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## Lay Summary

# LuHeNAM – Post tuberculosis lung health in Namibia

### Research management

1. *Main applicant:*  
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2. *Co-applicants:*  
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University of Namibia  
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University of Namibia
3. *Partner institutions involved in the research project*  
Inselspital, University of Bern, University of Namibia, Ministry of Health and Social Services Namibia, NGO CoHeNa, Scientific advice: Institute of Social and Preventative Medicine University of Bern (Prof. Fenner), Centre Hospitalier de Vadouis (CHUV) Prof. von Garnier

### Short title

LuHeNAM – Post tuberculosis lung health Namibia

### Synopsis

LuHeNAM will investigate the impact of pulmonary tuberculosis, after successful microbiological cure, on lung- and general health in the Namibian population.

Little is known globally and in this particular population on post TB lung health, a long neglected, but common respiratory disease, which mostly affects patients in low- and middle-income countries.



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10 million new cases 2023      1.3 million deaths 2023      155 million survivors alive

**How do patients live after tuberculosis was declared cured?**

Very little is known about the lung health of TB survivors. Time to investigate the likely most frequent neglected lung disease in the world – Post TB lung disease (PTLD) !!!

LuHeNAM will investigate a cohort of TB survivors in Namibia for their post-TB quality of life, pulmonary sequelae, other lung disease - and bring them into care

Background: CXR from TB survivors in Katutura hospital, Windhoek, Namibia

## Project description

- **Context / background**

*Which current development in society leads to the main questions of the planned project? The aim is to describe the specific issue.*

Tuberculosis affects about 10 million new patients every year globally and 1.3 million die. But approximately 155 million are alive and have survived TB. Until recently we knew very little about those 155 million people, but it becomes more and more apparent that many of them DON'T live a disease-free life. In case of pulmonary TB up to 30% suffer from the very heterogeneous symptoms of post-TB lung disease (PTLD). In Namibia, with a TB incidence of approximately 470/100.000 one of the 10 countries with the highest TB incidence worldwide, we know almost nothing about the health of patients after tuberculosis. LuHeNAM should investigate the (lung)health of successfully treated patients with TB 12 – 24 months after the end of treatment.

- **Objectives and methods**

LuHeNAM should evaluate the burden of PTLD and other respiratory conditions and risk factors for PTLD. It should test novel assessment tools for PTLD, characterize in detail different phenotypes / clinical patterns of PTLD and propose specific interventions for prevention and therapy. The cross – sectional research

will be performed in the Khomas district / Katutura township of Namibia's capital Windhoek, in a very vulnerable community with a very low socio-economic level. Patients will be traced at their home by community health workers of the NGO CoHeNa, interviewed, screened for PTLD symptoms. Symptomatic patients will be assessed and characterized for PTLD clinical patterns by clinical assessment, lung function test, imaging of the chest, 6 min walk test and various blood test, and offered care at a dedicated hospital clinic by trained staff.

- **Significance**

PTLD is a common, neglected pulmonary disease with a high burden in low- and middle-income countries. Addressing global lung health requires to address not only i.e. asthma, COPD, lung cancer and interstitial lung disease, it urgently requires to care for patients affected by TB sequelae and more specific PTLD. The predominant prevalence of PTLD in poorer communities and the structure of TB care left many patients undiagnosed and untreated. It is time to change this, and LuHeNAM will contribute such overdue change.

**Start and duration**

01.09.2025 24 months

- **Amount of funding**

The SLA makes available a total amount of **110 000 CHF**

