the project's activities.
- Extension of site activities to a rural Health and Social Promotion Center (CSPS) to increase recruitment opportunities.
- Implementation of continuous training for study agents, focusing on patient pathways and the procedures for recruitment and follow-up.



Awareness session



Analysis Laboratory



Training of WANEAM 2 technicians in microscopy

Gabon

Progress achieved :

Completion of the KALUMI Clinical Trial

As part of the KALUMI clinical trial, the recruitment of the last participant took place in July 2027. A total of 92 participants were enrolled in this trial at the Gabon site. The database was locked in November 2024, and the destruction of investigational products was carried out on December 18, 2024. The closing visit for this trial is scheduled for January 2025.

Preparation of the Libreville Satellite Site

During the same period, we prepared the Libreville site, a new study site in Gabon for the KALUMA clinical trial. The site's capacity was enhanced in terms of equipment and staff training.

Conducting the KALUMA Clinical Trial

In the context of the KALUMA clinical trial, the initiation visits for the Lambaréné and Libreville sites were conducted on September 29–30 and October 3–4, 2024, respectively. The first participant was enrolled at the Lambaréné site on October 15, 2024. A total of 28 participants have already been enrolled in Gabon for the KALUMA clinical trial, of which 13 have completed follow-up in the main phase.

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Mali

Progress:

1. KALUMI Study:

The final cohort of the KALUMI study was completed at all three sites in Mali (1100, 1101, and 1102).

All three sites are currently undergoing Site Monitoring Visits (SMVs) to finalize data clarifications and resolve queries.

2. KALUMA Study:

The Bougoula-Hameau site (Site 1700) has been prepared to continue with the KALUMA study.

- The Pre-Site Initiation Visit (SIV) took place on July 3rd and 4th, 2024, followed by the SIV on August 5th and 6th, 2024.
- During the SIV, all investigators received protocol-specific training, delivered both onsite and remotely.
- Efforts are underway to optimize the entomology study in Bougoula-Hameau, with two series of tests completed to identify the best option (ongoing).

Capacity Building:

- The electricity-sharing system using a generator between the two buildings on-site has been completed.
- No additional updates from the previous report.

The Impact of WANECAM 2 Infrastructure:

All these activities aim to enhance the Mali site's contribution to participant enrollment in the KALUMA study. This will help accelerate enrollment within a reasonable time frame, given that malaria is seasonal in Mali.

Capacity Building:

Training for microscopists conducted by IQLS to update their skills in preparing and reading thick blood smears and blood films.

Defense of a PhD candidate enrolled at the University of Hamburg on June 4, 2024.

Impacts of the Infrastructure Implemented by WANECAM 2 at the End of the Project:

As part of the WANECAM 2 project, we successfully opened and equipped a satellite site in Four-Place, Gabon. Additionally, two other satellite sites were equipped with hematology biochemistry devices and microscopes. These satellite sites will:

1. Extend our research activities beyond the Lambaréné region.
2. Enable us to host new research projects thanks to this enhanced capacity.

One of these satellite sites has been selected to conduct a Phase III clinical trial. We also strengthened human capacity through training, and one of the investigators successfully earned a PhD. All of these efforts will contribute to enhancing the individual skills of researchers working in these satellite sites.

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Niger

Progress:

Regarding the work on our site, we have nearly completed the construction and the installation of permanent materials for our new facility, mentioned in the previous newsletter (Newsletter 2). This building includes:

- a laboratory, two hospitalization rooms, the consultation room, a toilet for male staff, a toilet for female staff, a pharmacy room.

This building, equipped with a staircase and a flat roof, has been enhanced with additional equipment compared to what was previously mentioned:

- a Stago device for hemostasis testing, a pH meter, an intranet system managed by Lab-Book software, a refrigerator for the storage of investigative products, a generator, an electronic cabinet.

Currently, no studies have begun yet. However, we are actively preparing for the launch of the KALUMA study. Several preparatory events have already been organized:

- a pre-SIV on June 6 and 7, 2024,
- an SIV on July 15, 16, and 17, 2024,
- a HA inspection on July 25 and 26, 2024.

At present, we have one PhD student.

Capacity Building:

As part of capacity building, a clinical doctor and a laboratory technician participated in an immersion training at the Research Action and Health Group (GRAS) in Burkina Faso, from February 5 to 20, 2024. They also visited the clinical research branch in Banfora.

The laboratory technicians underwent training on performing thick blood smears and thin blood smears with IQLS, thus validating the test panel on June 18, 2024. In parallel, the research team completed several online training sessions, including:

- ECG training for clinical doctors,
- Training on performing thick and thin blood smears for biological technicians,
- Medidata Rave training for all staff,
- Cenduit/IRT training for pharmacists and clinicians.

One participant in the immersion program at GRAS expressed his gratitude for this enriching experience. He was particularly impressed by the exemplary organization of the host institution, which enabled him to acquire new skills and resolve numerous research-related issues. According to him, a longer internship would have been even more beneficial.

Expected Impacts of the Infrastructure Established by WANECAM 2:

The infrastructure developed under WANECAM 2 will have significant impacts, including:

- the production of high-quality results,
- the improvement of patient care in the health area covered by the clinical research center,
- the promotion of health within the population targeted by the studies.

These advancements will contribute to strengthening clinical research and public health in the region

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Word of thanks

We would like to thank all contributors to this second newsletter for sharing updates from of their respective sites where WANECAM 2 clinical studies are being conducted.

We look forward to sharing more news on the progress of the project very soon.

Happy New Year 2025!

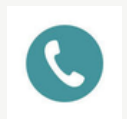
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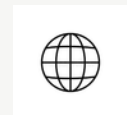
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