

Beyond high level recommendations and rule books- doing the 'hard work' of global health research: lessons and recommendations from an interdisciplinary global partnership.

Reflexivity statement

Even though this commentary does not report on the research itself -those papers are under peer review in other journals currently- but on our experiences of joint global health research work, as Global North, Global South Team we wish to include a reflexivity statement based on the received recent guidance (1). This reflexivity statement has been co-written by the whole team.

The global South and Global North partners co-developed all aspect of the project, from funding application to study design, and dissemination activities. Most of the co-development took place through online meetings and a dedicated 2-day online training workshop to finalise the study design. Initial data-analyses and dissemination approaches were co-designed during face-to-face meetings, which took place in the Global South, and allowed the Global North partners to fully contextualise the findings. Finalisation of the data-analyses and dissemination approaches thereafter took place through monthly online meetings). The results from the study were visualised and discussed to communities, policy makers and other key stakeholders at a series of events in Malawi and Kenya in February 2023, with two members of the UK team attending all events; all the members of the Kenya Team attended events in Malawi and all members of the Malawi Team attended events in Kenya, to enhance our South-to-South learning and knowledge sharing. A further reverse innovation visit took place in Scotland in March 2023, where the whole Kenya and Malawi Team ran a dissemination event at Stirling University and met other UK colleagues to share their ways of working and their expertise, thus fostering further South to North knowledge exchange.

The Fuel to Pot Study addressed a key burden of disease in Malawi and Kenya in a novel way. Despite some improvements in the last few decades, the 2024 State of Global Air figure show that 47% of the world population (almost 3.6 billion people) are still exposed to household air pollution (HAP) from cooking on solid fuels. This leads to approximately 3.1 million deaths per year and an estimated 91.5 million disability-adjusted life years globally. Across Africa, the HAP generated by solid fuel use accounts for nearly 700,000 deaths each year (10% of total mortality in Africa). High levels of rapid urbanization in SSA mean that 51% of urban populations reside in informal settlements often on the outskirts of large cities. Informal settlement residents often rely partially or totally on solid fuels such as wood, charcoal and other biomass residue for cooking and heating where cleaner fuels (such as LPG Gas, electricity) are either unavailable or unaffordable to them. This has a major adverse impact on their health, as is the case in the Ndirande slum in Malawi and in the Mukuru slum in Kenya. This Global South, Global North Team was motivated by the need for the voice of those most affected to be heard and placed at the heart of solutions to mitigate the harm from HAP and solid fuel use.

The first 2 authors (IU, LK) are considered joint first authors. IU is from the Global North and LK from the Global South; and both are female academics in mid-career stages. The last author (HM) is a female Professor from the Global South, and a mentor on the team. The early career researcher (TC) – is a female based in the Global South. The papers will be published in open access journals and the entire Global South and Global North Team continues to have access to all of the data from the study, in order to be able to continue to collaborate on further outputs.

1. Morton B, Vercueil A, Masekela R, Heinz E, Reimer L, Saleh S, et al. Consensus statement on measures to promote equitable authorship in the publication of research from international partnerships. *Anaesthesia* [Internet]. 2022 Mar 1;77(3):264–76. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/anae.15597>

