



Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health

Annual Report

2024-2025



VISION

A future where all people, regardless of where they live, can thrive in healthy communities

MISSION

Improving individual and public health through innovative interdisciplinary research, training, and partnerships in local and global contexts



Message from the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This past year brought new and unanticipated challenges for global health. Many colleagues faced disruptions, delays, or setbacks in their work. Those challenges were difficult for our community. Even so, our commitment to improving health through research, training, and partnerships is stronger than ever.

In this Annual Report, you'll find information about new grants and publications in addition to education updates and new affiliated faculty members. 2025 marked our 20th anniversary. This was an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come and celebrate the impact of our work. As we look forward to the coming years, we remain committed to supporting the communities we serve, both locally and globally.

I am thankful for the strong partnerships we have built with other institutions, departments across campus, and colleagues around the world. Our research and training programs continue to expand, including noncommunicable diseases such as epilepsy, cancer, and sickle cell disease, as well as bioinformatics. This work is alongside new infectious disease projects, including tuberculosis and HIV. These projects have sustained our global health portfolio and, in some cases, broadened our reach. We are excited to see these projects grow and to explore new areas of research in the future.

Building skills and knowledge is central to what we do. Our training and research programs, both here and abroad, help students and trainees discover and pursue careers in global health. Our graduates are making a difference around the world. I am thankful for the faculty who support our education programs and help prepare the next generation of global health leaders.

VIGH connects international research and education here at Vanderbilt, all with the goal of improving health for those who need it most, both around the world and in our local communities. Looking back, I'm proud of what we have achieved together. Being resilient and adaptable to constant change is our new reality. Our team's dedication, along with support from the Vanderbilt community, makes this work possible.

We remain committed to finding innovative ways to collaborate and to collectively navigate the way forward. Thank you for working with us to improve health and wellbeing for everyone, no matter where they live.

Sincerely,

Muktar H. Aliyu

Muktar Aliyu, MBBS, DrPH, MPH

Director, Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health
Vanderbilt Health Endowed Directorship in Global Health
Professor of Health Policy and Medicine, Vanderbilt Health

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In 2025, VIGH proudly celebrated its 20th anniversary. Over the past two decades, VIGH's influence has been significant, touching lives and communities in countless ways. While it is impossible to capture the full scope of these achievements in a single retrospective, the following article, originally published in *Vanderbilt Health News*, highlights the contributions of our dedicated faculty and staff.

The Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health (VIGH) is marking 20 years of work on maternal and child health, noncommunicable diseases, HIV and pandemic response through research, education and international partnerships.

Since its founding in 2005, VIGH has grown from a small team focused on HIV/AIDS research to an institute with projects in more than 20 countries and more than 150 faculty members and staff from Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Vanderbilt University and international organizations.

"We started with a vision of all people thriving in healthy communities and enhancing individual health through research discoveries and local partnerships," said **Mukhtar Aliyu, MBBS, DrPH**, director of the institute and member of the VIGH leadership team since 2014. "Over the past two decades, this vision has shaped our partnerships and contributed to strengthening health systems around the world."

Research and innovation

The institute leads studies on HIV, tuberculosis, sickle cell disease, epilepsy, cardiovascular disease, cancer and mobile health, and it has worked to strengthen health systems through partnerships in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. VIGH has prioritized training local researchers, clinicians and grant administrators.

In 2022, VIGH-affiliated faculty secured over \$100 million in extramural awards within a single year.

Timothy Sterling, MD, professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases and holder of the David E. Rogers Professorship, founded the Vanderbilt Tuberculosis Center in 2012 and serves as its director. The research hub focuses on multisite TB studies with emphasis on epidemiology, clinical trials and translational research. The center recently received a five-year, \$4 million grant to investigate pathogen and host predictors of *M. tuberculosis* transmission.

James Crowe, MD, the Ann Scott Carell Professor, University Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics and Chemistry, and director of the Vanderbilt Center for Antibody Therapeutics, and his research team discovered an antibody to combat SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in early 2020. His lab continues research that supports the development and testing of new antibody treatments for infectious diseases.

Carolyn Audet, PhD, MSci, professor of Health Policy and associate director of Research at VIGH, is leading a 42-community cluster randomized controlled trial to determine if delegating HIV counseling and testing tasks to traditional healers can improve testing rates, treatment uptake and adherence to HIV regimens in rural South Africa.

Expanding Reach

Under the leadership of founding director Sten Vermund, MD, PhD, VIGH established a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that provided HIV care in Mozambique. With technical oversight from **William Wester, MD, MPH**, professor of

Medicine, and operational management from **Julie Lankford, MBA**, this NGO supported the provision of antiretroviral therapy across 141 health facilities in Zambezia province. This program was transitioned to a Mozambican NGO in 2024 and continues to advance HIV epidemic control in Mozambique. A similar program in Nigeria provided HIV treatment and prevention services to 128,000 patients between 2008 and 2013 before transitioning to local Nigerian management.

Three core faculty members from VIGH — **Drs. Muktar Aliyu, Michael DeBaun, and William Wester** — established a research and training infrastructure at Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital (AKTH) in Nigeria. To date, more than 10 clinical trials have been conducted at AKTH. DeBaun, professor of Pediatrics, holds the J.C. Peterson, MD Chair.

Edwin (Ed) Trevathan, MD, MPH, former VIGH director, holder of the Amos Christie Chair, and professor of Pediatrics and Neurology, established the institute's epilepsy research focus in Nigeria. His work has paved the way for two new epilepsy epidemiology and genomics studies scheduled to begin in 2025.

Jessica Castilho, MD, MPH, associate professor of Medicine and Health Policy, and **Stephany Duda, PhD**, associate professor of Biomedical Informatics and Medicine, co-lead a network that harmonizes observational HIV data from multiple sites across the Caribbean, Central America and South America for epidemiological investigation and for the development of tools to optimize global research efficiency.

Education and Training

More than 700 trainees have completed National Institutes of Health-supported research training programs through VIGH, with many now holding leadership positions in academic institutions and health care organizations worldwide. Over 1,500 scholars have completed short courses, degree and postdoctoral programs through the institute.

In 2012, the institute launched the Global Health track within the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine Master of Public Health program under

the leadership of **Douglas Heimburger, MD, MS**, emeritus professor of Medicine, and **Marie H. Martin, PhD, MEd**, associate professor of Health Policy. Since then, 120 graduates have completed this track, securing positions in government, NGOs, academic institutions and the private sector. VIGH faculty have trained and mentored over 150 medical students in global health research.

Joey Starnes, MD, MPH completed his MPH in 2018 and MD in 2019, served as a leader in the student-run Shade Tree Clinic, which provides clinical care to patients while offering students experiential learning opportunities. Starnes now serves as an Advanced Cardiac Imaging Fellow at Vanderbilt Health.

Rachel Idowu, MD, who completed her MPH in 2014, served as the U.S. CDC Country Director in Liberia in 2021, where she scaled COVID-19 vaccinations to achieve over 80% coverage. She currently serves as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Public Health Service and is an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Health Policy at Vanderbilt Health.

Looking Ahead

As VIGH enters its third decade, the institute is broadening its focus to include global surgery and data science while expanding work on cancer, cardiovascular health and mobile health. The institute plans to deepen collaborations and strengthen its role in policy-relevant research.

"Our journey has been shaped by the relationships we've built and our shared commitment to evidence-based health solutions," said Aliyu, who holds the Directorship in Global Health at Vanderbilt Health. "The next 20 years will be just as transformative. This anniversary is not just a reflection of our achievements; it also serves as a launchpad for what comes next."



Leadership Team



Muktar Aliyu, MD, DrPH, MPH

Director, Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health (VIGH)
Vanderbilt Health Endowed Directorship in Global Health
Professor of Health Policy and Medicine,
Vanderbilt Health

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS



Carolyn Audet, PhD, MSci

Associate Director for Research,
VIGH; Co-Director, Center for
Clinical Quality and Implementation
Research; Director, Tennessee CFAR
Implementation Science Core;
Professor of Health Policy



Holly Cassell, MPH

Associate Director for Operations
and Collaborations, VIGH



Marie H. Martin, PhD, MEd

Associate Director for Education
and Training, VIGH; Associate
Vice President, Global Initiatives
(Vanderbilt Health); Assistant
Dean, Global Health Education;
Vanderbilt University School of
Medicine; Associate Professor
of Health Policy



C. William Wester, MD, MPH

Associate Director, Global Health
Faculty Development, VIGH; Co-
Director, Global Health Pathway
(Internal Medicine Residency);
Professor of Medicine, Division of
Infectious Diseases

FINANCE TEAM



Ron Jannetta, MBA

Director, Vanderbilt Institute for
Population and Public Health (IPPH),
Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and
Translational Research (VICTR)



Carla Parrish

Administrative Officer,
Vanderbilt Institute for
Population and Public Health
(IPPH), Vanderbilt Institute
for Clinical and Translational
Research (VICTR)

For FY24 and all of 2025, the total grant funding portfolio for global projects of VIGH-affiliated Vanderbilt faculty was \$104 million, which includes \$53 million in new global grants. Total funding was \$223 million.

Publications

948

VU and VH-affiliated
Faculty and Staff

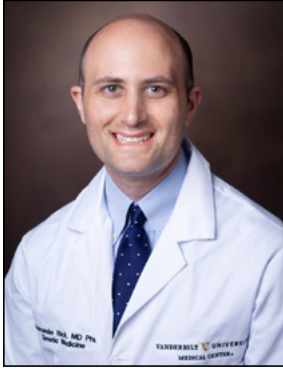
150

Global Health
Grand Rounds
(international guest speakers)

15



New Affiliated Faculty Members



Alexander Bick, MD, PhD

Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Genetic Medicine

Dr. Bick specializes in human genomics as a physician-scientist. His research advances understanding of the genetic causes of cardiovascular disease and

applies genomics to medicine. He investigates how inherited and acquired genetic factors interact to cause disease. In collaboration with multidisciplinary teams that merge genomics, statistical genetics, and laboratory research. Currently, Dr. Bick focuses his research on clonal hematopoiesis, a critical factor in aging-related diseases such as cardiovascular disease and cancer. His research focuses on clonal hematopoiesis, which can increase the risk for blood cancers, heart attack, and death. He sees patients at the Vanderbilt Genomics and Therapeutics Clinic and translates his research into improved patient care.



Lauren Brown, PhD

Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases and Department of Health Policy; Adjunct Assistant Professor of Medicine, Meharry Medical College

Dr. Brown's research centers on organizational

trauma resilience in HIV clinics and community-based settings, with a focus on community-led development of psychometric tools. Previously, she served as Director of Behavioral Health & Research at Nashville CARES, bringing over a decade of psychotherapy experience with a focus on trauma, intimate partner violence, and mental health. Her past research addresses the intersection of HIV and intimate partner violence among women in South Africa.



Lax Bhandari, MD, PhD, MPH

Assistant Professor of Plastic Surgery; Director, Limb Salvage and Reconstruction; Director, Microsurgical Training Center; Associate Director, Vanderbilt Global Plastic Surgery

Dr. Bhandari's practice will focus on hand and

wrist surgery for adult and pediatric patients. He specializes in procedures involving reconstruction and microsurgery for wound coverage. Dr. Bhandari has extensively researched the role of nerve and vascular repair in hand and other extremity surgery. His research has focused on the use of regenerative agents and surgeries involving unique nerve conditions and injuries. He has authored multiple chapters in Hand surgery books, including Hand transplantation.



Todd Edwards, PhD

Associate Professor of Medicine; Director, CTSA TL1; Training Program; Co-Director, Edge for Scholars

Dr. Edwards' research focuses on the heritable factors that modulate disease

risk and on developing statistical methods and software to make these investigations more efficient, with the objective of advancing public health and basic science through genetic epidemiology. His lab analyzes genetic data from African Americans, Chinese from Shanghai, and Nashville-area community studies and uses statistical techniques to test hypotheses in large-scale genetic data from populations of persons at risk for several traits, such as obesity, hypertension, blood pressure, body mass index, colorectal cancer, colorectal polyps, and endometrial cancer. genetics, and current technologies.



Nicholas Herrera, MD

Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases

He currently serves as the Medical Director of Antimicrobial Stewardship at Vanderbilt Tullahoma-Hartom Hospital and Vanderbilt Bedford Hospital, and as

the Associate Medical Director of Antimicrobial Stewardship at Vanderbilt University Hospital. He leads the division's Travel and Tropical/Geographic Medicine efforts and has clinical interests in the management of orthopedic infections.

Dr. Herrera is involved as an educator in the School of Medicine, Internal Medicine Residency Program, and the Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program. Additionally, he is a co-founder of the ID Fellows Cup, an educational game played by ID fellows nationally and internationally.



Mohana Karlekar, MD

Associate Professor of Medicine; Section Chief Palliative Care Division of Internal Medicine and Public Health

Dr. Karlekar co-founded the Vanderbilt Hospice and Palliative Care Fellowship. Her areas of interest and

expertise include primary palliative care education, the intersection of palliative care and trauma, and, more recently, advancing palliative care in Africa. In 2018, she served on the Tennessee Palliative Care and Quality of Life Task Force and has served as chair of the Tennessee state palliative care council since 2019. She has presented and published on palliative care topics both nationally and internationally.



Mohan Narasimhamurthy, MBBS

Assistant Professor of Pathology, Microbiology, and Immunology

Dr. Narasimhamurthy practiced pathology for ten years in Botswana, where he held various positions, including assistant program director of the pathology residency

program at the University of Botswana and the National Health Laboratory (NHL). During his time in Botswana, he played a key role in developing a pathology residency program, securing laboratory accreditation, expanding diagnostic services by introducing immunohistochemistry, and establishing multidisciplinary breast and gynecological tumor board meetings. He has taught medical students, pathology residents, laboratory scientists, Fulbright Scholars, and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) students. His projects and publications primarily focus on human papillomavirus (HPV) genotyping, breast cancer research, and improving diagnostic services.



Juan Salazar, MD, MPH

James C. Overall Professor and Chair, Department of Pediatrics, Vanderbilt Health; System Pediatrician-in-Chief, Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

Dr. Salazar has been nationally and internationally

recognized for his outstanding clinical care, advocacy efforts, and innovative global health research. Dr. Salazar has received several National Institutes of Health grants to study the human innate immune response to *Borrelia burgdorferi* and *Treponema pallidum*, the causative agents of Lyme disease and syphilis respectively. He is currently funded by the NIH to develop a first of its kind syphilis vaccine. The NIH funded project includes investigators in China, Malawi, Cali, Colombia and the US. Dr. Salazar was the recipient of three different Ryan White Care Act grants to coordinate and provide statewide HIV treatment and prevention services for women, infants, children, and youth.

29 New Grants

Strategic engagements in 25 countries
with over 53 million in global funding

Neurology/ Neurosurgery

The Sahel Epilepsy Epidemiology and Genomics Study (SEEG)

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
Edwin Trevathan, MD, MPH

Scaling Up Task-Shifted Epilepsy Care (SHIFT) National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
Edwin Trevathan, MD, MPH

Maternal and Child Health

Evaluating the impact of altered gene expression on uterine fibroid risk in African ancestry populations

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
Digna Velez Edwards, PhD, MS

Nutritional Optimization for Malnourished Children with Sickle Cell Disease in Nigeria: A Pilot Hybrid Effectiveness-Implementation Study (NOURISH-SCD)

American Society of Hematology
Lauren Klein, MD

Education and Training

AIC Kijabe Hospital Program

Hope Through Healing Hands
Rondi Kauffmann, MD

Frist Global Health Leaders Program

Hope Through Healing Hands
Marie H. Martin, PhD, MEd

Data to Policy: Accelerating Impact and Country Ownership

Vital Strategies, CDC Foundation,
Bloomberg Philanthropies,
John Graves, PhD, Marie H. Martin, PhD, MEd

Vanderbilt-Nigeria Building Research Capacity in HIV and Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) (V-BRCH) 2

John E. Fogarty International Center,
Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital
Muktar Aliyu, MD, DrPH, MPH

Vanderbilt Grant Administration International Network (GAIN)

National Cancer Institute
Xiao-Ou Shu, MD, MPH; Holly Cassell, MPH

Advancing American-Style Education in Iraq Through the Center for the Advancement of Higher Education in Iraq and the Innovation Lab for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Engineering

US Department of State
Brian Heuser, EdD, MTS

Strengthen linkages and increase collaboration between U.S. and Pakistani Higher Education Institutions

US Department of State
Brian Heuser, EdD, MTS

Infectious Diseases

The Southeastern HIV Implementation Science Hub: Supporting the sustained implementation of evidence-based care among academic, community, and clinical partners

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Carolyn Audet, PhD, MSci

Tuttplus - Evaluation Of The Role Of Tongue Swabs To Optimize Tutt Implementation - An Observational Study

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Wits Consortium
Rebecca Berhanu, MD

Development of a Bunyavirus Survivor Cohort to Discover Biologic Countermeasures

Department of Defense, Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine
Paul Blair, MD, MHS

Paramyxoviridae and Bunyavirales Vaccines and Antibodies Center (PABVAX)

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
James Crowe

Bunyavirus and Picornavirus Pandemic Pathogen Preparedness (BP4) Center

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
James Crowe, MD

Short-course rifapentine for TB prevention for all: clinical pharmacology matters

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Kelly Dooley, MD, PhD, MPH

WG Lead Contracts GoFAST

National Science Foundation, CRDF Global (Civilian Research and Development Foundation)
Stephany Duda, PhD

Pharmacogenomics for Study NC-009

The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance)
David Haas, MD

Statistical Methods for Ordinal Variables in HIV/AIDS Studies

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Bryan Shepherd, PhD

Creating, evaluating, and sharing synthetic data for multinational HIV cohorts

National Institute of Mental Health
Bryan Shepherd, PhD

Prevalence, Incidence, and Biomarkers of Subclinical Tuberculosis (TB) in Close TB Contacts in the RePORT International Consortium

National Science Foundation, CRDF Global (Civilian Research and Development Foundation)
Timothy Sterling, MD

Predictors of Resistance Emergence Evaluation in Multidrug Resistant-Tuberculosis Patients on Treatment

National Science Foundation, CRDF Global (Civilian Research and Development Foundation)
Timothy Sterling, MD

Cohort representativeness and country-level differences among RePORT and leDEA TB-SRN networks

National Science Foundation, CRDF Global (Civilian Research and Development Foundation)
Timothy Sterling, MD

Pathogen and host predictors of M. tuberculosis transmission

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Timothy Sterling, MD

NCDs

Breast Cancer Diagnostic Kit to Improve Early Diagnosis in Uganda

National Cancer Institute
John Scheel, MD, PhD

African-ancestry Breast Cancer Genetic Consortium

National Cancer Institute
Wei Zheng, MD, PhD, MPH

Role of complement in sickle cell disease-related phenotypes

American Society of Hematology
Michael Debaun, MD, MPH

mHealth Biomedical Informatics

mHealth conjunctiva photography for early preeclampsia risk-stratification

Gates Foundation, Purdue
Martin Were, MD, MS

Trainee Spotlight



Lucie Ecker, MD, MSc, PhD

Mentors: Claudio Lanata, MD, MPH

Instituto de Investigacion Nutricional; Carlos Grijalva, MD, MPH, Professor of Health Policy, Vanderbilt Health; Leigh Howard, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Vanderbilt Health

Dr. Ecker is a physician-epidemiologist focused on pediatric respiratory infections and community-based surveillance and a PhD candidate in Medicine through the supported by the Vaccination Training Program (PREVENT) program, which is supported by the Fogarty International Center.

In 2023 she received a master's in Epidemiology and Quantitative Methods and completed the Vanderbilt Institute for Research and Development and Ethics Scholar (VIRDE) program at Vanderbilt where she developed a successful grant proposal under the mentorship of Drs. Carlos Grijalva and Leigh Howard.

In 2024, she received the Merck Sharp & Dohme MISP Grant to lead the study "Incidence of Symptomatic and Asymptomatic Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection in Infants," which quantified the true community burden of RSV infection in infants and provided data critical for guiding public health responses and vaccine development.



Fadia Uribe, MD, MSc

Mentors: Theresa J. Ochoa, MD, PhD, Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia; Carlos Grijalva, MD, MPH, Professor of Health Policy, Vanderbilt Health; Leigh Howard, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Vanderbilt Health

Dr. Uribe is a pediatrician and pediatric infectious diseases specialist with extensive research experience in pediatric respiratory diseases, including pneumococcus, tuberculosis, COVID-19, and RSV. She has participated in observational studies and clinical trials on immunopreventable respiratory diseases, focusing on pneumococcal and RSV infections. She completed her Pediatrics residency at Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos and specialized in Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH), where she also earned a Master's in Control of Infectious and Tropical Diseases.

She belongs to the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Laboratory at the Alexander von Humboldt Institute of Tropical Medicine (UPCH) and Hospital San Bartolomé's research center in Lima, Peru. She also contributes to the Peruvian Group for Research on Pneumococcus (GPIN), which studies pneumococcal disease and the impact of immunopreventive interventions in children.

In 2023, Dr. Uribe completed the VIRDE Scholar Program at Vanderbilt, where she developed a research proposal under the guidance of Drs. Carlos Grijalva, Leigh Howard, and long-term mentor Dr. Theresa Ochoa. With their support, she prepared a grant proposal that was later funded by Merck Sharp & Dohme. Dr. Uribe now leads a study titled, "A prospective birth cohort study to quantify the burden of medically attended acute lower respiratory infection of respiratory syncytial virus disease in small vulnerable newborns during 1-year follow-up in three public hospitals in a middle-income country." This study aims to provide essential data on RSV burden in small, vulnerable newborns, inform healthcare strategies, and aid in developing a predictive model for severe RSV-related MALRI in this group.



Fatima Mohammed Damagum, MD, MSc

Mentor: Muktar Aliyu, MBBS, DrPH, MPH, Director, VIGH
Vanderbilt Health Endowed
Directorship in Global Health
Professor of Health Policy and
of Medicine, Vanderbilt Health

Dr. Damagum is a Consultant Family Physician and public health researcher at Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital, Kano, Nigeria. She has over 15 years of experience in sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, women's health, and health systems strengthening. In 2024, Fatima was awarded the HBNU Fogarty Global Health Fellowship.

Her fellowship research explored female sexual dysfunction in women with diabetes in Northwestern Nigeria, offering new insight into approaches to improving support and care for these women. As part of the fellowship, she was a visiting scholar at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Fatima completed the VIRDE Training Program in 2022 under the mentorship of Dr. Muktar Aliyu and later published research on the PLISSIT counseling model for sexual dysfunction in women with HIV, broadening our understanding of potential interventions in HIV care. She now serves as a faculty mentor for the Nigerian Institute for Research and Ethics fellowship, contributing to training the next generation of Nigerian research scientists.

Fatima is in her first year of a PhD, supported by a Fogarty D43 training grant at Bayero University, Kano. Her dissertation is on implementing the effectiveness of an integrated HIV and maternal-neonatal care model in conflict-affected setting of North-eastern Nigeria. Drawing on her HBNU Fogarty fellowship and preliminary data, she is preparing a grant submission to study genes linked to sexual function and their relationship to complications of diabetes mellitus.

Publications

1. Hinton A Jr, Claypool SM, Neikirk K, et al. [Mitochondrial Structure and Function in Human Heart Failure](#). Author(s): Kirabo, RCR: 19, Altmetric: 9
2. Link-Gelles R, Chickery S, Webber A, et al. [Interim Estimates of 2024-2025 COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness Among Adults Aged \$\geq 18\$ Years - VISION and IVY Networks, September 2024-January 2025](#). Author(s): Chappell, Halasa, RCR: 13
3. Moline HL, Toepfer AP, Tannis A, et al. [Respiratory Syncytial Virus Disease Burden and Nirsevimab Effectiveness in Young Children From 2023-2024](#). Author(s): Halasa, RCR: 13, Altmetric: 165
4. Platt HL, Bruno C, Buntinx E, et al. [Safety, tolerability, and immunogenicity of an adult pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, V116 \(STRIDE-3\): a randomised, double-blind, active comparator controlled, international phase 3 trial](#). Author(s): Grijalva, RCR: 11, Altmetric: 3
5. Surie D, Self WH, Zhu Y, et al. [RSV Vaccine Effectiveness Against Hospitalization Among US Adults 60 Years and Older](#). Author(s): Grijalva, RCR: 10, Altmetric: 329
6. Self WH, Johnson KD, Resser JJ, et al. [Prevalence, Clinical Severity, and Serotype Distribution of Pneumococcal Pneumonia Among Adults Hospitalized With Community-Acquired Pneumonia in Tennessee and Georgia, 2018-2022](#). Author(s): Grijalva, RCR: 8, Altmetric: 25
7. Scott P, Haranaka M, Choi JH, et al. [A Phase 3 Clinical Study to Evaluate the Safety, Tolerability, and Immunogenicity of V116 in Pneumococcal Vaccine-Experienced Adults 50 Years of Age or Older \(STRIDE-6\)](#). Author(s): Grijalva, RCR: 7
8. Kassim AA, Walters MC, Eapen M, et al. [Haploidentical Bone Marrow Transplantation for Sickle Cell Disease](#). Author(s): DeBaun, RCR: 7, Altmetric: 54
9. Thiel CL, Vigil-Garcia M, Nande S, et al. [Environmental Life Cycle Assessment of a U.S. Hospital-based Radiology Practice](#). Author(s): Scheel, RCR: 6, Altmetric: 64
10. Shkolyar E, Zhou SR, Carlson CJ, et al. [Optimizing cystoscopy and TURBT: enhanced imaging and artificial intelligence](#). Author(s): Bowden, RCR: 6
11. Larsen BB, McMahon T, Brown JT, et al. [Functional and antigenic landscape of the Nipah virus receptor-binding protein](#). Author(s): Crowe, RCR: 6
12. Ma KC, Surie D, Lauring AS, et al. [Effectiveness of Updated 2023-2024 \(Monovalent XBB.1.5\) COVID-19 Vaccination Against SARS-CoV-2 Omicron XBB and BA.2.86/JN.1 Lineage Hospitalization and a Comparison of Clinical Severity-IVY Network, 26 Hospitals, October 18, 2023-March 9, 2024](#). Author(s): Chappell, Grijalva, Halasa, RCR: 5, Altmetric: 14
13. Masenga SK, Wandira N, Cattivelli-Murdoch G, et al. [Salt sensitivity of blood pressure: mechanisms and sex-specific differences](#). Author(s): Kirabo, Masenga, RCR: 5, Altmetric: 43
14. McMorro ML, Moline HL, Toepfer AP, et al. [Respiratory Syncytial Virus-Associated Hospitalizations in Children <5 Years: 2016-2022](#). Author(s): Halasa, RCR: 4
15. Lienhardt C, Dooley KE, Nahid P, et al. [Target regimen profiles for tuberculosis treatment](#). Author(s): Dooley, RCR: 5, Altmetric: 10
16. Barr JS, Martin LE, Tate AT, Hillyer JF. [Warmer environmental temperature accelerates aging in mosquitoes, decreasing longevity and worsening infection outcomes](#). Author(s): Hillyer, RCR: 4, Altmetric: 26
17. Ray WA, Fuchs DC, Olfson M, et al. [Incidence of Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome During Antipsychotic Treatment in Children and Youth: A National Cohort Study](#). Author(s): Cooper, RCR: 4, Altmetric: 41
18. Frutos AM, Cleary S, Reeves EL, et al. [Interim Estimates of 2024-2025 Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness - Four Vaccine Effectiveness Networks, United States, October 2024-February 2025](#). Author(s): Halasa, RCR: 4
19. Griffin KE, Snyder K, Javid AH, et al. [Use of SGLT2i Versus DPP-4i as an Add-on Therapy and the Risk of PAD-Related Surgical Events \(Amputation, Stent Placement, or Vascular Surgery\): A Cohort Study in Veterans With Diabetes](#). [Diabetes Care](#). Author(s): Grijalva, RCR: 4, Altmetric: 35
20. Scudese E, Marshall AG, Vue Z, et al. [3D Mitochondrial Structure in Aging Human Skeletal Muscle: Insights Into MFN-2-Mediated Changes](#). Author(s): Kirabo, RCR: 4
21. de Waal R, Wools-Kaloustian K, Brazier E, et al. [Global Trends in CD4 Count Measurement and Distribution at First Antiretroviral Treatment Initiation](#). Author(s): Castilho, Duda, RCR: 4, Altmetric: 7
22. Dooley KE, Bonnet K, Schlundt D, et al. [Mixed Methods Evaluation of a Youth-Friendly Clinic for Young People Living with HIV Transitioning from Pediatric Care](#). Author(s): Desai, RCR: 3
23. Saleem M, Aden LA, Mutchler AL, et al. [Myeloid-Specific JAK2 Contributes to Inflammation and Salt Sensitivity of Blood Pressure](#). Author(s): Bick, Kirabo, RCR: 3, Altmetric: 38
24. Lucas C, Torres-Guzman R, James AJ, et al. [Machine Learning for Automatic Detection of Velopharyngeal Dysfunction: A Preliminary Report](#). Author(s): Pontell, RCR: 3
25. Rasdall MA, Cho C, Stahl AN, et al. [Primary Visual Pathway Changes in Individuals With Chronic Mild Traumatic Brain Injury](#). Author(s): Chomsky, RCR: 3, Altmetric: 56
26. Negretti NM, Son Y, Crooke P, et al. [Epithelial outgrowth through mesenchymal rings drives lung alveologenesis](#). Author(s): Mahadevan-Jansen, RCR: 11, Altmetric: 28
27. Ravindra VM, Riva-Cambrin J, Jensen H, et al. [Comparing ventriculoatrial and ventriculopleural shunts in pediatric hydrocephalus: a Hydrocephalus Clinical Research Network study](#). Author(s): Naftel, RCR: 3, Altmetric: 1
28. Doss DJ, Shless JS, Bick SK, et al. [The interictal suppression hypothesis is the dominant differentiator of seizure onset zones in focal epilepsy](#). Author(s): Bick, Naftel, RCR: 3, Altmetric: 17
29. Trickey A, Zhang L, Rentsch CT, et al. [Care interruptions and mortality among adults in Europe and North America](#). Author(s): Sterling, RCR: 3,
30. Lewis NM, Harker EJ, Leis A, et al. [Assessment and mitigation of bias in influenza and COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness analyses - IVY Network, September 1, 2022-March 30, 2023](#). [Vaccine](#). Author(s): Chappell, Grijalva, Halasa, RCR: 3, Altmetric: 1
31. Quertermous BP, Williams DJ, Bruce

Academic Report

BY THE NUMBERS



13

MPH Global Health Track Graduates



26

Medical Students International Clinical Rotations

13

Graduate Certificate in Global Health Awardees

32

Global Health students supported through endowments

25

Vanderbilt Collaborative for Global Health Excellence Graduate (Vanderbilt Health residents)

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Vanderbilt Global Health Student Advisory Organization

31

Student Poster Presentations Global Health Symposium

88

Global Health Case Competition Student Participants

33

Global Health Alliance Student Organization Members

30

Mentors

Student-led, VIGH-mentored events

The annual Global Health Case Competition (GHCC) was held in February 2025. Almost 90 students competed in 18 teams, representing a broad range of Vanderbilt's graduate and undergraduate degree programs. The planning committee for the GHCC included four Master of Public Health (MPH) students in the Global Health track (**AnnaClarke Paxton '26, Serge Bizaba '26, Chimdindu Ugwuanyi '26, and Caitlin Bieniek '25**) and was mentored by Dr. Elizabeth Rose and Sarah Crane. The competition's 13 judges were comprised of eleven VIGH members and two MPH Program alumni. During the competition, Dr. Elizabeth Rose delivered a keynote speech entitled "Mindfully Engaging in Global Health."

In the annual competition, students receive the case a week before the competition and work in teams to write a comprehensive proposal that addresses the pressing, but complicated, global public health issue in the case. This year's case focused on the ongoing famine in Yemen. Teams' proposals included sustainable agriculture and fishing practices, community engagement, and strengthening WASH and health services. The winning team consisted of six undergraduate students (Owen Cai, Devin Crawford, Katherine Tam, Christina Kim, Ankit Janamanchi, and Adityha Bhatt) who advanced to compete in the Emory Morningside International Global Health Case Competition.

Endowments

The Overall Family Fellowship for International Research, established in 2000, funds Vanderbilt University School of Medicine students for global health research, clinical work, and training abroad. Since 2010, the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health has administered the fellowship, providing travel stipends for international learning. In 2025, 20 students used this funding for clinical rotations and research in countries including Argentina, China, Guatemala, Guyana, the Himalayas, Hong Kong, Kenya, Peru, Zambia, Nigeria, and Uganda. Two recipient experiences are highlighted below.

Brian Song (MD, '26) partnered with Georgetown Public Hospital in Guyana to conduct retrospective observational research on snakebite envenoming and adolescent toxic ingestions. Both topics are major public health issues. His team's analysis is helping start Guyana's first toxicology registry to guide clinical and public health policy. Brian described the experience as "profoundly helpful" for his career professional development. He was mentored by VIGH faculty, Dr. Anisa Mugal, assistant professor in the department of Emergency Medicine at Vanderbilt Health.



Chimdindu Ugwuanyi (MPH, '26) worked with Speak Out for Children Development Initiative, a non-governmental organization in Nigeria, to promote child protection in 12 African countries. As a leader in the organization, she worked with the team to curate training materials for a six-week virtual Child Body Safety training. In April, Chimdindu led this training for 113 educators and caregivers across Africa, which was the second time the training has been held. In the months following the training, 38 participant-initiated community outreach projects across Africa were conducted, creating ripple effects of increased awareness and engagement of child body safety among children and caregivers. Chimdindu was mentored by VIGH faculty, Dr. Elizabeth Rose.

Nicolette Jew (MD, '27) worked with long-time VIGH partners at the University Teaching Hospital in Zambia for a clinical rotation and research in neurosurgery. Collaborating with surgeons and staff, she helped research and introduce a new point-of-care ultrasound to diagnose and monitor hydrocephalus in children. Training residents to use this tool and seeing them begin to apply it on the wards gave her a deeper appreciation for how simple, cost-effective innovations can improve care and outcomes. She is mentored by Dr. Michael Dewan.



Master of Public Health Program

VIGH oversees the Global Health track in the Vanderbilt MPH Program. Students completed practicums in multiple countries and Tennessee, working on projects that improved child protection, clinical care, and community health. Their experiences built skills in culturally responsive practice and global health partnerships. Two student practicum experiences are highlighted below.

Makenna Frenia (MPH, '26) completed a transformative summer practicum with The Harvest Fund (THF) in Zambia, where she supported initiatives that expanded agricultural resources and education for women farmers. She traveled with THF around southern Zambia to observe field monitoring, training sessions, and meetings with Ministry of Agriculture officials. Makenna worked with a Zambian nutrition expert to develop a culturally relevant nutrition curriculum, training video, and accompanying materials for use in farmer trainings. She worked on several smaller projects to support THF including leading a skill-building workshop on document formatting; helping with grant preparation; and writing blog posts connecting nutrition to THF's work in agriculture and women's empowerment.



Sarah Thompson (MPH, '26) served on the Youth With A Mission Ships (YWAM Ships) medical team partnering with Modilon General Hospital in Papua New Guinea. Sarah participated in the registration and documentation of over 1000 patients, supported the delivery of primary care and maternal-child health services, and assisted in implementation of health education sessions focused on the prevention of waterborne diseases. She developed community health lesson plans; revised healthcare protocols, day-in-the-life and overview videos, and education workshop materials for the Modilon General Hospital; and a community assessment for the organization. Workshops that she helped facilitate strengthened critical care, emergency airway management, maternity care, and public health research skills among hospital staff.



Awards and Recognition

Rondi Kauffmann, MD, MPH, FACS, FCS (ECSA), associate professor of Surgery and vice chair for Global Surgery gave the Patrick Dietz Surgical Education Lecture at Bassett Medical Center, and she was named Chair of the American College of Surgeons Health Outreach Program for Equity's Advocacy Committee in 2025.

Ryan Belcher, MD, MPH, received the Vanderbilt Excellence in Patient Experience Award and won first place for his poster at the 2025 NOIG Scholars in Otolaryngology Conference. He was featured in the Early Career Researcher Spotlight section of the Cleft Palate Craniofacial Journal and now chairs the Humanitarian Efforts Committee of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery. In 2025, he also became Grand Rounds Director for Otolaryngology and joined the Academy for Excellence in Education Mentorship Program (Fleming Society).

Annet Kirabo DVM, MSc, PhD, FAHA, associate professor of Medicine, Clinical Pharmacology, and an associate professor of Molecular Physiology and Biophysics in the Vanderbilt School of Medicine, Basic Sciences, was named "Top Scholar" in hypertension and appointed to a leadership role in the Clinical Immunology Center of Excellence.

Kelly Dooley, MD, PhD, MPH, Addison B. Scoville Jr. professor of Medicine and director of the Division of Infectious Diseases at Vanderbilt Health, was appointed to the Board of Directors of the American Society of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics

in 2025 for a three-year term. She also received a MERIT Award (Method to Extend Research in Time Award) from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). Dr. Dooley's MERIT Award stems from a recent five-year, \$3.8 million NIAID grant for her research project, "Short course rifapentine for TB prevention for all: clinical pharmacology matters."

John Tarpley, MD, FWACS, FACS, professor emeritus of Surgery, Department of Surgery, gave the Martin Allgöwer Lecture, "The Greening of Surgery," during International Surgery Week in Kuala Lumpur in 2024. He also gave the Champ Lyons Lecture, "Ethics in Global Surgery," at the University of Alabama Department of Surgery in Birmingham, in 2025. He received recognition as "An Icon in Surgery" from the American College of Surgeons in San Francisco in 2024. He was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus by the Vanderbilt Medical Alumni Association of Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in 2024.

2025 promotions of Aurum Institute leadership: **David Alan Clark MBBCh, BCom, MBA**, appointed Group CEO, **Vinodh Edward, BSc, DTech**, appointed Group COO, and **Gavin Churchyard, MBBCh, MMed, PhD**, appointed Emeritus President. **Salome Charalambous, MBBCh, MSc, PhD**, was awarded the Heath Clark Lectureship at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

2025 Star Staff Awardees:

Champion of Change Award: Kristin Centers, MLAS
Best Mentor/Team Leader: Heather Jordan, MPH
Exemplary Partnership: Kyle Rybczyk (Vanderbilt Health IRB)

VIGH Annual Retreat

VIGH faculty and staff gathered at our annual team day retreat, learning about new projects and networking with each other at Gaylord Springs. The agenda included discussions on funding challenges, a presentation by Vanderbilt Health's development office, lunch and staff awards. Wellness activities and staff awards were highlights of the day!





Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health

2525 West End Avenue, Suite 750 Nashville, TN 37203

globalhealth@vumc.org

vumc.org/global-health