Terms of Reference

Part-Time Research Assistant	University of Liberia School of Public Health
	College of Health Sciences
	AM Dogliotti College of Medicine Campus
	Catholic Junction, Monrovia, Liberia
	Web site: https://ulsoph.org
Project:	Assessing Social, Demographic, and Clinical Drivers of COVID-19 Vaccination Behavior in post-Ebola Liberia
Project Budget:	250 USD per month (Part - time; 24 hours per week)
Duration:	December 15, 2021 – June 15, 2021
Number of Positions:	1

Background Information on UL SOPH

UL SOPH. Since the Ebola outbreak ravaged West Africa, Liberia's leaders have been championing efforts to build a more resilient health system focused, in part, on epidemic preparedness, surveillance, and response as well as a fit-for-purpose workforce to drive the system. These efforts have included the development of local public health programs attuned to the evolving workforce needs. In March 2018, the University of Liberia Faculty Senate approved the curriculum for an MPH degree housed within the College of Health Sciences specifically in the School of Public Health (UL SOPH). The program is envisioned to provide students with a foundational understanding of core public health concepts and skills, as well as in-depth learning in a concentration area: Applied Epidemiology, Environmental Health, Health Systems Management, or Public Health Laboratory. MPH students engage in practicum experiences as well as on-campus research. This vision diverges from that of other public health academic programs in Liberia due to its focus on leveraging partnerships to provide classroom-based and real-world opportunities for competency training that will prepare graduates to serve in all tiers of the country's public health workforce.

Background Information on the Project

With support from the Sabin Vaccine Institute, a mixed methods study will be undertaken to investigate who in Liberia sought the COVID-19 vaccine and why they opted for it, what the experience has been since vaccination, and how likely they are to seek the second dose. The approach is intended to provide evidence to support EPI in planning its campaign to reach the vaccinated population with the second dose and to expand the overall coverage of vaccination. The EPI Unit will be engaged at all steps. Through communication with members of the vaccinated population, the study will as a secondary objective document reports of symptoms of acute respiratory illness since vaccination. We expect that the scale and diversity of the data to be collected will provide actionable insight that may not otherwise reach EPI.

Specific Objectives of the Study
- To describe the sociodemographic and health characteristics of the population of individuals who opted for COVID-19 vaccination in Liberia
- To investigate associations between the reasons for accepting the first dose of the vaccine and the reported intention of accepting the second dose
- To determine the incidence of acute respiratory illness symptoms among people who received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in Liberia

Methodology

The Research Associate will support the project by implementing quantitative research projects, with the supervisor's support. Research Associates will learn new skills and techniques, both through independent learning and regular discussions with the supervisor, to address the objectives of the projects. The goal will be to generate results that can be shared with local and international stakeholders via academic and non-academic presentations and scientific articles. In addition, the Research Associate will be required to attend and co-facilitate classes of the R and Biostatistics course series.

Responsibilities of the Research Assistant

Under the direct supervision of the UL SOPH project team and in compliance with the ToR, the Research Assistant is expected to:
- Dedicate three full working days (or 24 total hours) per week during the contract period.
- Be willing to self-learn new concepts and skills that are needed to undertake activities associated with the research objectives.
- Clean and work with sensitive patient data in an ethical manner.
- Participate in quantitative and/or qualitative data collection and data processing/management.
- Contribute to the recruitment and coordination of practicum students involved in the project.
- Offer administrative support to coordinate regular engagement between ULSOPH PIs and EPI as well as other stakeholders.
- Communicate progress and challenges via weekly updates to the ULSOPH PIs.
- Develop PPT presentations and scientific manuscripts, with support from the PIs, to disseminate research findings.

Responsibilities of the Supervisor

- Provide all required background materials in a timely manner.
- Be available to support the Research Assistant in achieving research tasks that may be new or less familiar.
- Provide feedback on work shared by the Research Assistant.
- Clearly communicate expectations overall and through assignment of weekly tasks.

Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience of the Research Associate

The Research Assistant should meet the following requirements:
- Minimum BA or BS degree required; preferred: Completion of or enrollment in a Master degree program in public health or a related field
- Successful completion of two semesters of graduate-level statistics courses; basic familiarity with statistical concepts; experience working with health-related data
- Previous experience with qualitative data collection preferred
- Strong written and verbal communication skills – writing sample will be required
- Attention to detail and excellent organizational skills
- Must be familiar with MS Office
- Access to a personal laptop with internet capability and space for downloading new software.
- Interest in social and behavioral factors associated with public health decisions in Liberia

Duty Station, Compensation and Timelines

Duty station: Works remotely and/or on AM Dogliotti campus to complete deliverables
Timeline: Approximately 24 hours per week (three days)
Indicative assignment dates: December 2021-June 2022.

Submission of Applications

Interested candidates should submit their application (in a single e-mail to skripla@ul.edu.lr and graywh@ul.edu.lr) by 5PM, Monday, 6th December 2021. Please ensure to include:

1. CV that demonstrates the required qualifications.
2. Letter with expression of interest that demonstrates understanding of the position.
3. Support documents, such as thesis work or manuscripts.