



### **About AMARI:**

The African Mental Health Research Initiative ([AMARI](#)) is a mental health research capacity building grant funded through the Developing Excellence in Leadership, Training and Science ([DELTAS](#)) in Africa, a programme of the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) implemented with the support of Wellcome and the UK Department of International Development.

AMARI is a consortium of four African universities namely; Addis Ababa University, College of Medicine - University of Malawi, University of Cape Town and University of Zimbabwe. These institutions are supported by three UK universities namely; King's College London, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

### **Goal:**

AMARI's overall goal is to build an Africa-led network of future leaders in mental, neurological and substance use (MNS) research in Africa. Mental health problems like depression, neurological conditions such as dementia, and substance misuse difficulties account for a huge proportion of disease burden in sub-Saharan Africa. Only around ten percent of people experiencing MNS problems get the treatment they need. Our researchers are working to reduce this treatment gap by first understanding MNS conditions in sub-Saharan Africa, then designing and testing treatments to get people the help they need.

### **Aims:**

- To equip African mental health researchers to lead high quality mental health research programmes that meet the needs of their countries at the same time establishing a sustainable career path for these researchers. A particular focus is on integrating MNS research into existing programmes such as HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health work.
- To shift the centre of gravity in global mental health (GMH) by ensuring that African scientists become leaders in GMH research, training and implementation.
- To select and train research fellows at masters, PhD and post-doc in research excellence and leadership so that their research findings contributes to narrowing the African mental health treatment gap and prevention of mental health disorders.

### **Achievements:**

- Successfully recruited and trained 48 MNS fellows (19 MPhils, 24 PhD and 5 post-docs) in research excellence and leadership.
- AMARI fellows published their research findings in high quality scientific journals (over 80 publications).
- Successfully built leadership skills of AMARI PhD and post-doc fellows through adaptation of the KCL Career Development Series on Leadership, Management and Mentoring.
- Designed and tested an advocacy and systems change strategy for each AMARI country, the strategy was aimed at building sustainable career pathways in MNS academia.

- Developed and ran the research skills course outline comprised of 8 training workshops delivered to all the PhD and post-doctoral fellows.
- Developed and ran the MPhil introduction to Mental Health Course to all the MPhil fellows.
- Mental Health research webinars were delivered to MPhil, PhD and post-doctoral Fellows.

**Future Plans:**

- The second phase of AMARI will see expansion of the consortium to six African countries with the addition of Ghana and Zambia.
- To develop a cohort of independent research leaders through a network of early and mid-career researchers who will raise funds for research and capacity building.
- To provide implementation research skills required to take to scale promising initiatives from AMARI-I and new initiatives in AMARI-II.