

Early Career Researchers online café

- **Purpose of ECR online café** : an informal online meeting with Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to discuss ideas of what the GSA could do to support ECRs working on schistosomiasis.
- **Objectives:** Identify challenges and needs of ECRs, and ideas of potential support that the GSA could take forward.

27 July 2023



Early Career Researchers Questionnaire

- Shared through GSA network and partner networks in May 2023
- To help us develop the content, structure and running of this online meeting.
- The short questionnaire asked about career stage, topic suggestions, language preferences, and challenges, needs and desired support for ECRs.
- Number of respondents: 101
- English survey: 89, French survey: 12
- Students (PhD, Msc, Undergrad), research associate, junior faculty, postdocs.
- Africa (mainly Nigeria), Europe, USA



Schistosomiasis Early Career Researchers

The [Global Schistosomiasis Alliance](#) will be hosting an informal online meeting with early careers researchers working on schistosomiasis. This online meeting will be called **The Schistosomiasis Early Career Researchers Online Café**. The purpose of this online café is to discuss ideas of what the GSA could do to support Early Career Researchers (ECR) with ECRs themselves, to identify challenges, discuss potential areas and ideas of support that the GSA could take forward. **This form is the first step in understanding the needs of ECRs. We invite ECRs to fill in this form to help us develop the content, structure and running of this first online café.**

ECR Definition: We recognize that countries use different definitions for ECRs, and that the challenges faced will differ accordingly. **We wish to be as inclusive as possible, therefore we invite anyone who self-identifies as an ECR.** In order to help us structure the online cafe to capture all definitions and to support discussions for the different definitions we are using this form to assess career stages of all ECRs.

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this form. The information and data you provide will be used by the GSA solely for the purposes of the GSA ECR Online Cafe. You can request that your data is removed at any time by emailing Anouk Gouvras at anouk.gouvras@eliminateschisto.org

Online Café Programme

- Section 1 – Introduction and questionnaire findings
- Section 2 - Breakout Discussion Groups
 - Share experiences of pursuing research in this area - what were some of the challenges
 - What have you found useful in your career development -share examples from your institute/network/experience
 - What are the top three actions you think would be most useful for the GSA to do to support Early Career Researchers working on schistosomiasis?
- Section 3 - Summary of ideas and networking opportunity
- Breakout discussion groups
 - Epidemiology, Burden and Unmet Need
 - Implementation Research, Diagnostics, Drug Discovery, Vaccines
 - Molecular Research and Immunology
 - Recherche moléculaire et immunologie
 - Environmental/Social Factors, and Behaviour Change

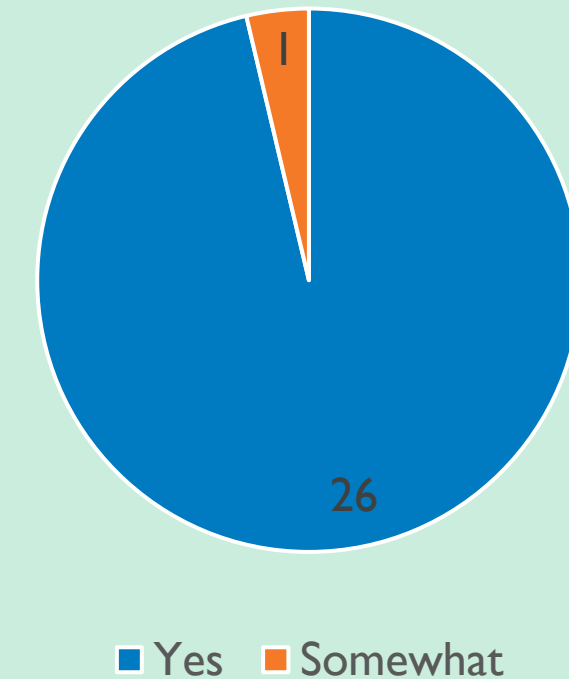
Registration and attendance

- 113 registered to attend the online café
- Countries: Nigeria, Ghana, United Kingdom, Germany, DRC, Kenya, USA, Rwanda, Cameroon and more
- Language preference: Majority English-only, some English and French, 7 French-only

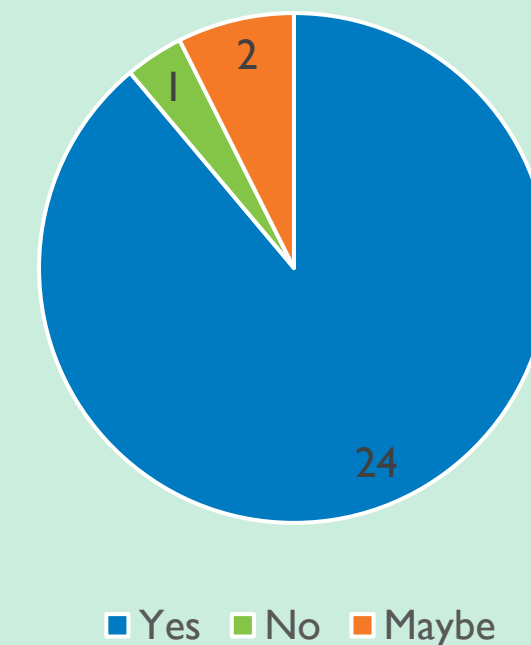
- 57 participants attended the online café

- Post online café survey – 27 responded.
- 12 found the ECR online café **Very Useful**, 5 found it **Somewhat useful**.

Do you think the programme was well thought out?



Do you think this online cafe or similar discussion meeting for early career researchers should be repeated?



Summary of challenges and needs discussed

List of ECR Challenges:

- Finding funding
- Lack of networking opportunities
- Lack of training especially molecular and statistics/bioinformatics
- Lack of access to resources and facilities/infrastructure
- Monopoly of knowledge and lack of knowledge/methodology sharing
- Access to samples/lack of biobanks
- Lack of consistent, long-term funding to finish projects.
- Finding platforms/networks that facilitate exchange of knowledge, especially methodology and SOPs

List of what would be useful to ECRs:

- Mentoring
- Training on molecular and statistics
- Networking opportunities and exchanging ideas
- Sharing info on accessible biobanks, e.g. through FIND's online biobank
- Advocacy from researchers and GSA to private organisations etc that may be interested in diagnostics, drugs and vaccine developments.
- Meetings and courses for knowledge exchange on methodologies etc – sharing info when these meetings/courses are announced.
- Cloud computing support
- Publication fees support

Suggestions of key actions for the GSA to take forward for ECRs.

Action theme	Count
Networking and CoP	10
Comms listings	8
Training	7
Collaboration	6
Advocacy	4
Visibility	3
Funding	2
Mentoring	2

- Keen interest in networking and community of practice, i.e., peer to peer support systems.
 - Discussions brought up some useful ideas on types of platforms that could be used for peer-to-peer support and types of events for networking and methodology/knowledge exchange discussions.
- The next top interest is listings/repository of different available resources, from grants and funding to listing different types of training.
- Thirdly there's a request for GSA to organise workshops and training sessions directly.

Suggestions from the post-online café survey

- A platform for ECRs to collaborate, share, select topics (WhatsApp/Emails/other)
- Smaller, theme-specific online cafés
- Live training sessions
- Consider time zones and timing
- Invite experienced scientists to join and provide guidance/mentoring in discussions
- Opportunities for ECRs to present research – short presentations/rapid fire
- Francophone specific sessions
- More time for interaction and discussion
- Quarterly meetings for ECRs to connect and discuss
- Regional/country representatives

GSA RWG to discuss

- Set up an Early Career Researchers community of practice / network platform.
 - Use WhatsApp or Telegram?
 - Use email group?
 - Have a sign-up form?
 - How to lead/how to manage?
- Set up a GSA Early Career Researchers steering group / secretariat / advisory group.
 - Could guide set up and platform of ECR CoP/network.
 - Could manage ECR CoP/network
 - Could guide GSA activities for ECRs including training/networking meetings
 - How many? How to select/invite volunteers/votes?
- Look at what GSA could do to support training, networking and collaborations.
- Ensure GSA Schistosomiasis Research Update newsletter is relevant and shared with ECRs
- Other ideas?

Global Schistosomiasis Alliance

- GSA website www.eliminateSchisto.org
 - Resource Collections
 - Webinars
 - GSA Online Network – become a member
- GSA Newsletters and Bulletins eepurl.com/dyjac9
 - Schisto Bulletin newsletter, covering schistosomiasis news circulated every 3 months.
 - Frequent Schistosomiasis Research Update Bulletin.
 - Adhoc announcements to mailing list.

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Thank you!

