

# African Interest Group



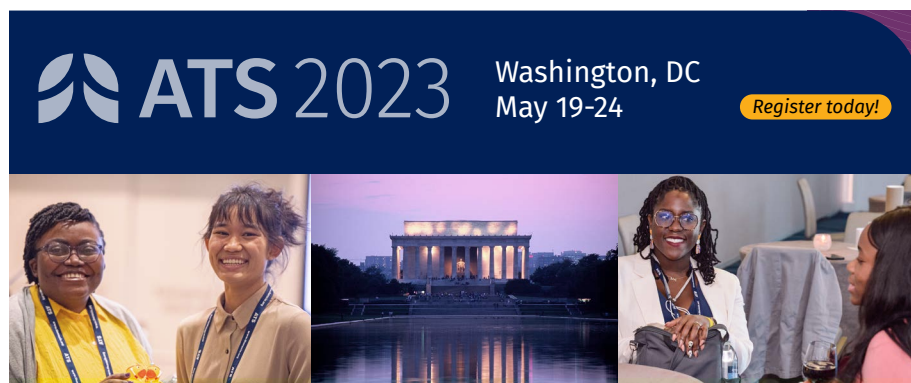
March 2023  
Co- Chairs, African interest group, ATS:  
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## The African Interest Group— Who Are We?

The African Interest Group (AIG) is a group of physicians within the American Thoracic Society (ATS) with a passion to advance respiratory medicine in Africa.

The AIG aims to:

1. Raise awareness of African issues within the American Thoracic Society and promote the interest of attendees of the ATS conferences from Africa
2. Support and create a niche for Africans attending the ATS international conferences.
3. Advance the science and practice of respiratory medicine in Africa by leveraging on the rich network of resources available at the ATS.



## ATS International Conference 2023

The ATS 2023 international conference is around the corner.

The conference will take place in Washington DC between May 19 and May 24, 2023.

The annual ATS conference is one of the world's largest gatherings of physicians and allied care professionals involved in pulmonary care and research. The ATS conferences show cases the most cutting-edge science in pulmonary research and advances in respiratory care from around the world.

This year's Congress promises to be very interesting as we reflect on all the advances we have made over the last few years of the COVID pandemic in pulmonary and critical care. ATS 2023 will be a great opportunity to network and engage with leading experts in pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine.

Registration for this conference has started. Take advantage of the reduced price of early registration. More information about registration, travel, visa and accommodation can be found in the ATS website.

## African Interest Group Meetings at the ATS 2023.



We will be holding a special AIG evening on Sunday, May 21, 2023. The time and venue will be communicated in the conference program/brochure. There will be space for poster display to showcase the best of respiratory research in Africa and a short keynote address. This year's keynote address is titled 'Developing partnerships to advance critical care in Africa'. It will be delivered by Dr Christian Bime, MD MSc., Associate Professor of Medicine/Clinical Translational Sciences and Medical Director - Medical

Intensive Care Unit BUMC, University of Arizona College of Medicine, Tucson, Arizona.

The presentation will take a deep dive into strategies for improving critical care in all African countries, and how to network and create the partnerships needed to achieve better critical care medicine in Africa. It will be very informative on advances in modern technologies and skill transfer needed to entrench this important aspect of medicine in African health institutions. The importance of critical care medicine has been further highlighted since the COVID-19 epidemic. There will be opportunities for question and answers, poster review, networking and meeting potential collaborators.

This annual ATS AIG event is a niche for all Africans and diasporans attending the ATS international conference. Plan to attend this very special event. We encourage you to come along with your posters for display during this meeting and to provide feedback for those who may be interested in your work. This event is also a great meeting place for all ATS conference attendees from all backgrounds who are interested in research, teaching, mentorship, collaboration, networking, advocacy and clinical care in Africa.

### Dr Obianuju Ozoh to Receive the World Lung Health Award at ATS 2023.



The African Interest Group (AIG) is pleased to announce that Dr Obianuju Ozoh will be receiving the prestigious ‘World Lung Health Award’ at the ATS 2023. Congratulations!!!. This is a well deserved award and a solid recognition for the work Dr Ozoh has done for respiratory care over the years.

Dr Obianuju is an associate professor at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Lagos, Nigeria. She has worked tirelessly to advance respiratory care and pulmonary research in Nigeria, Africa and around the world. She has also made significant contributions to the global lung health agenda of the ATS. She has been a champion for patient education, equity in healthcare and a strong advocate in the global effort to bridge disparities

in lung health in low and middle income countries.

We celebrate with Dr Ozoh for this great recognition from the American Thoracic Society.

The award event will hold at Walter E Washington Convention Centre Hall E in Washington DC on Saturday May 20th, 2023 during the opening ceremony of ATS 2023. The event begins at 4:30 PM.

If you are planning to attend this year’s ATS conference, please make it a date to be at this event.

Once again, from the AIG, a big hearty congratulation to Dr Obianuju Ozoh.

### Selected ATS 2023 Events With Focus on LMIC

1. Session Number: A4

**ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY IN GLOCAL CRITICAL CARE: CHALLENGES AND INNOVATION.**

Date: Sunday, May 21, 2023: 9:am- 10:30 am

2. Session Number: A89.

**CAN ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTIONS CHANGE THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH?**

Presentation: 2502, Household Energy Use in Low and Middle-Income Countries Affects Lung Health and Perpetuates Poverty.

Date: Sunday May 21, 2023: 2:15 PM - 3:45 PM

3. Session Number:D5

**Session Title: REVISITING BEST BUY INTERVENTIONS FOR THE DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC RESPIRATORY DISEASES IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES**

Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2023: 8.00 am to 9.30 am

There are also many interesting presentations scheduled for the international participant center.

## ATS African Interest Group Recognizes Dr Refiloe Masekela.

Monday, May 22, 2023, 11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.  
ATS International Conference, Washington, D.C.



Dr Refiloe Masekela, a distinguished pediatric pulmonologist and Head of the Department of Pediatrics and Child Health at the University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa is one of the featured speakers at this year's ATS Women's Forum. Her presence in the women's forum represents a significant milestone for our African colleagues and is a great accomplishment for the global respiratory community as a whole. Along with Dr. Masekela, the

forum will also feature a talk by Dr. Mina Gaga, MD, PhD, adding to the diverse international perspectives that will be shared. This is a unique opportunity to hear from these accomplished women and to join in the celebration of African female leadership in respiratory medicine and research.

The event will be held on Monday May 22, 2023, 11:45am at the ATS 2023. Don't miss out on this inspiring event!

## PATS Congress

The 2023 Pan African Thoracic Society congress will hold in Kenya between June 7- 10th, 2023. The venue of the conference will be Sarova Whitesands Beach Resort and Spa in Mombasa, Kenya. Check the congress website for details:  
<https://panafricanthoracic.org/congress-events/congress-2023>

## PATS MECOR

Registration is ongoing for the next PATS MECOR course. It will be held at Sarova Whitesands Beach Resort and Spa in Mombasa, Kenya from June 12- 16, 2023.

PATS MECOR is a reputable research course organized by PATS in collaboration with ATS. Visit the following link for more details.  
<https://panafricanthoracic.org/pats-mecor/kenya-2023>.

## ATS Travel Awards

Applications are open for the ATS International Trainee Scholarships (ITS). This award is aimed at providing scholarship support for international trainees to attend the ATS International Conference. If you are a trainee and have an abstract accepted, you will be eligible for selection. The award will cover most of the costs to attend ATS – but the competition is high as this is for all trainees around the world.

## Journal of the Pan African Thoracic Society

The Journal of the Pan African Thoracic Society (JPATS) is an open-access peer-reviewed journal committed to publishing high-quality articles in the field of Pulmonology (adult and pediatric), Critical Care, Sleep, and Thoracic Surgery.

JPATS aims to be the leading voice in respiratory-related research in Africa through the publication of high quality globally relevant research.

To access the journal go to: <https://patsjournal.org/>



# Advances in East African Training Initiative



The East African Training Initiative (EATI) is the first and only two-year fellowship training program in pulmonary and critical care medicine in Ethiopia and the broader East African region, based at Tikur Anbessa Specialized Hospital (TASH) in Addis Ababa. Today, EATI has graduated 18 specialists, including two pediatric pulmonologists and two physicians from Rwanda and Tanzania. These graduates now have leadership roles in hospitals throughout the country, including with the Ministry of Health and USAID projects, and participate in ATS, ERS, Open Medical Institute, and MECOR. They have established the Ethiopian Thoracic Society, which has in turn led to improved ICU development in regional hospitals, a national strategic approach to managing the COVID pandemic, and national tobacco control legislation.



As the training program has grown, TASH has been able to expand to provide comprehensive pulmonary care, with a Chest Clinic that sees up to 6000 outpatients/year, provides bi-weekly spirometry at ATS standards, bi-weekly bronchoscopy to assist with challenging diagnoses, as well as multi-disciplinary conferences with pathology, oncology, and thoracic surgery.

Since its inception, EATI has supported 136 manuscript and abstract publications, and the research aims have grown further with the establishment of the Center for Pulmonary and Critical Care Research in Ethiopia in 2019. Already, TASH is a site for the African Severe Asthma Project and has a strong interest in lung cancer and occupational lung disease.

## Post-TB Care: A Lung Health Initiative From PATS



The PATS lung health initiative (PALI) recently sponsored a workshop in Lagos, Nigeria to educate health care workers on treatment pathways for post-tuberculosis care.

Post TB syndrome is often associated with residual symptoms related to lung scarring both from Tuberculosis infection and possibly, its treatment and could demonstrate abnormal imaging despite microbiological cure.

Participants received training on evaluation of patients with post-TB lung syndrome and a referral pathway for further care at the specialist lung centre at Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH).



Recognizing these facts and avoiding a repeat prolonged anti-TB treatments has significant implications including economic and psychologic advantage over a stigmatized disease that more often affects the very poor. It also reduces the risks and adverse consequences of an unnecessary repeated TB treatments.

### Recent Publications of African Interest

Ratanachina J, Amaral AF, De Matteis S, Lawin H, Mortimer K, Obaseki DO, Harrabi I, Denguezli M, Wouters EF, Janson C, Nielsen R. Association of respiratory symptoms and lung function with occupation in the multinational Burden of Obstructive Lung Disease (BOLD) study. *European Respiratory Journal* 2023 61: 2200469; DOI: 10.1183/13993003.00469-2022

Knox-Brown, Ben, et al. "Small airways obstruction and its risk factors in the Burden of Obstructive Lung Disease (BOLD) study: a multinational cross-sectional study." *The Lancet Global Health* 11.1 (2023): e69-e82.

Arnold-Day, C., et al., Outcomes of patients with COVID-19 acute respiratory distress syndrome requiring invasive mechanical ventilation admitted to an intensive care unit in South Africa. *S Afr Med J*, 2022. 112(1): p. 13516.

Obaseki DO, Carter EJ. Training Specialists in Developing Countries: A new model. *Journal of Pan African Thoracic Society*. 2(1); 4-5.doi: 10.25259/JPATS\_31\_2020

Abdella S, Tessema M, Tasew G, Defar A, Deressa A, Regasa F, et al. Prognostic factors and outcomes of COVID-19 cases in Ethiopia: multi-center cohort study protocol. *BMC Infectious Diseases*. 2021;21(1):956.

Abebe W, Worku A, Moges T, Tekle N, Amogne W, Haile T, et al. Trends of follow-up clinic visits and admissions three-months before and during COVID-19 pandemic at Tikur Anbessa specialized hospital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: an interrupted time series analysis. *BMC Health Services Research*. 2021;21(1):731.

D. K. Huluka, A. W. Ashagrie, T. H. Gebremariam, H. Y. Ahmed<sup>1</sup> R. A. Abera, A. B. Binegdie, K. G. Gebrehiwot, M. Tadesse, M. Sultan, W. W. Dode, A. A. Tumebo, A. Abayneh, Y. Seman, T. Firew, C. B. Sherman, N. W. Schluger, D. A. Haisch. Strategic response to COVID-19 in Ethiopia. *Public Health Action*; 2022; Vol 12 No 4

Aschalew A, Kebed RA, Demie TG, Weldetsadik AY. Assessment of level of asthma control and related factors in children attending pediatric respiratory clinics in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *BMC pulmonary medicine*. 2022;22(1).

Ashamo AY, Bekele A, Petrose A, Gebreyes T, Etissa EK, Bekele A, et al. Assessment of hypertension and other factors associated with the severity of disease in COVID-19 pneumonia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: A case-control study. *PloS one*. 2022;17(8):e0273012.

Barros LM, Pigoga JL, Chea S, Hansoti B, Hirner S, Papali A, et al. Pragmatic Recommendations for Identification and Triage of Patients with COVID-19 in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*. 2021;104(3\_Suppl):3-11.

Binegdie AB, Brenac S, Devereux G, Meme H, El Sony A, Gebremariam TH, et al. Post-TB lung disease in three African countries. *Int J Tuberc Lung Dis*. 2022;26(9):891-3.

Gebremariam TH, Sherman CB, Schluger NW. Perception of asthma control among asthmatics seen in Chest Clinic at Tertiary Hospital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *BMC pulmonary medicine*. 2019;19(1):187.

Gebremariam TH, Haisch DA, Fernandes H, Huluka DK, Binegdie AB, Woldegeorgis MA, et al. Clinical Characteristics and Molecular Profiles of Lung Cancer in Ethiopia. *JTO Clinical and Research Reports*. 2021;2(7):100196.

Kirenga B, Chakaya J, Yimer G, Nyale G, Haile T, Muttamba W, et al. Phenotypic characteristics and asthma severity in an East African cohort of adults and adolescents with asthma: findings from the African severe asthma project. *BMJ Open Respiratory Research*. 2020;7(1):e000484.

Kebede D, Mekonnen D, Abebe S, Meshesha A, Mekonnen D, Deyessa N, et al. Prevalence and risk factors of pulmonary hypertension among adult patients with HIV infection in Ethiopia. *Pulmonary Circulation*. 2020;10(4):1-6.

Ozoh OB, Dede S, Eze J, Mortimer K, Chinouya M. Nigerian doctors' experiences of guideline-based asthma management: a qualitative study. *Journal of Global Health Reports*. 2022;6:e2022067. doi:10.29392/001c.56661