

## **Extent of co-existence of Trachoma with Schistosomiasis infections in Chikwawa District, Southern Malawi (Junior Fellowship: Dr. Khumbo Kalua)**

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Trachoma and schistosomiasis are common NTDs that are a leading cause of morbidity in Malawi. Currently there is no information regarding co-infections between trachoma and schistosomiasis. Risk factors for trachoma include dry areas with poor environmental hygiene while risk factors for schistosomiasis include readily availability of water that is not hygienically clean and harbors the schistosomiasis parasite. The applicants hypothesize that in districts where these infections are considered endemic; infections do not overlap in same communities. The study objectives are to compare prevalence rates and determine rates of co-infection in different areas within a district which have associated risk factors for trachoma and schistosomiasis respectively. The study will use mixed quantitative and qualitative methods in collecting clinical and laboratory data at community at different levels in Chikwawa District. Results of this study are likely to have a wider implication and lead to policy change where trachoma and schistosomiasis infections do/do not coexist. Targeted treatment guided by the research findings may potentially lead to cheaper and more cost effectiveness ways of administering drugs for NTDs, and eventually lead to reduced Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY) among endemic communities.

### **Projektbeteiligte**

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