

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



**ANNUAL RESEARCH MEETING OF NOGUCHI MEMORIAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL
RESEARCH**

THEME:

***“EPIDEMICS, PANDEMICS AND DISEASES OF PUBLIC HEALTH IMPORTANCE: BRIDGING THE
RESEARCH-POLICY DIVIDE”***

ADDRESS BY:

**PROFESSOR NANA ABA APPIAH AMFO
VICE - CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2022

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



Mr. Kwaku Agyeman Manu, Honourable Minister for Health

Dr. Yaw Osei-Adutwum, Honourable Minister for Education

Dr. Anarfi Asamoah-Baah, Presidential Coordinator for
Ghana's COVID-19 Response

Prof. John Gyapong, Former Vice Chancellor, University of Health
and Allied Sciences, Ho & Former Pro Vice-Chancellor (RID) of
University of Ghana

Mr. Yasuaki Momita, Representative of the Japan International
Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Dr. Gerald Mboowa, Representative of Africa Centres for Disease
Control (Africa CDC)

Dr. Francis Kasolo, WHO Country Representative

Prof. Julius Fobil, Provost of the College of Health Sciences,
University of Ghana

Professor Dorothy Yeboah-Manu, Director, Noguchi Memorial
Institute for Medical Research

Past Directors of the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical
Research

Staff of the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research and
the University of Ghana

Members of the Research Meeting Planning Team

Specially Invited Guests

The Media

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning to you all.

The world has over the last two decades witnessed and suffered from emerging and re-emerging disease threats including Ebola, pandemic influenza, Zika and measles outbreaks, with the most recent being the COVID-19 and Monkeypox pandemics. Ghana has also recently experienced a Marburg virus outbreak scare. These health threats have collectively resulted in significant loss of lives and livelihoods and continue to stretch health systems globally. Researchers around the world have been working hard to develop control and prevention measures against these health threats.

In Ghana, one of the flagship research institutes of the University of Ghana, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR), has been at the forefront of research into both

communicable and non-communicable diseases, surveillance and specialized diagnosis of most of these health threats.

The NMIMR has been a vanguard of biomedical and health research in Ghana and has over the years made significant impact in health policy and practice. Key amongst these are the Institute's contribution to the change in national anti-malarial drug policy in the early 2000s, its leadership in COVID-19 testing and diagnosis and the expansion of testing capacity through training of health personnel across the country. Other areas of the Institute's impact include COVID-19 sequencing capacity building in Ghana and across Africa as well as the hosting of several national, regional and international reference laboratories including those for Influenza, Polio, HIV drug resistance, Buruli Ulcer, Tuberculosis and diarrhoeal diseases caused by rotaviruses. Thus, the Institute is very well situated within Ghana's health system and works closely with almost all disease control programmes under the Ghana Health Service, impacting health policy, healthcare practice and delivery.

NMIMR's contributions to research, policy formulation and rendering of support for the health sector goes beyond the

boundaries of Ghana. The Institute has established partnerships with international health institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the West African Health Organization (WAHO) and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) to conduct research that is relevant to health promotion and delivery on the African continent, and to develop tools and systems for disease surveillance and diagnosis. One of such most recent partnerships has been NMIMR's recognition and resourcing by Africa CDC as a regional hub for COVID-19 viral sequencing, with the responsibility to sequence viral variants for Ghana and West African countries including Togo, Benin, Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as providing laboratory support and training in viral sequencing for some laboratories on the continent.

I am therefore extremely delighted that the Institute has taken this step to revive its Annual Research Meeting (ARM) which serves as an important avenue to disseminate research data that is relevant for healthcare delivery and policy formulation. This year's meeting, which is under the theme ***Epidemics, Pandemics and Diseases of Public Health Importance:***

Bridging the Research-Policy Divide, is expected to bring both seasoned researchers as well as young scientists together with policymakers and the media to foster the uptake and proper dissemination of research information to impact healthcare policy and practice.

The purpose and outlook of this research meeting aligns perfectly with the vision of the University of Ghana to become a “world-class research-intensive university” and my own vision to reinvigorate impactful research in the (applied) sciences and humanities, to contribute meaningfully to the country’s developmental agenda.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as you may be aware, the University of Ghana is in its 75th anniversary year with a number of programmes outlined to celebrate this significant milestone, as we reflect on the gains we have made and strategize for the future.

Over the years and through the dedicated efforts of research institutions such as the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, University of Ghana has distinguished itself as one of

the best universities in Africa and globally. NMIMR has impacted positively and significantly in the health sector in Ghana and beyond and continues to play leading roles in health research, policy decision and practice. I seize this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of every member of the Institute; including its administrative staff, researchers, and Directors, both past and present for your leadership.

Management is committed to ensuring that the Institute gets the necessary support from the University and the Government of Ghana to sustain the good work the Institute is noted for and to contribute to innovation in healthcare delivery while serving as a national asset for specialized capacity building in the country and the sub-region.

On this note, I welcome you all warmly to the University of Ghana and to the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research and wish you fruitful and impactful deliberations over the next two days.

Thank you for your attention.

Professor Nana Aba Appiah Amfo

Vice-Chancellor

November 17, 2022