



THE NUTRITION THEME ANNUAL MEETING 2016

Saltation and saltflats, hyenas and hepcidin, camping and calcium – however you look at it the Nutrition Theme’s Annual Meeting for 2016 was a resounding success. “The best scientific meeting I have ever attended” according to one of our international visitors. Four days in Keneba packed with presentations and discussion were followed by a morning of talks in Fajara to showcase our on-going research and foster cross-talk with the other themes.



Keneba’s newly extended and refurbished seminar room was the ideal venue for the 80+ participants including 10 international collaborators. The primary purpose of these annual meetings is to bring everyone up to date with progress achieved in the past year and to introduce new studies. A key feature is to brainstorm developing ideas and provide a venue for plans to be stress-tested under friendly fire.

In common with MRCG as a whole the Nutrition Theme needs to establish vibrant

and productive links with international collaborators yet to keep the intellectual centre of gravity within The Gambia. Bringing such colleagues to where the research happens is a key element of this strategy. Yet the core of the meeting was driven by a wealth of ongoing studies, emerging data and fresh ideas from within the home team that emphasises the current strengths within MRCG. It was particularly pleasing to have some more junior members of the group contributing excellent presentations.

Discussions and brainstorming outside of the main sessions often generate as much innovation as do the more formal discussions within the sessions, so opportunities for such interactions were maximised with communal

lunches and dinners. During these there was as much debate on the metagenomics of the gut microbiome as there was attention to providing it with much-needed nutrients. Some of the younger participants took less care of their sleep patterns, but we shall draw a veil of charity over that – at least for this year!

Accommodation in Keneba is stretched at the best of times and could not possibly fit all the visitors – our solution is to camp down on the nearby salt-flats – an



innovation that was treated with scepticism at first, but which is now viewed with relish. Thanks to Gambia's reliable dry season no tents are required – just wicker beds, mattresses and mosquito nets. We thank the tremendous 'ground crew' who ensured that the science was supported by great attention to detail and hard work on all the arrangements.



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