



SeroSelectTB

newsletter



SeroSelectTB national project meeting in Tanzania

KCMUCo organized a national project meeting at the Weru Weru River Lodge on the foothills of Kilimanjaro, from 28 to 29 February 2024.

A total of 60 participants attended including the SeroSelectTB team members from KCMUCo, research assistants from the 21 healthcare facilities involved in the field research, invited SeroSelectTB project partners from other countries, TB researchers from KCMUCo and Kibong'oto Infectious Disease Hospital, and the Regional and District TB and Leprosy Coordinators and Regional Medical Officer. We were especially grateful to have the Provost and Deputy Provost at KCMUCo, Professors Kaaya and Mushi, respectively, in attendance.

Presentations addressed updates from partners in Tanzania, Ethiopia and South Africa, project data management at KCMUCo, a report from the field sites, and other TB projects conducted at KCMUCo and Kibong'oto.

The Regional TB and Leprosy Coordinator presented an overview of TB detection in Tanzania.

Challenges we have experienced since the project start and the way forward during the next two years were discussed.



KCMUCo Provost, Professor Kaaya addressing the meeting attendees

Professor Kaaya, the Provost, expressed his thanks to the SeroSelectTB project team and extended his gratitude to be invited and participate on behalf of KCMUCo. He was pleased to hear of the achievements KCMUCo had made with participant enrollment during 2023 and the no-cost extension provided by EDCTP2. Professor Kaaya reiterated his personal commitment and that of KCMUCo to support the project and the College's commitment to partners and collaborators.

An excellent presentation by three research assistants from Pasua Health Center, Kibosho Hospital, and Mageriza Dispensary clearly illustrated the importance of the work conducted at the field sites.

The comment that most impressed the audience was from the research assistant at the Chekereni Dispensary who asked the Regional TB and Leprosy Coordinator if team members from the field sites could attend the World TB Day events to be held in Kilimanjaro Region on March 24th and “talk about SeroSelectTB”!

Professor Declare Mushi, Deputy Provost for Administration, thanked the SeroSelectTB team at KCMUCo for their outstanding work, the meeting attendees for their active participation, and especially the SeroSelectTB project partners and government officials who attended the meeting. Prof Mushi remarked that it was excellent that all research assistants from all 21 sites were in attendance. The meeting was officially closed by Professor Mushi.



Research assistants listening to their colleagues' presentation

Interviews conducted at the Weru Weru conference venue

For Kilimanjaro, we notify about 2000 cases per year, and it is increase of about 70 cases per year.



Dr Peter Nigwa, Kilimanjaro region TB and Leprosy Regional Coordinator



Dr Hadija Semvua, Senior Research Scientist at KCMUCo

“ We [the Kilimanjaro region] are among the 10 leading regions, which notify the TB patient in the country... SeroSelectTB project, which is aiming to reduce the delay in getting the result for TB, has been very potential because the device can detect the TB within 15 to 20 minutes. ”



Jesca Msemo, Public Relations and Communication Officer at KCMUCo, interviewing Dr Hadija

The contribution of SeroSelectTB project on TB control is that it is going to reduce time to get results clinicians will initiate treatment immediately.... that means we are going to make sure that the delay in diagnosis of TB is reduced... [and] by initiating treatment, you will reduce the risk of transmissions to other people as well as transmission of difficult microorganisms that are resistant.



Dr Balthazar Nyombi, Tanzania SeroSelectTB Project Principal Investigator

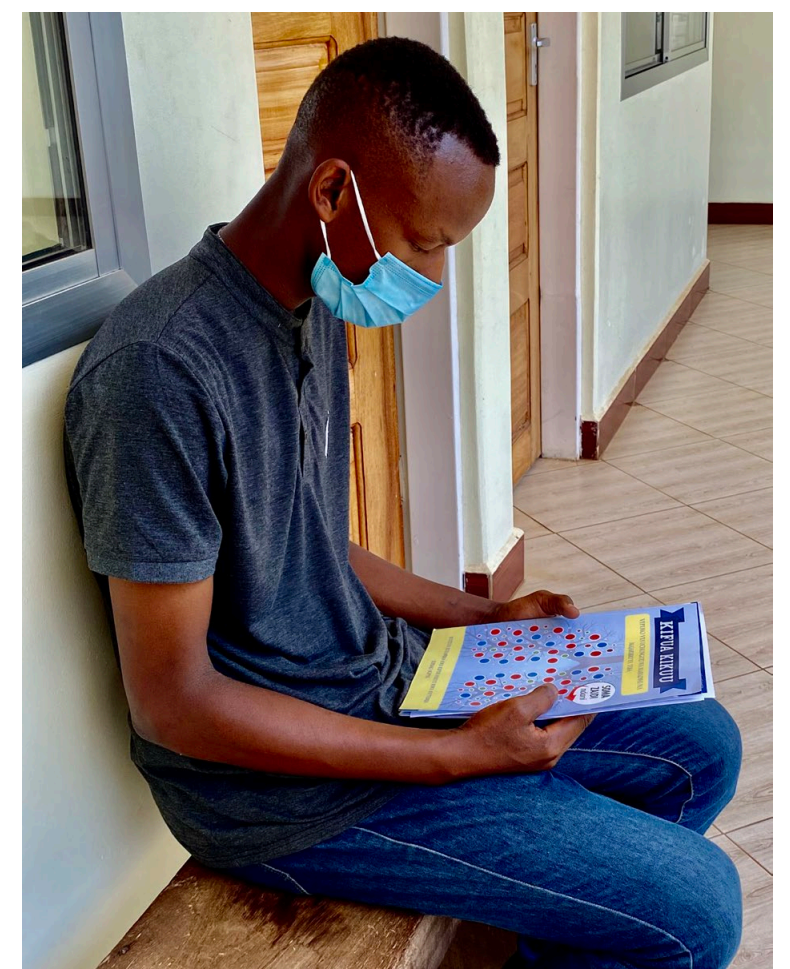
“ In some areas there is one Gene Expert machine for a lot of people.... I don't think the [Ethiopian] government even gives much attention. ”



Mekdelawit Wondiyfraw, Field Research Coordinator for the SeroSelectTB project in Sidama region, Ethiopia



Invited guests visited Kibosho Hospital, Narumu Dispensary, Kirua Vunjo Dispensary, Pasua Health Center, and/or Shirimatunda Health Center after the conclusion of the meeting.



Observing participant enrollment at Shirimatunda Health Center and SeroSelectTB test being performed by the research assistant.

Postcards from the field sites



EQC exercise performed at KCMUCo

External Quality Control (EQC) is a task included in SeroSelectTB WP3. Initially, we planned to send randomly selected sets of samples collected and tested at study sites in South Africa, Tanzania, and Ethiopia to KNCV in the Netherlands for EQC. More recently, it has become difficult to export human samples due to obligatory export licenses and prohibitively expensive shipping charges. Therefore, it was decided, with Steering Committee approval, to conduct blinded EQC exercises on-site. The first EQC exercise was conducted at KCMUCo on 26-27 February 2024 immediately prior to the national project meeting in Tanzania.

The aim of the EQC exercise was to investigate inter-reader and inter-test reproducibility, and compare the results obtained at the field sites with the EQC results.

A total of 175 serum samples were subjected to the EQC exercise.

All 175 samples showed a clear control band (C).

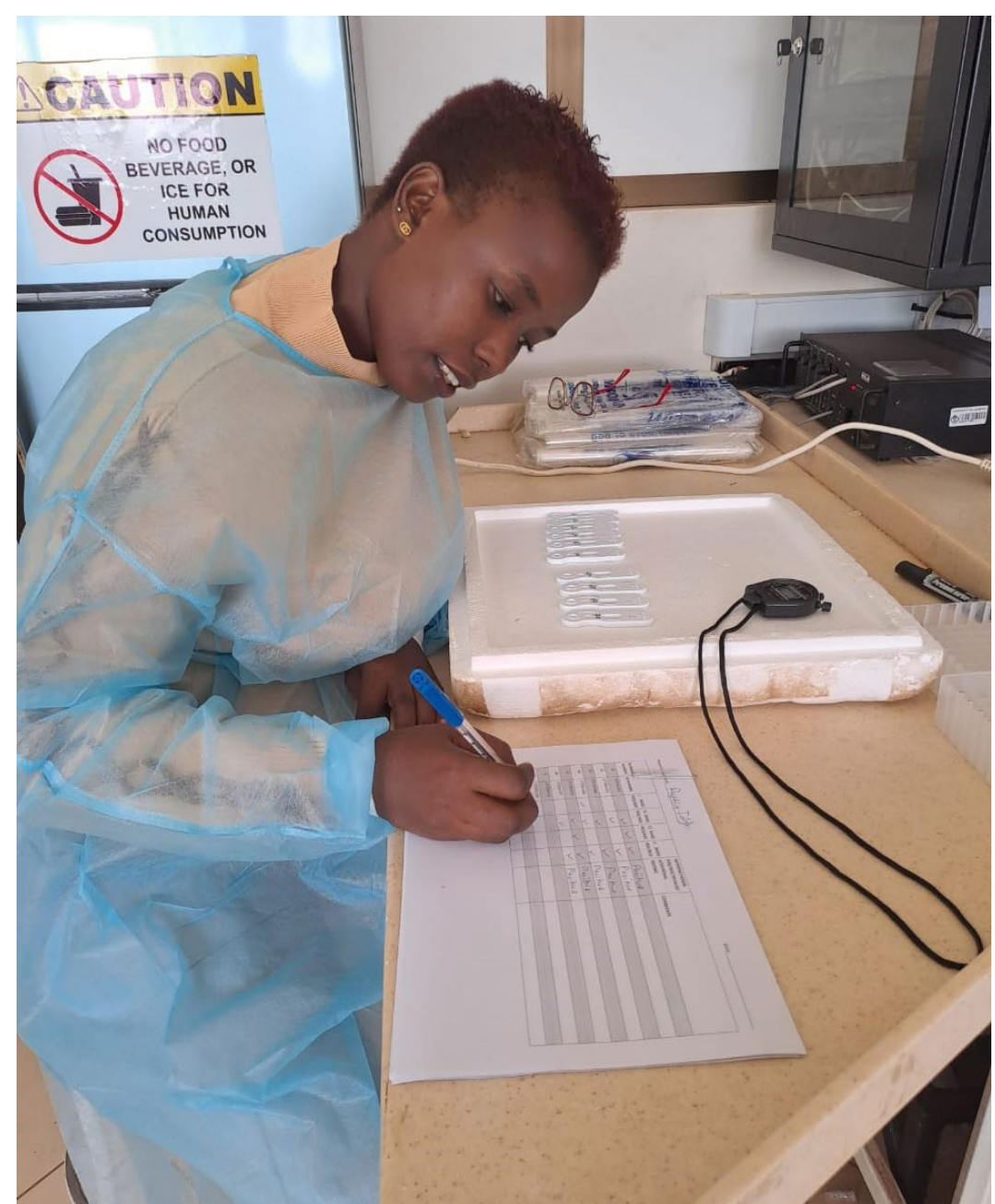
The two EQC readers were in full agreement about the interpretation of 161 (92%) SeroSelectTB test results.

The 14 samples that yielded discordant EQC results were subjected to retesting, and a consensus was reached.

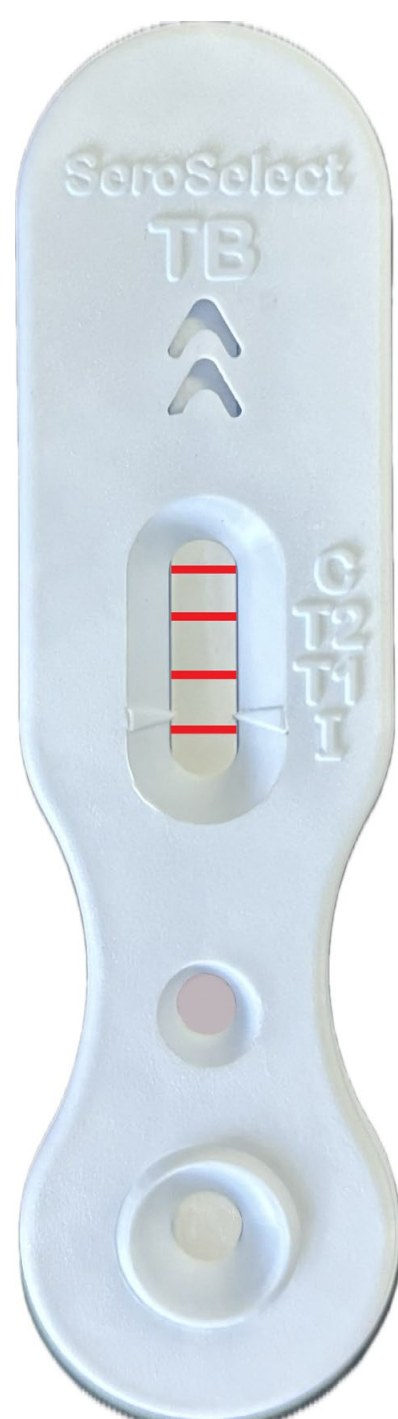
Discrepancies observed between results obtained at the field sites and EQC exercise were investigated and rectified. These results illustrate the importance of regular retraining activities.



Dr Kristin Kremer, Senior Scientist at KNCV



Ruphia Ramadhani, Laboratory Technologist at KCMUCo



SeroSelectTB test cassette with digitally labeled positions of the bands in red.

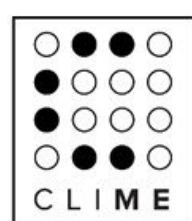
Looking ahead

- » The SeroSelectTB test is currently being evaluated by the FIND/FEND-TB network.
- » We aim to complete participant enrollment by the end of 2024.
- » A national project meeting will be held in Hawassa, Ethiopia, in September 2024.



The city of Hawassa, Sidama region, Ethiopia (picture taken from: <https://visitsidama.travel/destination/the-city-of-hawassa/>)

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