

October 9, 2024

For Dissemination

Research & Scholarly Opportunities for Harvard Students & Trainees

We are pleased to announce research and scholarly opportunities for Harvard students and trainees in Southeast Asia through placements with a consortium of partners including: the Harvard Medical School Global Program the **Partnership for Health Advancement in Viet Nam (HAIVN)**, a collaboration between Harvard Medical School (HMS), the Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, **HMS Center for Primary Care**, and the **University of Philippines Manila**. We are **offering health professional students the opportunity to apply for the 2024/5 Scholars Program**. This program centers on a 12-month research project that will contribute to Harvard's work within partner countries to advance people-centered care approaches within health system reform through knowledge generation, innovation and advocacy.

All Scholars will be supervised by Harvard faculty and local academics and will receive monthly teaching and regular support to assist them in completing their project. Each project includes a 4-6 week placement over the northern hemisphere summer, where students may be embedded with the local project teams in Manila and Tarlac, the Philippines, Hanoi or HCMC, Vietnam, and other country sites as they become available.

Ideal candidates will have a strong passion for challenges facing healthcare quality and access to care in low- or middle-income countries, primary health care, interest in medical education and/or quality improvement. Previous experience working in a low-or-middle-income country setting is preferred. Fluency in Vietnamese or Filipino is highly desirable, but not essential for the role.

Below is a summary of the projects that are available for the 2024/2025 academic year. Others may be available, by special request and initiative of the candidate, but cannot be guaranteed.

For each project, the expected deliverables will include the following (*this will be in addition to any core school/degree/training requirements e.g., if undertaken as an elective or practicum*):

1. Brief report with relevant literature review and proposed methods
2. Project-specific design outputs (e.g., survey tool, curriculum outline, training assessment)
3. Powerpoint presentation with on process, findings/outputs, and recommended next steps
4. One manuscript draft which may be used for publication
5. Personal reflection on lessons learned through the experience and cross-country collaboration

Interested candidates should submit a resume/CV and Letter of Interest to Rhea Racho (rracho@bwh.harvard.edu) and CC Dr. Bethany Holt (bethany_holt@hms.harvard.edu) before Friday 15 of November. The Letter of Interest should indicate:

1. Why the candidate is interested in this opportunity, indicating the specific project of interest (as described above). *Please indicate the Project Number (e.g. "Subj: Project X Interest") in the subject line;*
2. Relevant experience working in LMICs and/or the fields of interest;
3. How the opportunity will serve the candidates intended professional development;
4. If the candidate has any committed or possible funding sources which may be applied to this opportunity (i.e. travel funding, living stipend, etc.).

CURRENT PROPOSED PROJECTS

People-Centered Care Research and Advocacy

Project 1 - Lancet Commission on People Centered Care for Universal Health Coverage

- Background: HMS Center for Primary Care will house the Secretariat for the newly [announced Commission](#), kicking off background research this fall to prepare for the first in-person meeting in winter 2025; then coordinating original research in through spring 2025 to prepare for second in-person meeting in summer 2025
- Question(s)/Aim(s):
 - a. Literature review of the existing evidence base on people-centered care practices/approaches, and the development of key research questions for the Commissioners
 - b. Provide on-going/longitudinal support to the Commissioners in their work in Working Groups
- In-country activities: None - remote/Boston-based

Project 2 - Advancing People Centered Care Primary Health Care in Thailand

- Background: HMS Center for Primary Care has recently partnered with the Praboromarajchanok Institute, part of the Ministry of Public Health in Thailand, to strengthen their capacity for primary care research and education. One of the key innovations developed by PBRI is the "[PBRI Model](#)" for systematic screening and differentiated management of common chronic conditions.
- Question(s)/Aim(s): [*preliminary - to be discussed further with partners at PBRI*]
 - a. Support PBRI leadership to develop a research questions and protocols to demonstrate the benefits of the PBRI model and/or practice guideline for its implementation, including for example a research needs assessment survey to disseminate among PBRI colleges to help guide the development of regional research priorities
 - b. Support Harvard Faculty to design, develop and deliver courses in primary care excellence to visiting PBRI Executive (Boston, April 2025) and/or Faculty (Bangkok, July 2025).
- In-country activities:
 - a. Develop and conduct research needs assessments, develop research questions and support staff from local colleges to conduct and disseminate their research.
 - b. Support Harvard Faculty in developing course content for a primary care excellence (Boston-based) and assist in delivering the course during Summer 2025 (Thailand)

Implementation and Quality improvement

Project 3 - Community Engagement in Strengthening Integrated Treatment and Care of Hepatitis (StiTCH) in SE Asia

- Background: Through a public-private partnership with Gilead Sciences, partners are implementing a co-designed model of care in selected provinces of Vietnam and the Philippines
- Question(s)/Aim(s):
 - a. Improving community health literacy in chronic hepatitis
 - b. Explore associations between patient experience, stigma, health literacy and retention in care for people living with hepatitis B/C
- In-country activities:
 - a. Work with Yellow Warriors and/or Vietnam Women's Union to develop community educational programs/initiatives around hepatitis B/C
 - b. Work with in-country project staff to clean, analyse and report project data on patient experience and health outcomes

Project 4 - Global guideline implementation for Strengthening Integrated Treatment and Care of Hepatitis (StiTCH) in SE Asia

- Background: WHO recently released updated guidelines for the treatment of hepatitis B which expand eligibility criteria from 15% to ~50% of those chronically infected
- Question(s)/Aim(s):
 - a. Integrate updated eligibility criteria into model of care for hepatitis in primary care
 - b. Explore impacts of introducing expanded eligibility criteria on patient outcomes
- In-country activities:
 - a. Work with in-country stakeholders to update and implement training materials and protocols/SOPs
 - b. Work with in-country project staff to conduct QI on implementation and examine impact on patient outcomes

Project 5 - Community of Practice (CoP) to strengthen infection control and prevention, reduce hospital acquired infection and improve antimicrobial stewardship in Vietnam

- Background: Funded by USAID, this project aims to spread best practices in infection control and antimicrobial stewardship among 20 hospitals in Vietnam
- May be paired with Vietnamese medical student who will rotate to U.S. in summer 2025
- Question(s)/Aim(s):
 - a. Spread best practices and standardized tools for infection control and antimicrobial stewardship
 - b. Evaluate changes in practices and rates of hospital-associated infections among participating hospitals
- In-country activities:
 - a. Work with in-country stakeholders to develop and implement training materials and protocols/SOPs to support provincial hospitals
 - b. Assist in coordination of the CoP including data management, knowledge management and dissemination, communication
 - c. Participate in data synthesis, analysis and manuscript preparation of outcomes of CoP interventions in 20 hospitals

Education and training

Project 7 - Strengthening medical education for students and trainees in Vietnam

- Background: Funded by USAID, partners work in >20 medical schools across Vietnam to support the review, design and implementation of competency-based medical education
- May be paired with Vietnamese medical student who will rotate to U.S. in summer 2025
- Question(s)/Aim(s):
 - a. Develop curricula and training materials for undergraduate and post-graduate curricula on emerging topics: i) provision of care for person-centered care/caring for marginalized individuals; ii) sexual orientation and gender identity
 - b. Participate in data synthesis, analysis and manuscript preparation related to undergraduate and post-graduate medical education reform and program accreditation (WFME)
 - c. Participate in evaluation of faculty training courses to build capacity to develop a physician National Licensing Exam
- In-country activities:

- a. Work with in-country project officers and local medical school faculty, to either conduct a literature review and develop materials to support the design of a curriculum and training materials on emerging topic
- b. Design and implement a research and publication plan using existing, available project data (e.g., Joint Comprehensive Readiness Assessment (JCRA), project indicators, University internal training/self-assessment data) and apply it to WFME accreditation

EXAMPLES OF PAST PROJECTS

Primary care workforce development in hepatitis service delivery in Vietnam/Philippines

- Scholar(s): Naeema Hopkins-Kotb (HMS MD Y4), Marwa Al Mubarakah (HMS GHD Y1)
- Mentor/supervisor: [Dr Bethany Holt](#)
- Question(s)/Aim(s): How effective is the current training and support provided to primary care professionals in terms of improving their competency and experience with delivery person-centered hepatitis care? What are the opportunities for further strengthening of the curriculum and professional development/support model?
- In-country activities: In partnership with local project officers, design, conduct and analyse the results of healthcare worker experience survey and/or focus groups and design, deliver and analyse the results of competency-based assessment
- Project-specific output(s): New provider experience survey to evaluate stigma among healthcare providers; case-based vignettes to add to provider competency assessments

Stigma reduction in the HIV care system in Vietnam

- Scholar(s): James Ricks (HMS M1)
- Mentor/supervisor: [Dr Lisa Cosimi](#)/Dr Todd Pollack
- Question(s)/Aim(s): Does the measurement and quality improvement efforts related to stigma in the health system improve quality of care for individuals at risk and living with HIV?
- In-country activities: Work with in-country project officers to measure stigma and discrimination, patient experience, and health literacy, analyze data, and design interventions to address identified needs.
- Project specific output(s): Abstract developed on analysis of stigma and discrimination and resiliency

Hospital-based quality improvement efforts to reduce infection rates from central lines in the National Pediatrics hospital in Vietnam

- Scholar(s): Naomi Schmeck
- Mentor/supervisor: [Dr Todd Pollack](#)
- Question(s)/Aim(s): Work with PI and project team members to describe quality improvement efforts to reduce Central Line associated bloodstream infections in the Vietnam National Children's Hospital (VNCH) and a network of affiliated hospitals.
- In-country activities: Work with in-country project officers to develop curriculum and train to spread QI efforts to additional facilities using a community of practice approach.
- Project specific output(s): Report and presentation reviewing the implementation of CLABSI prevention and surveillance at VNCH over the last 5 years (2019-2023) with recommendations for improvement and next steps.

Reforming the medical education for health care workers, medical faculty and medical trainees in Vietnam

- Scholar(s): Sanavanan Thangarajan (HMS GHD Y1)
- Mentor/supervisor: [Dr David Duong](#)
- Question(s)/Aim(s): Develop curricula and training materials for undergraduate and post-graduate curricula on health equity, social determinants, emerging public health threats and climate change associated diseases and impacts
- In-country activities: Work with in-country project officers and local medical school faculty, to either conduct a literature review and develop materials to support the design of a curriculum and training materials on emerging topics

- Project specific output(s): baseline survey on student and faculty knowledge and preferences related to climate change and health; deployment and analysis of results; Manuscript drafted