



Mental Health and Well-Being Foundation October 2019 News Letter

**GHANA HIGH COMMISSIONER TO AUSTRALIA H.E.
MR EDWIN N ADJEI VISITS GHANAIAN STUDENTS AT
University of Newcastle (UON) NEWCASTLE -
AUSTRALIA**



**Congratulations to Dr Yaw Amankwa Arthur for
completing his PhD in Mental Health Literacy**

HIS EXCELLENCY WITH THE LEADERSHIP TEAM AT UON

Visit to UoN-His Excellency Mr Edwin N. Adjei- Ghana High Commissioner to Australia

His Excellency visited UoN on the 29th July in New Space and was welcomed on behalf of the University by Pro-Vice Chancellor Tony Travaglione. Dr Francis Acquah and Dr Yaw Arthur from the Mental Health and Well- Being Foundation for Ghana also attended. Throughout the day, 20 Ghanaian PhD students had the opportunity to meet His Excellency with 15 presenting their research. His Excellency was impressed with the University's commitment to Ghana and Africa in general. His Excellency committed to:

- Briefing his Government on the quality of educational training and research provided through UoN
- To promote UoN as the preferred Australian University for Ghanaian students.
- Explore opportunities for further scholarships
- Work with his Government to increase employment opportunities for graduates on completion of their studies.
- To continue to support the work of UoN in Ghana.
- To meet and further discuss the above outcomes at the Australia/Africa University Network (AAUN) forum at the University of WA early September



Attendance included the following :

Dr Sidsel Grimstad, Dr Patricia Johnston, Professor Jim Jose; Associate Professor Frank Agbola, Dr Janet Dzator; Ms Elaine Terry, Executive Office for the Faculty of Health and Medicine Ms Jodi Davis, Associate Director UniAccess

Mental Health & Well Being Foundation participates in the Centre for African Research Engagement and Partnership presentations by Ghanaian PhD candidates

The Centre for African Research Engagement and Partnership, a virtual Organisation is located in the University of Newcastle (UoN) under the direction of Associate Prof. Chris Kewley. University of Newcastle has been very supportive and committed to African students including providing various forms of scholarship. Therefore, this flagship centre was created to provide a unique platform to showcase how the university is committed to engaging with universities within African countries particularly those within the sub-Saharan African region. Again, to illuminate the research projects that African students within UoN are undertaking and the contributions of African academia within the university. In addition, the centre seeks to look for new opportunities to working with African universities in research and engagement. With these objectives in mind, 29th July 2019 was set aside to showcase the fantastic research work that Ghanaian PhD candidates are undertaking in mental health and economics. It is worth to note that, Associate Professor Chris Kewley have done work and research in Ghana and had been instrumental in the organisation of four conferences of the Mental Health & Well-Being Foundation (MHWBF) including securing full scholarship and providing academic support for five PhD students.

Interestingly, within the period of 2016- 2019, about 92 Ghanaian students including 26 PhDs have enrolled in UoN pursuing various programme such as Mental Health, Nursing, Public Health, Politics, Economics, Business and Education. A large percentage of this increased is a direct result of the partnership between the MHWBF and UON.



Presentation Title: Prevalence and Associated Factors of Psychological Distress among Ghanaian Gold miners.

Winifred Asare-Doku

Abstract

Studies have found that the mining industry is faced with work- related stressors like job insecurity, conflict with colleagues/managers, job isolation and long working hours with commonly reported issues being anxiety, depression and substance use. They experience more psychological distress compared to other occupation types . The focus of this study is to determine the prevalence of psychological distress and its associated workplace factors in the mining industry in Ghana. A cross-sectional survey was conducted in a gold-mining population in Ghana. Participants completed measures of psychological distress and key variables across two categories (socio-demographic characteristics, work attitudes and characteristics, health behaviors). Associations between psychological distress and key variables were tested using logistic regression models and chi-squared test of association. Analysis concluded / suggested that. The following factors, psychological job demands, financial factors, social networks, high recent alcohol use, employment category, and shift type were significantly associated with psychological distress. The findings indicate that social, personal and work factors are associated with psychological distress. This is the first study to examine the characteristics associated with mental health problems in the Ghanaian gold mining industry .

I would turn this round and sound more authoritative Sample size and which employment category Link with significance



Suicide bereavement in families: Exploring the experiences and postvention among families in Ghana.

Jennifer Peprah, Associate Professor Frances Kay-Lambkin, Dr Conor Gilligan, Associate Professor Joseph Osafo

Jennifer is a PhD (Psychiatry) student at the faculty of Health and Medicine, University of Newcastle. Jennifer's background is in Clinical Psychology with a research focus in mental health, suicidology and adolescent sexual health.

The World Health Organization (2014) estimates indicate that 1,000,000 people worldwide die by suicide each year. This makes suicide one of the leading causes of death and an important public health problem across the world. The individual as well societal burden of suicide is reported to include emotional and psychosocial ill health, lost productivity and personal distress to family members and friends and community members (Whitlock, Wyman & Moore, 2014). Suicide continues to be criminalised in Ghana with a lot of stigma, negative attitudes and cultural beliefs. When someone dies by suicide, people usually focus on the deceased. However, those bereaved are the real victims of the circumstance as they are left with the difficult task of making sense of the loss. Using a qualitative approach, the current study sought to explore the experiences of families, community reactions and postvention following suicide bereavement in Ghana. The preliminary findings show that, there is still a lot of stigma associated with suicide in Ghana and many people including some professionals feel uncomfortable to talk about it. The study will further provide guidelines and recommendations for postvention programs in Ghana based on what has worked in Australia.

Whitlock J, Wyman PA, Moore SR (2014) Connectedness and suicide prevention in adolescents: pathways and implications. Suicide Life Threat Behav 44:246–272

World Health Organisation (2014). Preventing Suicide: A Global Imperative. WHO. Geneva.