



Bridget Chukualim was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone and grew up with her father, founder of the first commercial training college in Freetown and a passionate advocate for advanced education. While in secondary school she loved to read histories of famous scientists, and was always intrigued by their discoveries. Now married with three children of her own, she enjoys reading and playing tennis.

Bridget graduated in 1991 from the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria with her BSc in biochemistry. She earned her MSc in bioinformatics in 2006 from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom, and in 2010 she began studying for her doctorate in medical informatics at the University of Cambridge in the UK.

## **Bridget CHUKUALIM**

### **Home Country**

Sierra Leone

### **Degree**

PhD in Medical Informatics

### **Expertise**

Sleeping Sickness

### **Research Focus**

Comparative Genomic Analysis of Kinetoplastid Protozoa

### **Host University**

University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

### **Fellowship Awarded**

2010

At Cambridge her research interest is in a comparative genomic analysis of kinetoplastid protozoa and related parasites. She is performing literature searches to identify novel drug targets in corresponding parasitic diseases such as *Trypanosoma brucei*, the causative agent for sleeping sickness in humans and for nagana in cattle. These diseases currently plague the sub-Saharan Africa continent, affecting more than 60 million people and contributing to loss of lives and cattle throughout the region. Related parasites include *Trypanosoma cruzi*, which causes the disease American trypanosomiasis (chagas disease), which affects about 11 million people in America, and leishmania, which causes the disease leishmaniasis and affects about 12 million people in tropical and sub-tropical regions worldwide.

Bridget's analysis of these parasitic genomes is aimed at dissecting the genetic susceptibility and resistance to trypanosomiasis. She hopes her work will help give rise to a better understanding of the pathogenesis of these diseases and lead to the production of more effective treatments and management regimes.

When she graduates with her doctorate, Bridget intends to contribute to the curriculum development of medical informatics research in Sierra Leone and other countries in West Africa.