



SCHOOL OF Clinical Medicine NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL

Dear Staff and Students of SOCM

I hope this finds you all safe and well.

We entered level one lockdown on 01 October 2020 and have come through the first wave of the COVID pandemic. I wish to congratulate and thank every one of you for your resilience and fortitude during this extremely difficult time. Thanks to each one of you, the School was able to continue the academic program which will be completed this year. This required innovation and hard work from staff to rapidly change over to online teaching, remodel assessments and rearrange clinical rotations. Similarly, students had to quickly adapt to the new methods of teaching and assessment, as well as learning to work in a very different environment.

COVID presents a risk to all of us, but particularly to healthcare workers, which adds mental stress to those dealing with the pandemic. Some hospitals and units were overwhelmed with very ill patients. Some staff and students became ill with COVID. Despite all of this, you rose to the challenge and have successfully negotiated the recent COVID surge. We are especially proud of the hundreds of students who volunteered to assist with the COVID response. These students demonstrate altruism and professionalism, two of the greatest attributes of a good doctor, which we hope to instill in all our graduates.

Although the country is gradually opening up and the numbers of COVID cases are declining, I urge you all to remain vigilant and to practice COVID prevention at all times (mask, hand sanitizer and social distancing).

I wish you all the very best in preparing for the upcoming exams.

Thank you again and keep safe.

Prof Daynia Ballot (Head of School)

A LOOK AT OUT STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations:

Associate Professor Deirdre Kruger with her appointment as Head of Research & Laboratories

Dr Charl Verwey with his appointment as Academic Head for the Division of Paediatric Pulmonology



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS	1
PROMOTIONS	2
HONORARY STAFF	2
OTHER STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS	2
COVID-19 APP TO ASSIST FRONTLINE WORKERS	3
SOLID, ALTRUISTIC GLOBAL LEADERSHIP	3
3RD RSSA & SASPI CONGRESS	5
STUDY TO INTERVENE EARLY TO TACKLE CHILDHOOD OBESITY	6
NEW SOCM TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS	6
CALL FOR JOE VERIAVA BIOETHICS MEDAL & MARGOT LACHMANN TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP AWARD - 2020	7
"UPTODATE"	8
SOCM MEETING DATES 2020	9
WITS JOURNAL OF CLINICAL MEDICINE	9



Staff Promotions:

Adjunct Professor Prof Willy Vangu to Personal Professor

Dr David Moore to Associate Professor

Dr Christopher Wareham to Associate Professor

Dr Herbert Cubasch to Associate Professor

Dr Gita Naidu to Adjunct Professor

Dr Francois Venter to Research Professor

Dr Janan Dietrich to Reader

Dr Catherine Draper to Reader

Dr Erica Shaddock to Senior Clinical Lecturer

Dr Andre Theron to Senior Lecturer

Welcome to:Honorary Professors

Prof Julia Goedecke

Prof Stephen Lye

Honorary Adjunct Professors

Adjunct Prof Dick Van Der Jagt

Dr Emmanuel Makasa

Dr Brent Tipping

Honorary Researchers

Dr Emily Mendenhall

Ms Luisa Whitelaw

Dr Ansuyah Magan

Honorary Senior Lecturers

Dr Linda Hlabangana

Dr Trevor Frankish

Dr Gladness Nethathe

Honorary Lecturers

Dr Charles Sanyika

Dr Zubrina Joan Solomon

Dr Christina Eleftheriades

Dr Mamaila Lebea

Dr Nhlakanipho Mangeni

Dr Nicolette Brown

Dr David Rakotsoane

Dr Togara Pamacheche

Dr Gihana Nkera-Gutabara

Mrs Carrie Minnaar

Dr Nivana Morgan

Dr Himani Pandya

Mrs Irma Mare

OTHER STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS**EMINENT WITS EPIDEMIOLOGIST ELECTED TO AFRICAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES - 2 September 2020 - Wits University**

Professor Shane Norris has been elected as a Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) for his work on the developmental origins of health and disease.

Norris is Director of the Department of Science and Innovation/National Research Foundation Centre of Excellence in Human Development based at Wits University. AAS Fellows are individuals who have reached the highest level of excellence in their field of expertise and have made contributions to the advancement of the field in Africa. Fellows are elected through a rigorous review process based on their achievements that include their publication record, innovations, leadership roles, and contribution to society.

"To be recognised by Africa's foremost science research organization is a great honour. My area of research – infant and maternal health and its social and economic repercussions for generations down



Congratulations Professor Shane Norris !

the line – has indeed received a boost and recognition of its importance in Africa," says Norris.

Norris's election acknowledges the critical work he has done in Africa, especially around the developmental origins of health and disease. His research focuses on lifecourse epidemiology with a specific interest in the development of intergenerational risk for obesity and diabetes. He also runs the Wits South African Medical Research Council-Developmental Pathways for Health Research Unit (DPHRU).

The DPHRU is part of the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health in the School of Clinical Medicine at Wits. The unit investigates genetic, physiological, psychosocial, and lifestyle determinants of growth and development; obesity and risk of cardio-metabolic disease; and healthy ageing through innovative multi-disciplinary methodologies across the life-course.

For the full article: <https://www.wits.ac.za/news/latest-news/general-news/2020/2020-09/eminent-wits-epidemiologist-elected-to-african-academy-of-sciences.html>



Congratulations to Associate Professor Ahmed Adam (Division of Urology) who has recently received an invite to the Editorial Board of the BJU (British Journal of Urology) International. It is one of the oldest journals (est 1920s) and amongst the most prestigious Urology journals in the world.

He is also been inducted as an interna-

tional member of the SIU Innovators:

A global think tank of innovation and advancement of early career urologists within the organisation of the global organization of Urology - the SIU (Société Internationale D'Urologie),

A NEW APP HELPS COVID-19 FRONTLINE WORKERS WITH MENTAL HEALTH –10 September 2020 - Ashraf Coovadia and Shaegan Irusen

Pasha 80: Fighting the coronavirus can put severe strain on a person's mental health.

Frontline workers in healthcare constantly have to deal with challenges of life and death importance. With this in mind, a team of researchers and health experts in South Africa developed an app to help healthcare professionals cope with anxiety and stress. The app connects healthcare workers to information, resources and each other. It recognises the importance of holistic protection.

at the University of the Witwatersrand, explain how the app works. They emphasise the importance of connecting with people and feeling more in control over an evolving situation.

To listen to the pod cast: <https://theconversation.com/pasha-80-a-new-app-helps-covid-19-frontline-workers-with-mental-health-145868>



Prof Ashraf Coovadia

Professor Ashraf Coovadia and Dr Shaegan Irusen, Paediatric specialists

Dr Shaegan Irusen



SOLID, ALTRUISTIC GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IS THE ONLY WAY TO FACE FUTURE CRISES AND WIN—9 September 2020 - Martin Veller and Ames Dhai

Covid-19 has taught us that investing in health security research, preparedness and responsiveness, nationally, regionally and globally, is critical.

For this to work and to beat similar crises in future, effective, credible, altruistic political leadership at all levels of society is needed.

The world as we know it has changed,

forever. The Covid-19 pandemic has achieved what a few outspoken voices had predicted. The emergence of the SARS-Cov-2 virus has affected every person in a multitude of ways, from restricting movement and changing interaction with others, to many losing their livelihoods and large numbers becoming infected and many of those infected, dying – more than 800,000 deaths have already been ascribed to the virus and evidence suggests

that this is a substantial underestimation (in South Africa, the current level of excess deaths is three times higher than the number of deaths that can be ascribed to Covid-19). It is, therefore, obvious that this pandemic is not just like any influenza epidemic (the 2009-2010 swine flu pandemic caused 300,000 deaths). On the other hand, fortunately, the lethality of this virus is modest when compared with the Spanish influenza pandemic of a century ago

that cost between 20 million and 50 million lives and the more recent West African Ebola outbreak, where 11,000 deaths occurred among the 28,000 infected (a 40% case-fatality rate).

What is patently clear, is that such events, whether they are caused by natural evolution of an infective agent or are human-made, will recur. During this week's virtual symposium organised by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Columbia University and the University of the Witwatersrand, titled Meeting the Challenge of Covid-19 in Africa, the key messages were:

That the world can overcome such threats if all nations and societies work in solidarity.

That tried-and-tested public health principles are effective. These primarily consist of using testing, tracing and isolation to reduce the rate of infections until vaccine-based prevention becomes available. Other methods to reduce the virus in circulation are also essential. In the case of droplet/airborne viral spread, this means limiting the movement of people, wearing facemasks, interpersonal distancing, enhancing dispersion of the virus by good ventilation and reducing the rate of transmission from hand to face by promoting effective and regular hand-washing.

That the only manner in which the SARS-Cov-2 virus will be relegated to becoming a seasonal, nuisance virus will be the development of effective population-wide immunity. To prevent undue mortality, this requires the development of effective, widely available vaccines.

That the world and every nation must be prepared and appropriately capacitated to prevent such threats from occurring,

and if this fails, to thwart such events developing by rapidly implementing the public health interventions listed above.

That threats of this nature have lasting effects not only on the well-being of people and the world's economy, but also on the world's sustainability. The consequences are long-lasting and cures, if they exist, take time and large amounts of money to develop. Furthermore, the focus on the acute problem invariably has other downstream costs in disrupted health systems and economies.

Mechanisms to prevent and manage pandemics are, therefore, essential. This requires that all countries have an effective public health system that is well run, and is adequately and consistently resourced. These entities must be in the position to rapidly deploy, using the most up-to-date, evidence-based health interventions and technologies. Their ability to advise the decision-makers and the populace must be unrestrained and protected from political interference. Importantly, the most effective tool available to these agencies is their communication about preventive public health measures, the importance of societal solidarity and the value of vaccination. Such messaging must be trusted by everyone in society and it is mandatory that this has political ownership in the highest office.

This requires that governance at all levels of society is ethical, strong, thoughtful and accountable. Such servant leadership is not only essential to ensure the level of international collaboration needed to allow for an effective global response, but more importantly is the quintessential element in implementing the local interventions, which at times may be harsh and unpopular. Trusted management, based on transparent decision-making, using the best scientific evidence available at the time and subsequent quality trustworthy communications are



Visiting Professor Ames Dhai

much more likely to reduce the rate of spread of the virus. Without trust, no measure will be implementable, no matter how effective the local enforcement agencies are, particularly in societies that are deprived or under threat.

That trusted leadership works in reducing the number of SARS-Cov-2 infections and minimises Covid-19 mortality has been clearly demonstrated in a number of countries. On the other hand, where trust in leadership is patchy or does not exist, high infection rates occur. Similarly, when political leadership has been in solidarity with neighbouring nations, regional outcomes appear to be better. As the Covid-19 pandemic has again shown, the biosphere has no borders. This also means that with the possibility of Covid-19 vaccines being available in the near future, immunisation equity will be central to global health security. In contrast, vaccine "nationalism" will impede the development of global immunity and global distributive justice.

As we have seen, human tragedy from rapidly spreading infectious outbreaks is profound, with extensive health, economic and social consequences causing monumental human suffering. The painful statistic of lives lost is only the first measure of impact. Covid-19, like the 1918 Spanish flu, has underscored how vulnerable the world is. Therefore, investing in health security research, preparedness and responsiveness, nationally, regionally and globally, is critical, even when no imminent crisis is apparent.

So what does this boil down to?

That the management of any pandemic, which arguably is the biggest threat to the wellbeing and survival of humanity, requires effective, credible, altruistic political leadership at all levels of society. Above all, this leader-

ship must be worthy of the trust placed in it. Anything less is paid for with lives, mostly by those who carry the burden of inequity and disadvantage.

Martin Veller is Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand and Ames Dhai a Visiting

Professor of Bioethics at the Wits School of Clinical Medicine and Specialist Ethicist at the Office of the President and CEO of the South African Medical Research Council.

This [article](#) was first published in the [Daily Maverick/Maverick Citizen](#).

THE 3RD RADIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA (RSSA) SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF PAEDIATRIC IMAGING (SASPI) CONGRESS

The 3rd Radiological Society of South Africa (RSSA) South African Society of Paediatric Imaging (SASPI) Congress took place from 6 - 9 February 2020 at Sandton, Johannesburg, It was co chaired by Professor Nasreen Mahomed. Nine International Faculties were invited. This was one of the largest and most successful Paediatric Radiology congresses in the African continent.

The Paediatric Neuroradiology Faculty: Professor James Barkovich, Dr Chen Hoffmann, Professor Susan Palasis, Professor Zoltan Patay, Professor Sanjay Prabhu, Professor Andrea Rossi and

Professor Pia Maly Sundgren.

The Paediatric Musculoskeletal Faculty: Professor Diego Jaramillo and Professor Tal Laor.

The World federation of Paediatric Imaging (WFPI) Current President Professor Omolola Mojisola Atalabi and incoming President Dr Joanna Kasznia Brown were also invited.

Local SASPI Members were given an opportunity to submit an abstract for a 15 minute scientific talk to facilitate the local faculty to present on this international forum. Prof Keith Bolton and Prof Ermos Nicolaou were also invited speakers.

The congress was also live streamed as a virtual congress.

Highlights included:

Keynote Lecture Prof J Barkovich 'New Concepts of Brain Malformations: Role of Molecular Pathways'

Special Focus Session Neonatal Hypoxic Ischemic Injury

The 13th annual RSSA Travel Award Oral Scientific

Electronic Paediatric Radiology Quiz

Professor Nasreen Mahomed
Division of Diagnostic Radiology



Special Focus Session Neonatal Hypoxic Ischemic Injury
Professor Andrea Rossi, Dr Shilandra Misser, Professor James Barkovich, Professor Nasreen Mahomed and Professor Keith Bolton.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL AND WITS UNIVERSITY JOIN FORCES IN A NEW STUDY TO INTERVENE EARLY TO TACKLE CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Obesity is a leading cause of poor lifelong health across the world. In South Africa, one in four girls aged two to fourteen years, and one in six boys in the same age group, are either overweight or obese. The Birth to Twenty Plus cohort, South Africa's longest running study of child health and development that started in 1990 in Soweto-Johannesburg, showed that by early adulthood 40% of girls were either overweight or obese. Also, if a girl was obese by age 5 years, she had a 42 times greater risk of being an obese adult.

Nicola Heselhurst and colleagues from Newcastle University (UK) after reviewing many studies from around the world, found that when mothers were obese before they became pregnant, their children had a 26 times greater risk of also being obese. Findings from the urban Soweto First 1000 Days cohort reported that 67% of women presenting at their first antenatal clinic visit were either overweight or obese. Observational evidence from several countries around the world suggests that possibly interventions that support women to optimise their health and manage their weight even before they become pregnant, that is preconception, will not only benefit their own health but may also combat intergenerational obesity. Given the public health concern around child obesity, the South African Medical Research Council, partner-

ing with the World Health Organization and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, has launched the Healthy Life Trajectories Initiative (HeLTI) in South Africa. This initiative aims to establish a programme of research to generate evidence that will inform national policy and decision-making to combat child obesity. This programme is also rolling out in Canada, China and India. Indeed, the science teams from these four countries are working together in a coordinated way to ensure the collection of high-quality data and biological samples to better understand the mechanisms underlying child obesity. In South Africa, the study is called Bukhali.

"HeLTI is a truly exceptional collaboration, and the Bukhali study, a truly innovative study. In the context of multiple environmental and commercial drivers of health, decision-makers for health policy and investment need high quality evidence and direction to combat the ever-increasing burden of obesity and NCDs. Bukhali, and the other HeLTI studies, speak to these issues and will also provide much needed knowledge about improving child development" reported Dr Nigel Rollins from the World Health Organization.

"Addressing non-communicable diseases, including those linked to obesity, is a major priority for the SAMRC and we are proud to be supporting this exciting international collaboration to test new interventions," said Professor Glenda Gray, President and CEO of the SAMRC.

Professor Shane Norris from the South African Medical Research Council and University of the Witwatersrand's Developmental Pathways for Health Research Unit is leading an exceptional team of South African scientists in collaboration with Professor Stephen Lye and his team from the Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Re-



Prof Shane Norris

search Institute in Toronto, Canada. Together, after more than three years of research and working with women living in Soweto to understand their lived experience and develop solutions, they have launched HeLTI SA-CAN. This clinical trial will examine the effects of a complex intervention aimed at optimising the health of women before they conceive a child, during pregnancy and post-delivery, and support the growth and development of their children to reduce obesity-risk at age 4-5 years. Similar, but context-adapted, trials have been launched in Canada, China and India.

"HeLTI is a landmark set of global studies that will offer us a unique opportunity to learn how to foster healthier trajectories for our children" said Shane Norris, lead investigator of HeLTI SA-CAN. He and his team are excited by the prospect of the study but realise the hard work that lies ahead and that they will not know some of the answers for at least another 8 years.

Link to the article:

<https://www.samrc.ac.za/media-release/south-african-medical-research-council-and-wits-university-join-forces-new-study>

WELCOME TO THE NEW SOCM TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2020–2023

The School of Clinical Medicine is welcoming the new SOCM Transformation Committee members and wishing them well with their term. They are:

Dr Dina-Ruth Lulua (Co-chair)
Dr Ifongo Bombil (Co-chair)
Dr Jillian Gardner
Dr Faraj Elmishat

Dr Jones Omoshoro-Jones
Dr Kagisho Marogaanye
Dr Kavita Makan
Dr Lamla Nqwata
Dr Mantoa Mokhachane
Mrs Minkie Kente
Ms Nabeela Sujee
Dr Nasrin Goolam Mahyooden
Mr Ramajwe Tseki

Prof Richard Cooke
Mr Victor Mokokotlela

Thank you to the outgoing members for your contribution and commitment!

NOMINATION CALL FOR JOE VERIAVA BIOETHICS MEDAL 2020 & MARGOT LACHMANN TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP AWARD 2020

Nominations are hereby invited for the **Joe Veriava Bioethics Medal 2020** to be awarded at the Faculty Prize-Giving function in 2021.

Establishment and Purpose of the Award:

Professor Joe Veriava has made major contributions to the advancement of bioethics and human rights in health care. The Faculty of Health Science has therefore established the Joe Veriava Bioethics Medal to recognize academic staff members and postgraduate students who have contributed substantially in this area.

The award is open to all members of academic staff and postgraduate students in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Procedure:

Nomination forms are included. Nominations may be made by staff or students and must be submitted to the Department of Internal

Medicine. Each nomination form must be accompanied by a motivation of not more than 500 – 700 words, giving a brief background picture of the nominee and the reasons for the nomination.

Criteria:

The following activities could be considered as contributions to bioethics and human rights in health care.

Involvement in projects and/or initiatives for the upliftment of communities including community-based research/participatory community service projects/community-based teaching initiatives, projects or work.

Functioning as a change agent within the Faculty through involvement in key projects, work or initiatives linked to the broader transformation vision of the University.

Participation in committee work, policy making and organizational development processes at Faculty, Community and Provincial and/or National Government level that advances

ethical health care practice and human rights.

Driving of major restructuring or transformation projects, work or initiatives in the field of bioethics and human rights in health care.

Playing a significant role in promoting the field of bioethics and human rights in health care into the wider community through serving as an acknowledged expert and/or substantially contributing to the public profile of the University.

Playing a significant role in promoting the field of bioethics and human rights in healthcare through clinical teaching and service.

Closing Date:

Completed nomination forms must reach the Department of Internal Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences no later than **26th October 2020**

The **Margot Lachmann Travel Fellowship** was established through the generous donation from the estate of the late Margot Lachmann. The Fellowship Fund is to be used to enable promising clinicians who are *postgraduate students or junior consultants (within 5 years of qualification)* in the Faculty of Health Sciences the opportunity to travel abroad or locally, to attend an appropriate centre for medical research, conference or training to further clinical or research skills *in the field of cancer and*

hearing impairment.

Applicants should submit a *letter of motivation stating the benefits to be derived from the award, together with their Curriculum Vitae and the following information with their application:*

Details of the training course/conference.

A letter of motivation from the relevant Head of Department and preference will be given

to applicants who have submitted an abstract for presentation at the Conference, but this is not an essential requirement for the award.

Closing Date:

Completed nomination forms must reach the Department of Internal Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences no later than **26th October 2020**

Applications or enquiries must be directed to:

Mrs Marlese Blom
Department of Internal Medicine
Tel: (011) 488-3621

Email: Marlese.Blom@wits.ac.za

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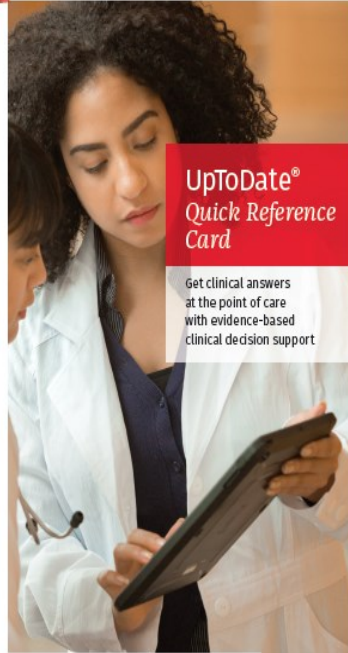


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SOCM MEETING DATES

SOCM EXCO Committee meeting

Date	Time	Venue
18/11/2020	13h00	Microsoft Teams

SOCM Transformation Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Venue
05/11/2020	14h00	Microsoft Teams

SOCM HR & Finance Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Venue
14/10/2020	10h30	Microsoft Teams
18/11/2020	10h30	Microsoft Teams

Heads of Department

Date	Time	Venue
10/11/2020	14h00	Microsoft Teams

WITS JOURNAL OF CLINICAL MEDICINE

The Wits Journal of Clinical Medicine is a peer-reviewed, Open Access scientific research journal published triennially, and was established to provide a forum to showcase scientific

research from the School of Clinical Medicine at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg as well as from other institutions nationally and internationally.

WJCM publishes original papers, review papers, case reports and letters to the editor.

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Prof Pravin Manga
(Editor)



Dear Students

We are wishing you good luck with your upcoming examinations!

Regards

HOS Office

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SUBMISSION OF CONTENT

The newsletter will be published bimonthly and we welcome all content, staff (academic & professional) achievements, profiles, and student events and achievements. Photos are always welcome. Should you wish to submit any content for publication, kindly send it to: Rita.Kruger@wits.ac.za (Please note that due to space restrictions content may be edited). The next deadline is 30 October 2020.