



Nwamaka AKPODIETE

Home Country: Nigeria

Degree: PhD in Entomology

Expertise: Medical and Molecular Entomology

Research Focus: Mosquito larval ecological adaptation to environmental pollution and habitat modification

Host University: Keele University, United Kingdom

Fellowship Awarded: 2015

Nwamaka Akpodiete was born in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Her father is a car mechanic and driver who, despite having received only primary education, loved to read and write. He inspired her passion for books, especially English literature. Nwamaka's mother, who completed senior secondary education only after she was married, was determined to provide her children with more than she had received and made sacrifices to ensure that they all attended good schools. She paid for Nwamaka to go to Enugu State to complete her secondary education at one of Nigeria's prestigious Federal Government Colleges.

Nwamaka studied towards a BSc in Animal and Environmental Biology at the University of Port Harcourt, where she received the award for the best graduating student in her department. She spent her compulsory year with the National Youth Service Scheme in Edo State, where she participated in a farmer's club and outreach career guidance program for school students. Nwamaka then returned to Port Harcourt, where in 2014 she gained an MSc in Entomology and Pest Management. She is currently an Assistant Lecturer at the University.

Nwamaka's father once worked as a driver at an oil drilling site and complained about the number of mosquitoes there, despite pollution from crude oil that might be expected to make it more difficult for mosquitoes to survive. Some research suggests that oil pollution may actually be a factor leading to insecticide resistance in mosquitoes, and Nwamaka is investigating the ecological adaptations of mosquito larvae to environmental pollution and habitat modifications. *Anopheles gambiae*, the main malaria transmitting mosquito in Nigeria is the insect of interest.

After completion of her PhD studies, Nwamaka plans to return to teaching and research at the University of Port Harcourt. She also hopes to contribute towards the development of policies for more sustainable utilization of natural resources and management of ecology in the Niger Delta region.