



**LASHANDA SKERRITT**, Class of 2024

Education: BSc (Biochemistry), University of Ottawa

Supervisor(s): Alexandra de Pokomandy, Angela Kaida

Dpt: Family Medicine, Infectious Diseases and Immunity in Global Health

Work location: Centre for Outcomes Research and Evaluation, Research Institute of the McGill University Health Center

Project: Assessing the reproductive healthcare needs and priorities of women living with HIV in Canada

Selected Award(s): Vanier Scholarship, Fond de Recherche du Québec – Santé (FRQS), CIHR Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research- Evidence Alliance Grant

Research Description:

My research aims to understand the reproductive healthcare needs and priorities of women living with HIV in Canada. I apply participatory research approaches, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to examine gaps in reproductive healthcare and identify strategies to address them.

Why did you decide to pursue both MDCM and PhD degrees? What are your career aspirations?

I pursued the dual degree program intending to tackle health issues from multiple angles. My medical training allows me to focus on the individual patient. My research training has provided me with tools to study the health systems that patients navigate, and healthcare providers work within. My doctoral training has given me a strong research background and skills to pursue the complex research questions that interest me.

Why did you choose to study at McGill University?

McGill chose me. I am grateful to be training at a world-renowned institution in an incredibly supportive program and in a fantastic city.

What aspect of the MD-PhD program do you enjoy the most or are looking forward to?

The support from my colleagues has been one of the best aspects of training in this program. We support each other, learn from each other and share our challenges and successes.

What advice do you have for incoming MDCM-PhD students?

Despite being in the same program, our training paths and experiences are all different. Sometimes we need different conditions to thrive. Identify and regularly reassess your goals and needs. Don't be afraid to tailor your training path to create the right conditions for you to succeed.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I love being outdoors -- camping, canoeing, biking, swimming. I also enjoy wheel throwing and making things with clay.