

# New Partnership to Strengthen Digital Health Solutions in Africa

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, December 6, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Child Health and Mortality Prevention Surveillance (CHAMPS), and [Hasso Plattner Institute \(HPI\)](#) announce a new partnership aimed at applying technology and research to advance the understanding of [causes of stillbirths and child deaths in Africa](#).

This collaboration will focus on three key pillars: technology transfer to incorporate AI and other digital methods, capacity-building for young scientists, and support for CHAMPS' work in South Africa. Through this partnership, CHAMPS will benefit from the technical expertise and solutions of HPI, while the HPI researchers will gain the opportunity to transform data into concrete actions.

This joint effort aims to close the information gap and deliver solutions that could improve the health care in Africa, with a positive impact on the lives in the communities where CHAMPS is active.

Cynthia Whitney, M.D., MPH, Executive Director and Principal Investigator of CHAMPS, highlighted the significance of this collaboration:

"A partnership with the HPI Digital Health Research Cluster presents an extraordinary opportunity to amplify our impact by integrating cutting-edge digital technologies, fostering innovation, and strengthening the analytic capacity of our global network. Together, we can unlock new pathways to understanding and preventing child deaths, transforming data into action and building a healthier future for communities most in need."

Professor Shabir A. Madhi, CHAMPS South Africa Director and Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, emphasized the local impact:



(L to R) Ziyaad Dangor, Co-Director of CHAMPS South Africa, Victor Akelo, Senior Director of the Science, Site Strategy and Implementation Unit, CHAMPS Kenya, Bill Gates, Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Stefanie Plattner, Hasso Plattner Foundation

“The CHAMPS site in Soweto, South Africa, represents a convergence of innovation and urgent health priorities, addressing the needs of over 1.9 million residents in a community challenged by economic disparities and significant health inequities. Its strategic proximity to the Hasso Plattner D-School Afrika in Cape Town and the WITS VIDA Research Unit, which hosts CHAMPS South Africa, provides a fertile ground for collaborative innovation. Our goal is to deepen our understanding of child mortality while building local expertise to ensure lasting impact.”

CHAMPS is driving impactful results by accurately defining causes of child deaths and delivering actionable findings to decision-makers. To uncover why a child dies, CHAMPS employs a multi-faceted approach that includes collecting clinical data, conducting verbal autopsies, testing for pathogens, and analyzing [minimally invasive tissue samples \(MITS\)](#) using advanced PCR and pathology techniques. This collaborative initiative spans nine low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in Africa and South Asia—regions that bear a disproportionate burden of global child mortality.

The Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI) will apply its expertise in artificial intelligence to tackle critical challenges, including significantly reducing child mortality rates in Soweto and Johannesburg. By analyzing thousands of autopsy findings through machine learning, we aim to gain deeper insights into the causes of child deaths. These findings will inform the development of targeted interventions and help enhance health education in schools and communities. Ultimately, our goal is to reduce child mortality and increase life expectancy in the region.

Professor Lothar H. Wieler, Speaker of the HPI Digital Health Cluster and Head of the research group “Digital Global Public Health” highlighted “Digital Health will revolutionize medicine. This holds true both for public health and health care. While the potential is obvious, we are eager to implement this innovation, especially in settings that will profit most from it. We at the Digital Health Cluster are more than happy to now be part of research that prevents child death. By digitizing health records, automating image analyses and interpretation of medical information, and precisely informing target groups of our findings, we aim to prevent stillbirths and child deaths, unleashing the power of digitization and AI together with our CHAMPS colleagues. Initially concentrating in South Africa, we strive for digital inclusion of the most vulnerable. We are proud that Hasso-Plattner-Foundation opens the avenue for this new adventure, giving our young scientists the chance to make the world a better place”.

CHAMPS’ work would not be possible without generous funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as funding and collaboration from the Hasso Plattner Foundation.

Sampson Kofi Adotey  
Child Health and Mortality Prevention Surveillance (CHAMPS)  
sadotey@emory.edu

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