

History of KAVI Institute of Clinical Research

Kenya AIDS Vaccine Initiative (KAVI) was established in 1998 as a research unit within the Department of Medical Microbiology, College of Health Sciences, University of Nairobi, with an initial mission to conduct basic research in epidemiology of HIV and to carryout HIV/AIDS vaccine trials.

Over the years, KAVI experienced tremendous growth as a result of sustained funding, hence the development of human capacity, infrastructure and community mobilization catchment areas. By 2013, KAVI as a research unit had successfully undertaken eight HIV vaccine trials, two drug trials, thirteen epidemiological and basic research projects in addition to pioneering the development of mucosal sampling and standardization of mucosal immune assays. KAVI has also greatly assisted in the development of human capacity within the East African region by training various Institutional Ethics boards and clinical research personnel on research ethics, Good Clinical Practice (GCP) and Good Clinical and Laboratory Practice (GCLP). KAVI has also been involved in the strengthening of Laboratory management systems of various health institutions to prepare the institutions for accreditation.

This exceptional growth has brought about the transition from KAVI to KAVI-Institute of Clinical Research (KAVI-ICR). Indeed, KAVI-ICR is established on a strong foundation that includes more than a decade of clinical research, community engagement, the existence of a GCLP accredited laboratory facility and a modern information communication technology unit. The proximity to the country's largest referral hospital and access to a well-established ethics and research committee are some of the additional advantages.

Based on this foundation, KAVI-ICR aims to be a global research hub at the College of Health Sciences, University of Nairobi. In this context, the term 'global' is used to denote a focus on health issues that bring together a combination of skills, science and activities directed at research and training as well as maintenance and improvement of health of all people through a collective effort.

KAVI's skill base was predominantly in the area of infectious diseases in particular HIV/AIDS. However KAVI – ICR will undertake research not only in infectious diseases but also non-infectious disease. To achieve this, KAVI-ICR will collaborate with other departments within the College of Health Sciences and the wider University of Nairobi Community. In addition KAVI-ICR will partner with other local and international Institutions in order to leverage the necessary skills in the advancement of research and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

KAVI-ICR has two research sites – KAVI-KNH (located at the Kenyatta National Hospital, Medical School campus, University of Nairobi) and KAVI-Kangemi (located 10 km from the Nairobi city centre and within the Kangemi Health Centre) which is a community health facility established by the City Council of Nairobi.