



# LUBOMBO

## Health Research Unit

### **LAUNCH EVENT**

29<sup>th</sup> June 2018

George Hotel, Manzini

@Lubombo\_HRU

#LHRULaunch

# **LUBOMBO**

## **Health Research Unit**

# **Introducing Lubombo Health Research Unit**

**Dr Nick Riches  
Public Health Doctor  
COMDIS-HSD / LHRU**

**LUBOMBO**  
Health Research Unit

# BACKGROUND



# About us

- Lubombo Health Research Unit (LHRU) is a research organisation based in the Lubombo Region of the Kingdom of Eswatini.
- Collaboration between:
  - Bradford Institute for Health Research
  - Eswatini Ministry of Health
  - Lubombo Regional Health Office
  - Good Shepherd Hospital, Siteki
- Supported by [UK-Eswatini research link](#)



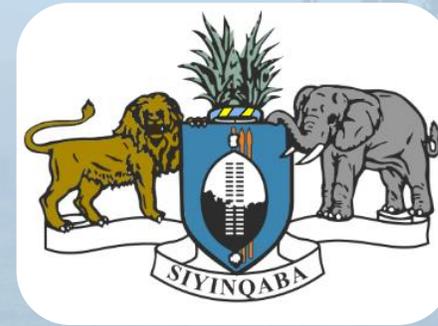
# UK-Eswatini research link

- This link has been delivering research in the Lubombo Region since 2005.
  - Arrangement between the UK Public Health training programme and Good Shepherd Hospital.
  - 16 UK Public Health Registrars have filled the post.
- Currently supported by **COMDIS-HSD**
  - a UK-based research group based at University of Leeds.
  - Focus on embedded research and development of health services.
  - Funded by UKAID until December 2018, then ownership of the link transfers to **Bradford Institute for Health Research**.



# Vision

- LHRU will work with regional and national stakeholders to design and deliver health research which can be rapidly translated into meaningful improvements in the provision of healthcare in the Lubombo Region and across Eswatini.
- This will lead to:
  - improved health outcomes
  - reduced variation in health outcomes
  - a trained workforce committed to research and continuous quality improvement



# Aims

## 1. Deliver impactful health research and quality improvement projects in the Lubombo Region.

- Research offer. Facilitate and host test bed innovation in Lubombo. If there are good ideas being proposed bring them to LHRU to see if we can field test.
- Evaluation offer. LHRU can provide support to partners in evaluating healthcare/research interventions (including support with methodology and statistics).

## 2. Bring together stakeholders from a range of disciplines to work collaboratively on health research.

- Healthcare / non-healthcare.
- Government / NGO / academic.
- Doctors / nurses / allied health workers / management.

# Aims

**3. Engage effectively with policy makers and health care professionals to identify and prioritise research needs and rapidly translate findings to improve services and outcomes.**

- Ensuring all decisions are informed by the best evidence available.
- Identifying and intervening to address research gaps.

**4. Support the training and development of the local healthcare workforce to increase capacity and expertise in healthcare research and quality improvement.**

- Improving access to appropriate CME (Continuous Medical Education) for all healthcare workers.
- Delivering training in research skills.

# Aims

## 5. **Prioritise research which targets marginalised groups, including isolated rural communities.**

- Recent research has included a focus on gender inequality.
- Priority given to neglected/underfunded conditions.
- Workplan should identify and prioritise any marginalised groups in Lubombo.

# Values

## A system wide approach

All activity will be:

- embedded within the local and national healthcare system
- informed by local needs and national priorities



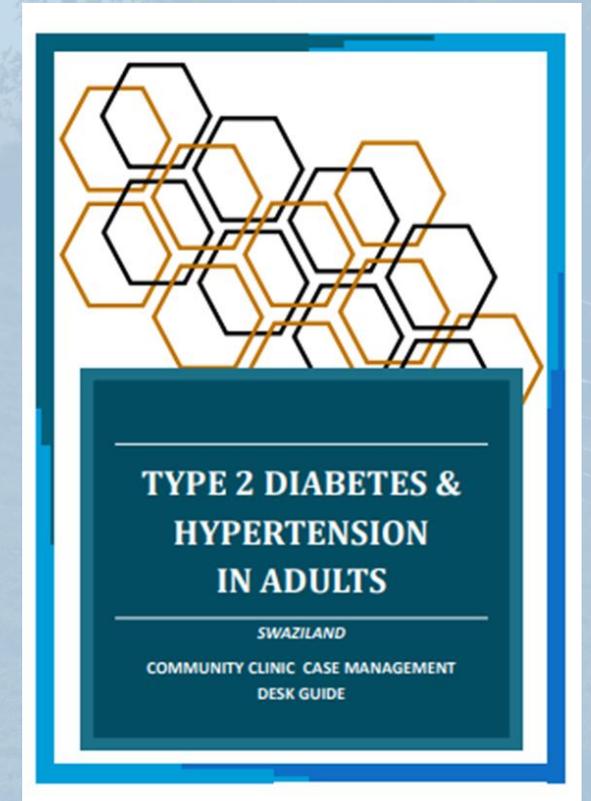
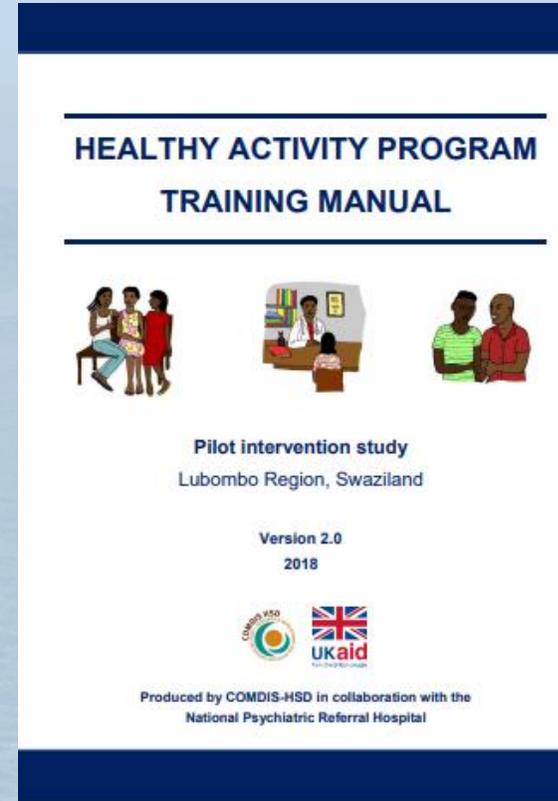
*National TB session on MDR-TB, infection prevention and control to community treatment supporters in Swaziland*

# Values

## A policy and practice focus

Research findings will be rapidly translated to:

- improve the delivery of healthcare in facilities
- support the development of national policies and guidance



# Values

## Nimble and flexible organisation

- The size and governance of LHRU will enable it to quickly take advantage of new opportunities and collaborations.



*Research assistant Archibald Nyamayaro training healthcare workers to deliver psychological counselling*

# Values

## Local identity

- The organisation and its staff will be based at Good Shepherd Hospital.
- We highly value the development of strong relationships with healthcare staff across the region.



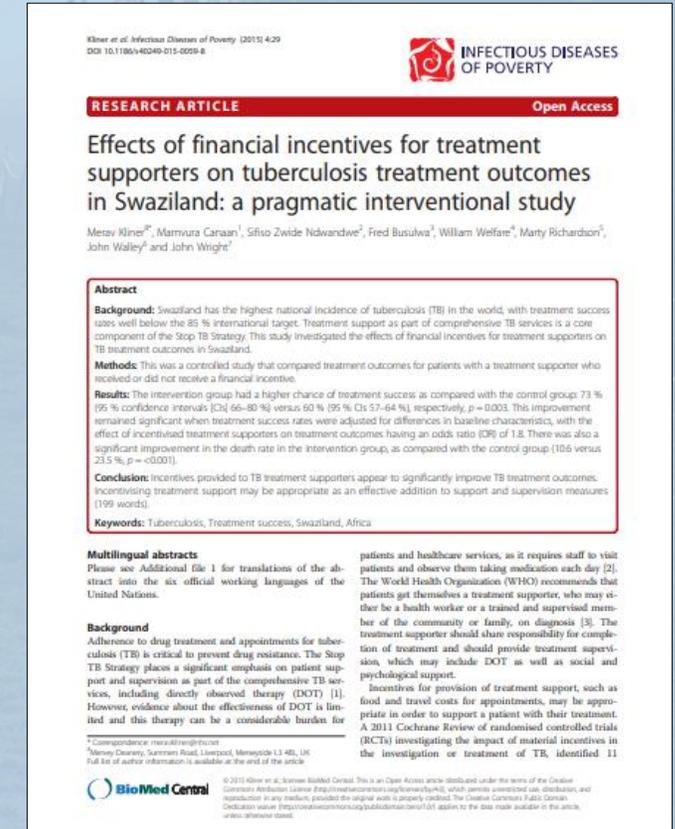
*Diabetes screening at family health promotion day Swaziland*

# Values

## Academic rigour

Work will be delivered by UK public health professionals and supported by senior academics ensuring:

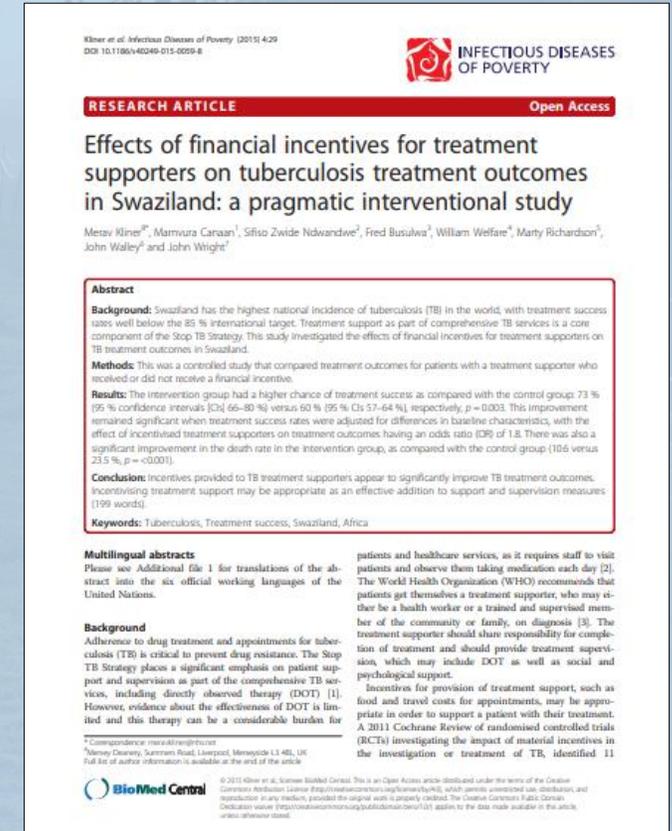
- methodological rigour
- publication of research findings
- opportunities for external grant funding



# Values

## Academic rigour

- **Research done in Eswatini must benefit Eswatini!**
- We will request that all health researchers in Lubombo share the following with LHRU:
  - **Project briefs:** One page overview of the aims and methods of each study.
  - **Policy briefs:** Short summary of main policy recommendations from research work.
  - **Research briefs:** Short summary of main research findings.
  - **Academic papers:** To-date, 18 publications from Eswatini research link, most in open-access publications.



# Work Plan

## Four thematic areas, initially:

1. Decentralising healthcare services
2. Co-ordinating research activity
3. Assisting with the Lubombo Regional Work Plan
4. Training and support of healthcare staff

**These will be further explored in the next session!**

### Lubombo Health Research Unit - Strategy

The Lubombo Health Research Unit (LHRU) is a new research organisation based in the Lubombo Region of Eswatini. It is a collaboration between the Bradford Institute for Health Research (BIHR), Eswatini Ministry of Health, Lubombo Regional Health Management Team and Good Shepherd Hospital, Siteki. It is being established as a means to catalyse and support the design, delivery and application of innovative research focused on improving the effectiveness, efficiency and accessibility of healthcare interventions in the Lubombo Region. It will build on the work of its predecessor organisation (COMDIS) which has delivered applied public health research in the Region for the previous 10 years.

#### LUBOMBO Health Research Unit

##### Vision

LHRU will work with regional and national stakeholders to design and deliver health research which can be rapidly translated into meaningful improvements in the provision of healthcare in the Lubombo Region and across Eswatini. This will lead to improved health outcomes, reduced variation in health outcomes and a trained workforce committed to research and continuous quality improvement.

##### Aims

- Deliver impactful health research and quality improvement projects in the Lubombo Region.
- Bring together stakeholders from a range of disciplines to work collaboratively on health research.
- Engage effectively with policy makers and health care professionals to identify and prioritise research needs and rapidly translate findings to improve services and outcomes.
- Support the training and development of the local healthcare workforce to increase capacity and expertise in healthcare research and quality improvement.
- Prioritise research which targets marginalised groups, including isolated rural communities.

##### Values

LHRU will adopt an approach to research which will be characterised by the following values:

- **A system wide approach.** All activity will be embedded within the local and national healthcare system and informed by local needs and national priorities.
- **A policy and practice focus.** Research findings will be rapidly translated to improve the delivery of healthcare in facilities and to support the development of national policies and guidance.
- **Nimble and flexible organisation.** The size and governance of LHRU will enable it to quickly take advantage of new opportunities and collaborations.
- **Local identity.** The organisation and its staff will be based at Good Shepherd Hospital in Siteki and will highly value the development of strong relationships with healthcare staff across the region.
- **Academic rigour.** Work will be delivered by UK public health professionals and supported by senior academics ensuring methodological rigour, publication of research findings and opportunities for external grant funding.

# Website

[www.lubombo-hru.org](http://www.lubombo-hru.org)

**LUBOMBO**  
Health Research Unit

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Delivering research which makes a difference in Lubombo

# Twitter

**@Lubombo\_HRU**



Tweets **5** Following **85** Followers **7** Lists **0** Moments **0**

## Lubombo Health Research Unit

@Lubombo\_HRU

Launches 29/6/2018. We design, deliver and apply research to make healthcare in Lubombo more effective and accessible for all. Supported by UK-Eswatini PH link.

Tweets **Tweets & replies**

You Retweeted



**Peter Corry** @pccorry · 16h

Replying to @dajohnwright @Lubombo\_HRU

Good to see more international health collaboration for Bradford.  
[@CityOfResearch](#) [@bradfordmdc](#)



# OUR TEAM



# Multidisciplinary team

## Core multidisciplinary team meeting monthly

- Representatives from:
  - Swaziland Health Research Department
  - Lubombo Regional Health Office
  - Good Shepherd Hospital
  - Other stakeholders...
- LHRU Public Health Registrar / Head of Research
- LHRU Research Assistant(s)
- Lubombo Resource Officer



# LHRU staff

## LHRU Public Health Registrar

- Senior UK Public Health practitioner training to become Consultant in Public Health. Rotate annually through Good Shepherd Hospital.
- Skills include:
  - Communicable disease control, emergency preparedness and response
  - The design and delivery of healthcare interventions
  - Research methods, health policy, health economics, health promotion
- 2017-2018: Dr Nick Riches
- 2018-2019: Dr Nina Putnis

# LHRU staff

## **LHRU Research Assistant**

- Funded by UK-Eswatini link to support the Registrar in the core aims of LHRU
- Current Research Assistant: Archibald Nyamayaro, Clinical Psychologist

## **Lubombo Resource Officer**

- Funded by Eswatini Ministry of Health to support training and capacitation of healthcare staff in Lubombo.

# Academic partners

## Bradford Institute for Health Research (BIHR)

- Research partnership between the UK health service (NHS) and Universities of Bradford, Leeds and York.
- **Professor John Wright**
  - Director of Bradford Institute for Health Research
  - Former Medical Officer at Good Shepherd Hospital
  - Established link with Public Health Training scheme



*Prof. John Wright*



# Academic partners

## Other academic partners



### **Professor John Walley**

- Professor of International Public Health
- Co-Research Director of the Communicable Diseases Health Service Delivery (COMDIS-HSD) research programme
- University of Leeds, UK



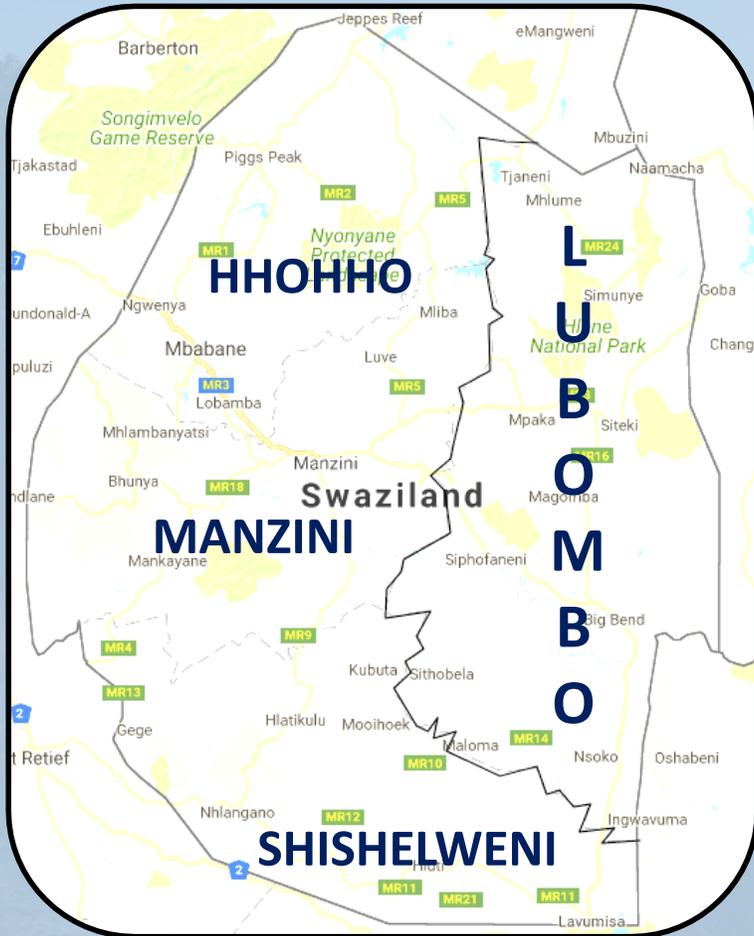
### **Dr Stephen Knight**

- Senior Lecturer and Principal Specialist in Public Health Medicine
- University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

# LUBOMBO



# About Lubombo



## Population

- Growing population, currently 212,531
- 80,312 people aged 0-14 (35% of population)
- Rural population – population density (36 people per sq. km) much lower than national average (63). Many isolated communities.
- Levels of prosperity are below-average for Eswatini with many dependent on subsistence farming.

2017 Census

# About Lubombo

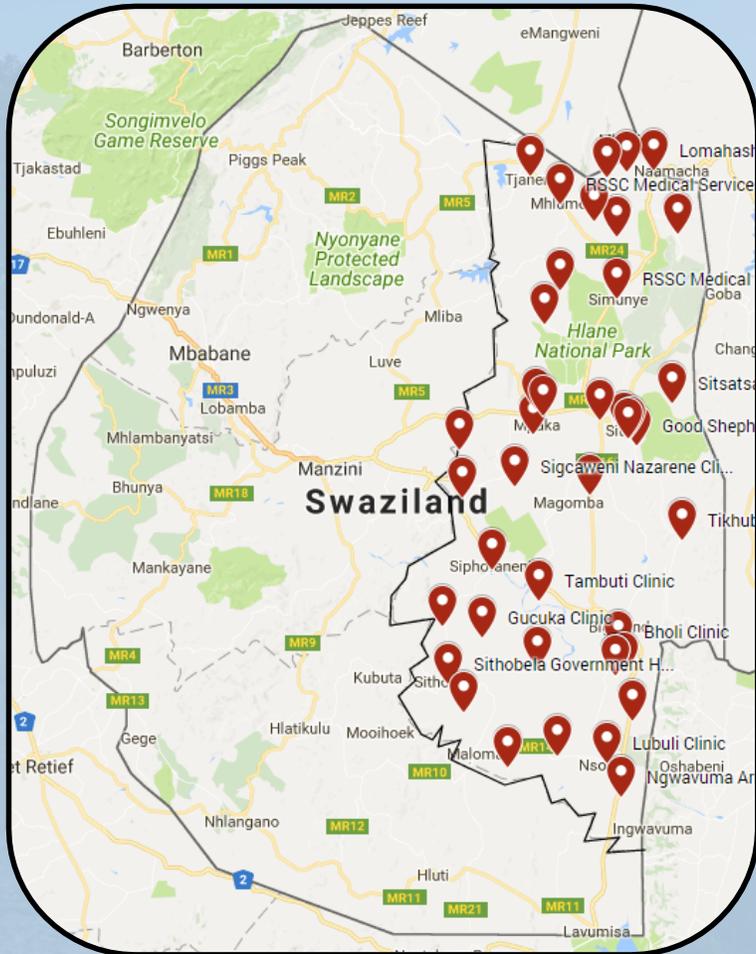


## Health

- Current HIV prevalence in Lubombo is 29.4% or 38,500 adults.
- Increase in non-communicable diseases (such as diabetes and hypertension).
- 58% of children have a chronically ill parent.
- High adolescent birth rate.
- 1 in 6 women deliver without support from a healthcare worker.

2017 SHIMS-2 study. 2014 MICS survey

# About Lubombo



## Health system

- Lubombo has pioneered novel approaches to the decentralisation of healthcare provision to its network of 40 nurse-led community clinics.
- This has covered diseases including HIV, TB, diabetes, hypertension and mental health.
- The history of applied health research makes Lubombo an ideal location to test novel approaches to delivering healthcare in Eswatini.

# RESEARCH



**LUBOMBO**  
Health Research Unit

# Approach to research

We follow the COMDIS model: “*Four stages of embedded research and development*”:

1. **Design and deliver** service delivery package in line with MoH national priorities.
2. **Pre-test and pilot package** (e.g. guidelines, materials and research tools) in partnership with local NGOs and MoH.
3. **Implement the service delivery package** once any necessary changes (identified in pre-testing and piloting) have been agreed, and evaluate the impact of the package.
4. **Scale up** successful service delivery packages with support from ministries and NGOs. This involves getting the evidence from using the service delivery package into national and international policy and practice.

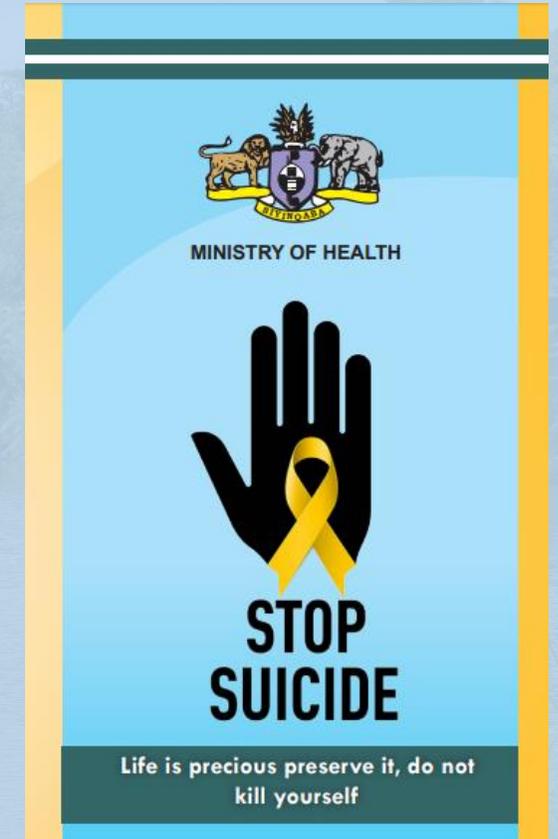




# Current research: Mental health

## Background

- 2014 STEPS survey found:
  - 1 in 11 Swazis had suicidal thoughts in previous 12 months
  - Only 1 in 4 sought professional help
  - 1 in 30 have attempted suicide
- Our screening survey of 298 HIV patients in Lubombo found :
  - 16.8% suffering from clinical depression
  - 9% report recent suicidal thoughts
- This corresponds to 6,500 depressed HIV patients in Lubombo (31,700 across Eswatini)



# Current research: Mental health

## Research activity

- LHRU/COMDIS-HSD are delivering a research study at 9 clinic sites in Lubombo, evaluating:
  - Screening tools for depression
  - A form of nurse-led simple structured counselling (HAP)
- Intervention consists of:
  - **Development of resources:** For patients and nurses.
  - **Training:** Mental health and HAP counselling training.
  - **Screening:** Systematic screening of HIV/TB patients.
  - **Counselling:** 5-8 x 30 minute sessions at 2-weekly intervals.
  - **Ongoing monitoring and evaluation**

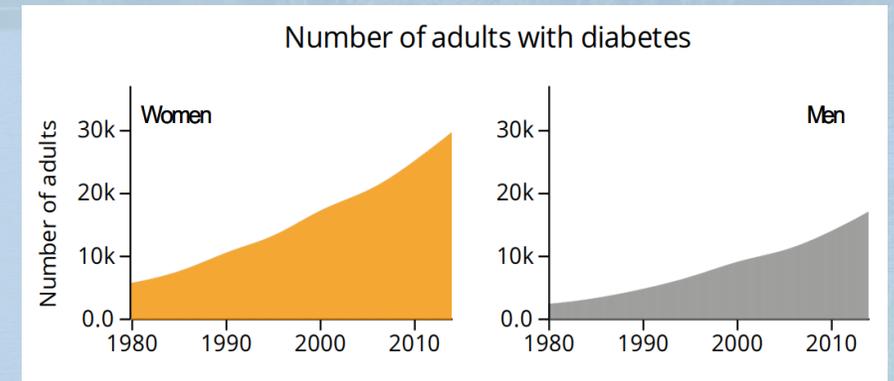
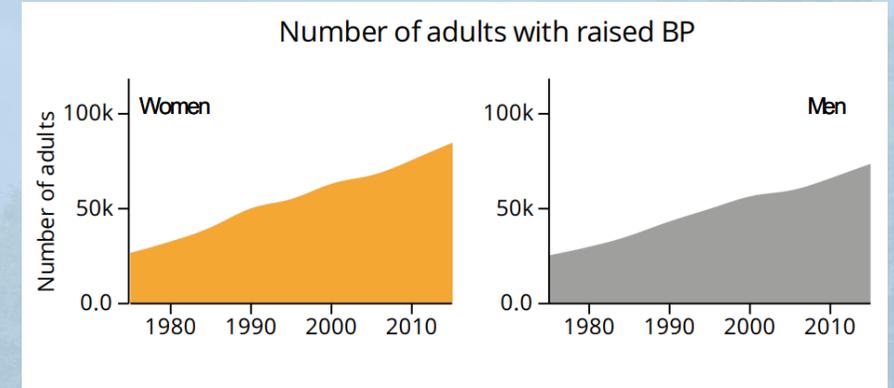


# Current research: NCDs

## Background

- Non-communicable diseases (e.g. diabetes, hypertension) are an increasing cause of morbidity and mortality in Eswatini.
- Female BMI now highest in Africa.
- Rates of hypertension / cardiovascular disease will soon overtake HIV.
- Diabetes prevalence projected to increase 50% from 2010 to 2025.
- **Early detection and treatment is critical.**

<http://www.ncdrisc.org/downloads/country-pdf/country-profile-Swaziland.pdf>



# Current research: NCDs

## Research activity

- 2014-2016 COMDIS-HSD pilot
  - 20 community clinics selected across Lubombo
  - 10 intervention, 10 control clinics
  - Intervention clinics received training and resources to deliver NCD care.
- Results:
  - Average systolic BP values in intervention clinics dropped by 10mmHg over study ( $p=0.01$ )
  - smaller non-significant fall in blood glucose
- NCD decentralisation now being rolled out across Eswatini.



# NEXT STEPS



# How can you get involved?

## Tweet!

- Follow @Lubombo\_HRU
- Tweet using #LHRULaunch

## Get in touch!

- We want to partner with anyone (programmers, providers, academia etc.) who shares our vision for improving healthcare services in Lubombo.
- Email: [lubombo.hru@gmail.com](mailto:lubombo.hru@gmail.com)
- Cell: +7835 3940
- Website: [www.lubombo-hru.org](http://www.lubombo-hru.org)

# Group discussion

1. Decentralising healthcare services
2. Co-ordinating research activity
3. Assisting with the Lubombo Regional Work Plan
4. Training and support of healthcare staff

## Each group choose a:

- Scribe to take notes on discussion points
- Spokesperson to feed back discussion to the group

## Discuss:

- How can your organisation work with LHRU to deliver this work?
- Be specific – what/who/how/when?...