



To:  
Prof. Dr. Mirjam van Reisen  
Global Coordinator  
VODAN-Africa  
LUMC  
The Netherlands

cc.  
Prof. Dr. Mark Musen  
Stanford University

Prof. Dr. Mpezamihigo  
Chair VODAN-Africa  
Kampala International University  
Uganda

Prof. Dr. Francisca Oladipo  
Executive Coordinator VODAN-Africa  
Kampala International University  
Uganda

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Dear Prof. Van Reisen,

**Re: Physicians Recommendation of VODAN-Africa**

We, the physicians associated with VODAN-Africa, are very pleased with the extensive work of VODAN-Africa. From our standpoint we see many benefits from our association with VODAN-Africa. The collaboration has built a platform for connecting health facilities across each other and one another, by obtaining complete integrated data of high quality. This means that doctors treating patients visiting any VODAN-Africa related health facility can – in future, enjoy e-health data interoperability, covering patient medical history, clinical data, laboratory data and radiological data.

VODAN-Africa establishes data sharing platforms and other clinical needs across Africa. This support will improve pathology data quality, collection, rapid fixation and biobanking. The exchange will also improve clinicopathology data linkages, incorporate multi-omics or imaging data using data aggregation and harmonization tools to facilitate interoperability, sharing, and discovery for specific preventable diseases like cancer, malaria, cholera and the

current one, COVID-19. VODAN-Africa has made it possible for physicians to collaborate with partner tech-companies and other consortium members in VODAN-Africa.

We have seen that the training of data stewards in our health facilities enhances better data collection and storage. This will support medical decision-making at point of care. In the past doctors were not privy to such data. The data infrastructure demonstrated by VODAN-Africa will make it easier to access and offer high quality health care services for us as medical physicians.

Through the VODAN-Africa research, we have also begun to realize that policy makers hardly have the right data to influence good patient-related policies. The VODAN-Africa platform has an approach to making data available for better policy-decisions on funding, infrastructure development and personnel recruitment by the government policy makers, international health organizations etc. From the available data, physicians can address patient safety from errors made in medical prescriptions and drug interaction. A big window has opened where physicians can network, enhance consultation and promote telemedicine. This patient data will enrich medical research in respective health facilities.

Specifically, VODAN-Africa has introduced the importance of data findability, accessibility, interoperability and reusability (FAIR) making data visiting automated. Each physician is aware of patient-data confidentiality, especially when visiting specific data. However, the VODAN-Africa platform for data-sharing only addresses aggregated data without names of patients. From this perspective, it does not contravene laws of respective countries on data confidentiality. Hence, physicians as data owners will preserve the control of their data while giving the opportunity for data to be interoperable. The physicians find VODAN-Africa as giving confidence and trust on data quality and specific data provenance. For instance, there will be a systematic review of biobanks in collaborative countries, to upload onto a data sharing platform and focus on epidemiological data to characterize a chosen disease across all countries.

We have also observed that sustainability of this innovation in health facilities and institutions is addressed by VODAN-Africa which provides the high-quality training conducted by research students and their professors. The trained data stewards from our respective health facilities can now act as trainers of trainees in respective countries to train other and to help improve the training in health information systems. We have seen the importance of planning seminars with stakeholders involved in data management to embrace FAIR data principles.

From this perspective, there will be improved patient data information exchange across stakeholders. Therefore, VODAN-Africa could also support different ministries of health (MOH), higher education and those handling electronic data in each country to train in FAIR data control and governance management. Because data stewards from each health facility would have been trained by VODAN-Africa, in technical skills and curriculum development, they too can become FAIR data tutors for the government, schools, colleges, universities and agencies.

Thank you for this opportunity.

We, the Physicians in VODAN-Africa,



Dr Jeremia J. Pyuza, Physician-Scientist At Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Hospital Pathology Department, Moshi, Tanzania



Dr Alex Mremi, Anatomical Pathologist and Head of department At Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Hospital, Pathology Department, Moshi, Tanzania



Dr. Samoel Ashimosi Khamadi Director, Centre for Virus Research, Kenya Medical Research Institute, Kenya



Dr Asma Awadh, Director Kibra Langata Sub County Ministry of Health and General practitioner Nairobi City County, Kenya



Dr Mariam Ghardallou, Associate Professor of Preventive and Community Medicine at Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of medicine, University of Sousse, Tunisia



Dr Magnus Chinemerem Ogaraku, National Secretary, Society for Telemedicine and ehealth in Nigeria, Director of Health Services, Fulokoja University, Nigeria



Dr Geoffrey Mutuma, Zambezi Hospital, Kenya



Dr. Bwaga, Obstetrician and Gynecologist at Hoima Regional Referral Hospital, Uganda



Dr. Maxwell Okello, Director Kampala International University Teaching and Research Hospital, Ishaka, Uganda



Dr. Bisrat Tesfay, Internal Medicine, Ayder Referral Hospital, Ethiopia



Dr. Amanuel Haile, Doctor of Medicine, Ayder Referral Hospital, Ethiopia.



Dr. Kibrom Gebreslassie, Surgeon and Medical Doctor, Acting Director Ayder Referral hospital, Ethiopia



Mahlet Mehari, Reproductive Health, School of Health, Mekelle University, Ethiopia



Kobob Gebru, Mental Health Practitioner, School of Psychology, Mekelle University, Ethiopia



Dr. Kebede Gofer, Physician Radiology Department, John F Kennedy Hospital, Monrovia, Liberia