

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



HCRU
Health
Communication
Research Unit



HEALTH COMMUNICATION RESEARCH UNIT

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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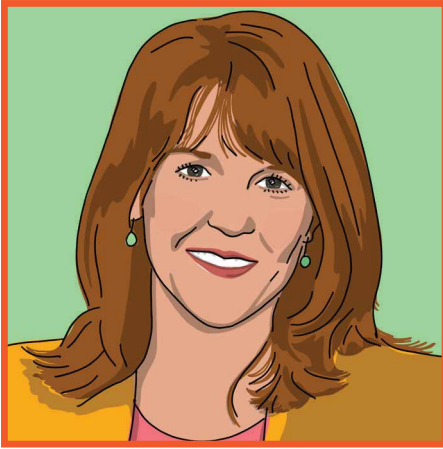
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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

2024 was another productive year in the HCRU with four major research thrusts/streams in the field of health communication and some exciting cutting-edge opportunities and projects. Our work in 2024 focused strongly on simulation and telepractice and will continue to do so even though our NRF grant comes to an end in 2024. We grew our collaborations through local and international projects.

Our team of three postdocs was whittled down to one, as we said goodbye to Johanni Beukes who took up a post at the CoE and welcomed Megan Scott on board as a research associate following three years of postdoctoral work. Each of our postdoctoral fellows worked successfully on multiple projects, and they more than met their goals and funding commitments for the year.

Some highlights of the year included two PhD students completing their theses; two prestigious support grants

to enable Sonto Madonsela to attend an international summer school and Megan Scott to present at an international genetics conference; my induction into the Academy of Sciences of South Africa and my inaugural lecture on health communication in August 2024; Sonto Madonsela's paper being cited in the *Lancet Psychiatry* (IF 30.8) Commission on Youth Mental Health; an invitation to join the International Consortium for Communication in Healthcare (IC4CH), an interdisciplinary collaboration aiming to conduct evidence-based research on the role of communication in various healthcare contexts; a best publication award from the Southern African Association of Health Educationists; and an invitation for the HCRU to partner with the INTERACT group as local organisers of the International Institute for Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis conference to be held in Johannesburg in 2027.

We have some exciting plans for 2025. These include several local and international conferences, including the IC4CH event in September 2025 in the UK. We also initiated some new collaborations, e.g. one with UKZN to map and define health communication across the continent so that we can initiate and grow an African consortium of scholars in this field. We are hopeful that our fundraising efforts this year will bear fruit so that we can fund our exciting planned project on strengthening interprofessional education in the health sciences via simulated learning approaches.

I am grateful to everyone who has helped make the Unit's continuous work possible in 2024, including the SHCD financial administrator, SRC of

the SHCD, HCRU employees, postgraduate students, and collaborators.

I am so proud of the excellent work that we continue to produce and look forward to more exciting work in 2025.

Prof. Jennifer Watermeyer

Director: HCRU





Overview of the HCRU

WHO WE ARE

The Health Communication Research Unit (HCRU) is based in the School of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). It is an interdisciplinary research group concerned with the unique challenges of multilingual and intercultural communication in South African health and community care contexts. The Unit is driven by an implementation research paradigm.



OUR APPROACH

- We use collaborative, disease-specific, evidence-based applied research to address social, cultural, linguistic and ethical complexities of health, illness and disability.

OUR VISION

To improve care in health and community spaces through enhancing communication processes.



OUR MISSION

- To develop innovative ways of understanding and facilitating communication in health care settings.
- To build research capacity and provide support to researchers and professionals working in similar spaces.

OUR CORE GOALS

- To promote equality and an understanding of diversity in health, social and community care through research;
- To create an interdisciplinary space for researchers from various disciplines across the university and beyond with a shared focus on diversity research in care;
- To apply methods from the social sciences to understand some of the challenges brought about by diversity in our context and examine how these impact on care;
- To influence theory, formulating recommendations for policy and practice; and
- To develop and implement innovative site-specific and community-sensitive interventions to facilitate improved care in the context of diversity.

OUR CORE VALUES

Innovative and excellent research which facilitates:

- Equitable and quality healthcare
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Relationship centred care
- Global and local links
- Postgraduate degrees
- Research support and mentoring





HCRU Staff for 2024

Director:

Professor Jennifer Watermeyer
(SHCD - Speech Pathology and
Audiology)

Visiting Scholars:

Prof. Tom Koole
(Groningen University)

Research Associate:

Dr Megan Scott

Research Assistants:

Ms Rhona Natrass
Ms Sonto Madonsela (PhD student)

Postdoctoral fellows

Dr Siobhan de Lange (year 2)
Dr Megan Scott (Jan – April 2024)
Dr Johann Beukes (Jan – June 2024)

Financial Administrator:

Ms Lerato Moroeng (SHCD)

Collaborators

WITS

Dr Daniella Rafaely (SHCD – Psychology; INTERACT group)
Dr Catherine Tam (Faculty of Humanities; INTERACT group)
Dr Sahba Besharati (SHCD – Psychology; Wits NeuRL research cluster)
Prof. Sumaya Laher (SHCD - Psychology)
Prof. Maria Marchetti-Mercer (SHCD – Psychology)
Dr Tasneem Hassem (SHCD – Psychology)
Prof. Aline Ferreira-Correia (SHCD – Psychology)
Prof. Amisha Kanji (SHCD – Audiology)
Ms Nabeelah Nagdee (SHCD – Audiology)
Dr Kim Coutts (SHCD – Speech Pathology)
Prof. Joanne Neille (SHCD – Speech Pathology)
Prof. Edmarie Pretorius (SHCD – Social Work)
Ms Nabeela Sujee (FHS – Centre for Health Science Education)
Dr Lisa Ware (DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in
Human Development Health Hub / FHS Dept of Clinical Medicine)
Dr Deidre Pretorius, Dr Aviva Ruch
(Faculty of Health Sciences, Dept of Family Medicine)
Ms Lisa Mills (Wits RHI)
Dr Charmaine Blanchard (Wits Strengthening Oncology Services
Research Unit, Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital)
Prof. Karl-Gunther Technau and Sr Merlyn Glass
(Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital)
Prof. Michael Urban (Human Genetics)

LOCAL

Prof. Tina-Marie Wessels (University of Cape Town, Genetic Counselling)
Mr Tarique Variava (SAMRC Gender and Health Research Unit)
Dr Eliza Govender (UKZN Centre for Communication, Media and Society
(CCMS))

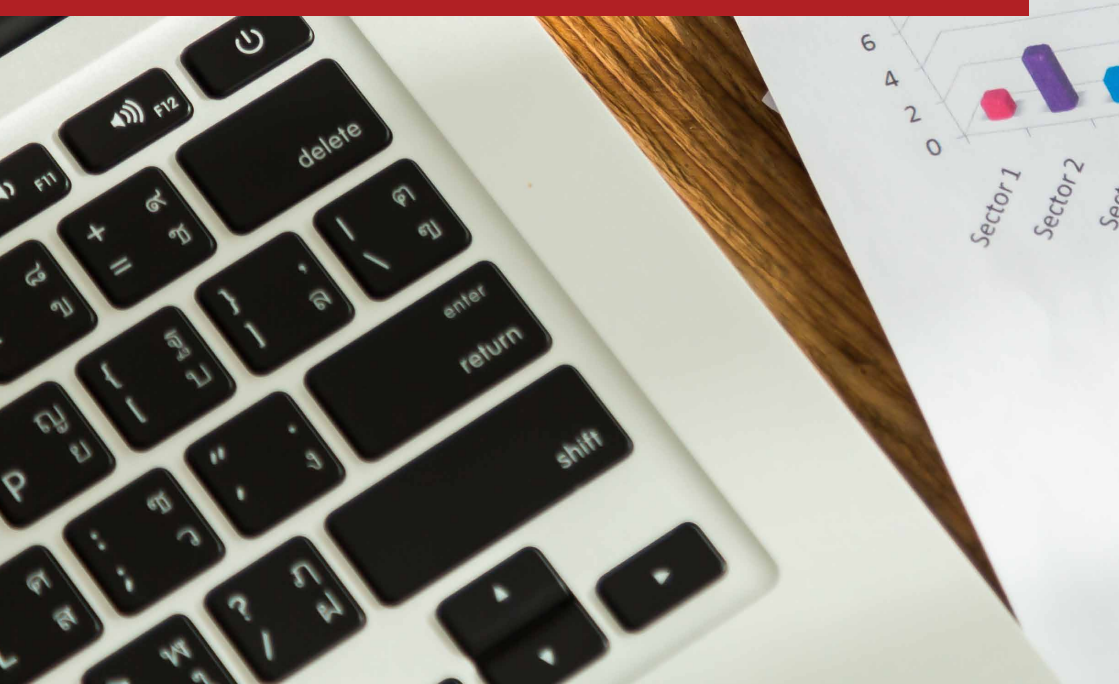
INTERNATIONAL

Prof. Tom Koole (University of Groningen, Netherlands)
Prof. Jonathan Crichton (University of South Australia)
Dr Gillian Martin (Trinity College, Dublin)
Prof. Jennifer Gerwing, Dr Magnus Hjortdahl
(Oslo Met University, Norway)





MAIN RESEARCH THRUSTS AND PROJECTS



Main Research Thrusts and Projects



Theme 1: Supporting Communication Skills in Health Care Interactions

This theme explores communication practices in multicultural and multilingual healthcare contexts in South Africa.

Communication in Audiology project:

This project involves examining communication practices in audiology consultations, aiming to improve how patients are provided with information and equip practitioners to be more effective in their communication skills. It involves a collaboration with Amisha Kanji (Wits Audiology). Several papers are in progress based on student projects, including a project on breaking bad news in audiology.

Emergency Medical Calls project:

The Emergency Medical Calls (EMC) project is an ongoing project from a previous NRF-funded collaboration with the Western Cape Government Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Several papers based on the original data set are in various stages of publication.

Rhona Natrass and Jennifer Watermeyer's chapter for the upcoming Handbook of Intercultural Communication in Health Care is in press, edited by Jonathan Crichton and Gillian Martin and published by Mouton deGruyter. This has proven to be a truly collaborative experience as we have worked together with the editors to challenge existing notions of 'language barrier'.

Rhona Natrass and Jennifer Watermeyer published a paper based on a case study of the emergency call from a high-profile murder.

A collaboration with **Jennifer Gerwing** and **Magnus Hjortdahl**, involving a meta-ethnography of research on language discordance in emergency calls, is underway and we hope to submit the paper for publication next year.

Genetic counselling project:

This project focuses on exploring and enhancing genetic counselling communication processes within a local context, particularly how risk and uncertainty is spoken about and negotiated. **Megan Scott** and **Tina-Marie Wessels** at the Division of Human Genetics at the University of Cape Town are involved with this project.



Prof. Watermeyer's inauguration, August

Monica Araujo is a PhD student supervised by Megan Scott and **Michael Urban** (Wits Human Genetics). Jennifer Watermeyer is an advisor on this project. Monica is exploring family communication and genetic counselling for hereditary breast cancer. She completed some data collection in 2024 and presented preliminary findings at a local conference.

Family Medicine Project:

Natasha Wookey, an MMed student, is studying the experiences of healthcare workers when breaking bad news in paediatric care. It involves a collaboration with **Dr Karl-Gunter Technau** and **Merlyn Glass** at Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital. Natasha completed her data collection in 2024 and is busy with analysis.

Modifying consent documents for communicatively impaired adults project:

Jennifer Watermeyer published a paper with **Chiara Aylward**, a past 4th year student, on a study which involved modifying consent documents and then presenting different formats to a group of communicatively impaired adults. The findings have direct relevance for researchers and ethics committees.

Jennifer Watermeyer is regularly consulted as an advisor on matters related to modification of consent processes for vulnerable participants.

Health information and counselling project:

Saleha Kola is a PhD student co-supervised with **Aline Ferreira-Correia** (Wits Psych). She is exploring health literacy issues for Parkinsons Disease. Her systematic review has been submitted for publication and she will start data collection soon.

Sibongile Zembe is a Masters student who started a project exploring communication between kitchen staff and adults with neurological disorders regarding meal orders. Her proposal has been accepted.

Health interpreting project:

Two 4th year students, **Naeemah Moola** and **Sameerah Bagus**, completed projects exploring the accuracy of Google Translate for case history interviews in the speech and hearing fields.

Theme 2 - Supporting communication skills in health care interactions – SoTL work

This theme (which expands on Theme 1) focuses on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) in health sciences, particularly how students develop communication skills in face-to-face interactions, online telepractice, and simulated role-play.

Speech therapy telepractice project:

Using online platforms to conduct therapy as part of a telerehabilitation approach opens significant opportunities for addressing resource shortages in our context, but it also comes with several challenges. This project explores communication facilitators and barriers in online speech therapy sessions, with the aim of providing support.

We published a study on communication facilitators and barriers in video-recorded online teletherapy sessions conducted by third-year student speech therapists – the first of its kind in the world to use interactional methods to study this topic. **Sonto Madonsela, Rhona Natrass, Megan Scott** and **Johanni Beukes** were co-authors with Jennifer Watermeyer. **Rhona Natrass** is working on analysis of caregiver involvement.

Mia Bronkhorst, a 4th year student, looked at private practitioner experiences of telepractice under non-emergency post-COVID conditions, highlighting unusual cases of cross-border telepractice and public/private telepractice.

Kim Coutts (Wits SPPA) and **Rhona Natrass** collaborated with Jennifer Watermeyer on a scoping review of simulation approaches to clinical education in speech-language pathology. A paper is under revision.

Simulation in audiology project:

This project focuses on understanding and enhancing communication processes in simulated learning activities for audiology students. It involves collaboration with **Amisha Kanji, Nabeelah Nagdee** (Wits Audiology) and **Nabeela Sujee** (Wits Centre for Health Science Education).

Amisha Kanji and Jennifer Watermeyer are working on a paper draft based on the analysis of recorded simulated newborn hearing screening sessions.

Amisha Kanji and Jennifer Watermeyer published a paper on simulated learning approaches for teaching communication and counselling skills to students. We also published a paper based on a survey of simulation approaches in the speech and hearing fields in South Africa.

Health services for adolescent
mental health: A focus on Soweto

Mental health (M-mHealth) may be a
alternative to reduce the unmet needs for
clinical services in SA, particularly in rural
ship areas.

Its indicated a positive attitude toward
Health because of its benefits, such as
convenience, and privacy.

Potential challenges, such as data
smartphone affordability, and lack of
the home, could hinder adolescents
M-mHealth.



Sonto Madonsela at the Digital Good Network Summer School, United Kingdom

Communication in Audiology project:

This project involves examining communication practices in audiology consultations, aiming to improve the way in which patients are provided with information and equip students to be more effective in their communication skills, both online and in-person. It involves a collaboration with **Amisha Kanji** (Wits Audiology).

A publication was published on peer role play as a clinical education tool in audiology, with **Aakifah Hassim** (a past 4th year student).

Natalie Fernandez, a 4th yr student, completed a project on clinical educator perspectives on student communication skills.

Genetic counselling project:

This project focuses on exploring and enhancing genetic counselling communication processes within a local context, particularly how risk and uncertainty is spoken about and negotiated. **Megan Scott** worked with **Prof. Tina-Marie Wessels** and the Division of Human Genetics at the University of Cape Town on a study aiming to explore student challenges when communicating risk to patients and provide practical support strategies to students.

Megan completed her postdoc fellowship in 2024. Several publications emerged from Megan's PhD and additional papers based on the postdoc project are in preparation. Megan also presented at several local and international conferences and meetings in 2024. She was invited to lead an international paper challenging the notion of non-directiveness in the field of genetic counselling, together with eminent scholars in the field.

Theme 3: Exploring Experiences of Care

[caregiving, care receiving, meaning of care]

A key focus of our work is listening to the voices of those involved in care and bearing witness to the experiences of patients and healthcare workers.

End-of-life care project:

Led by **Siobhan de Lange** in conjunction with the Wits Strengthening Oncology Services Research Unit, this project focuses on experiences of communication and the needs of stakeholders involved in palliative care. Siobhan works with **Charmaine Blanchard** at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital and with **Karl-Gunther Technau** and **Mertyn Glass** at Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital to develop projects in adult and paediatric palliative care. Data collection is underway on a project aimed at understanding the needs of informal caregivers for patients with cervical and breast cancer in collaboration with Dr Blanchard at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital. Data collection for a project aimed at understanding the support needs of healthcare professionals in the palliative care space is due to begin at Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital in the new year. Together with Prof. Technau, Dr de Lange has submitted a protocol centred around describing existing perinatal palliative care practices and concomitantly developing training materials, for ethical review. Dr de Lange is also in the final stages of writing up a scoping review on palliative care communication in South Africa.

COVID-19 projects:

A project on healthcare workers mental health originated in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Angela Kazadi**, a former Master's student, and **Sahba Besharati** published a paper on her work which involved interviews with frontline healthcare workers.

Mental health and loadshedding project:

This project emanated from the healthcare worker COVID project. Using similar methods, it explores the impact of loadshedding on the mental wellbeing and daily life of South Africans. This project involves a collaboration with **Maria Marchetti-Mercer**, **Sumaya Laher** and **Tasneem Hassem** (Wits Psych). **Sonto Madonsela** is assisting with this project. Some data collection has taken place, including the public, Wits staff and students, and small business owners in a township. Plans are underway to extend this project to include members of the public from lower socioeconomic brackets and healthcare workers. Several op-ed pieces and radio and tv interviews have resulted from this project.

Adolescents and mental health:

Sonto Madonsela, a PhD student funded by the NRF, is conducting a project which involves developing an m-health model for an app to support adolescents' mental health. This project also involves a collaboration with the Wits Health Hub and **Lisa Ware** at the Faculty of Health Sciences. Sonto published a scoping review, cited twice by The Lancet. Two additional papers have been submitted.

Sonto received a competitive scholarship to attend the Digital Good Network summer school in 2024, at the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom. She also presented her work at the 7th Africa Interdisciplinary Health Conference, in Johannesburg.

Caregiver Experiences and Diagnostic Journeys project:

Cynthia Sawasawa was awarded her PhD (Wits SPPA). Her thesis, "The help-seeking experiences of caregivers with young children living with cerebral palsy in Thembisa, a township in South Africa", highlights a shift in help-seeking amongst caregivers towards informal, social media-based networks. Cynthia's paper won best oral presentation at the Singapore Rehabilitation conference in November 2024.

Lavanya Naidoo is a PhD student (Wits SPPA) exploring diagnostic decision making on paediatric enteral feeding options from the perspective of caregivers and healthcare workers. She has completed her data collection.

Onalerona Manana, co-supervised by Cynthia Sawasawa, is a Masters student (Wits SPPA) exploring caregiver experiences of discharge processes from the neonatal ICU. Her proposal is being drafted.

Agnetha Gallant, co-supervised by Cynthia Sawasawa, is a Masters student (Wits SPPA) exploring caregiver experiences of food security and access in a rural township for their child with autism. Her proposal is being drafted.

Romaiza Jamal, co-supervised by Mignon Botes, is a Masters student (Wits SPPA) exploring caregiver experiences of navigating healthcare services for their child with craniofacial abnormalities. Her proposal is being drafted.

Health Care practices project:

Two 4th year students, **Nafees Wahab** and **Sipho-Eshile Khumalo**, conducted a project exploring the development of professional identity across the speech-language pathology and audiology degrees. **Amisha Kanji** is co-supervising. They both completed.

Nancy Barber, a PhD student (Wits SPPA), completed her study, which explored practices around feedback giving and clinical supervision in the speech-language pathology programme. She submitted her dissertation, which is under examination.

Kirstie Hughes, a new Masters student (Wits SPPA), is exploring speech-language therapists' experiences of accessing knowledge and engaging with evidence-based practice via social media. She will commence data collection in early 2025.



Dr Megan Scott (far left) at the European Human Genetics Conference in Germany

Mental health and wellbeing experiences in schools during COVID-19 project:

This project involves a collaboration with Edmarie Pretorius (Wits Social Work) and a cohort of MA (SW) students. The focus of the project is on the lived experiences of a variety of stakeholders (including learners, parents, teachers and social workers) in school settings during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on mental health experiences. Most students have graduated.

Neurofeedback project:

Led by **Johanni Beukes** who is co-hosted by the **Wits NeuRL** group with **Sahba Besharati**, this project focused on the efficacy of neurofeedback via EEG as an intervention for burnout. Johanni supervised several MA students working on systematic reviews and collected data on the use of neurofeedback as an intervention for burnout among academics. This project includes a novel aspect in that it will seek out qualitative experiences of participants who have received this intervention. Johanni took up a postdoctoral position with the CoE from July 2024.



Theme 4 – Advancing qualitative methodologies and research processes

The second new theme introduced in the current cycle centres on qualitative methodology, with a focus on developing locally relevant approaches and reflecting on methodological dilemmas and research processes in the health communication field. This theme aligns with a monthly HCRU journal club introduced in 2023 to explore the complexities of qualitative research and critically engage with methodological issues.

Nancy Barber, a PhD student (Wits SPPA) developed a new approach to integrating multiple qualitative and quantitative data sets. This paper is under review.

Rhona Natrass and Jennifer Watermeyer submitted a paper on some of the methodological challenges related to the student telepractice project. This project also generated more work on refining our pioneering observational transcription-free methods to identify communication barriers more quickly and enable faster implementation of findings.

Research Outputs

BOOK CHAPTERS (...)	1 in print 2 in press	international publisher
JOURNAL ARTICLES (...)	8 in print 6 in press 5 under review 7 from visiting scholar	5 WoS 3 WoS 4 WoS 3 WoS
PRESENTATIONS (...)	7 international 6 other	
TOTAL	Publications 30 Presentations 13	

BOOK CHAPTERS – IN PRINT

1. Tam, C.L., Whitehead, K. A. & Raymond, G. (2024). Inequality in Action: Managing Trust in Granting Service Requests and Closing Emergency Calls in a Highly Resource-Constrained Context. In H. Z. Waring & N. Tadic (Eds.), *Critical Conversation Analysis: Inequality and Injustice in Talk-in-Interaction* (pp. 91 – 114). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/WARING5393>

JOURNAL ARTICLES – IN PRINT

1. Kazadi, A., Besharati, S., & Watermeyer, J. (2024). Narratives on the frontline: A qualitative investigation of the lived experiences of healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa. *Health SA Gesondheid special issue*, 29, 1-10. [Scopus/DHET]

2. Watermeyer, J., Natrass, R., Beukes, J., Madonsela, S., & Scott, M. (2024). Considerations for paediatric student-led telepractice in speech-language therapy: A pilot observational study from South Africa. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 59(2), 665-677. [WoS]
3. Scott, M., Watermeyer, J., & Wessels, T. (2024). "We are just not sure what that means or if it's relevant": Uncertainty when gathering family history information in South African prenatal genetic counseling consultations. *Social Science & Medicine*, 342, 116555. [WoS]
4. de Lange, S., Muller, D., & Dafkin, C. (2024). Biomedical research on autism in low- and middle-income countries: Considerations from the South African context. *Developing World Bioethics*. [WoS]
5. de Lange, S., Muller, D., & Dafkin, C. (2024). Relationships between autistic traits, motor skills and socioeconomic status. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*. [WoS]
6. Cronje, R., Beukes, J., Masenge A., du Toit, P., & Bipath, P. (2024). Investigation of Neopterin and Neurophysiological Measurements as Biomarkers for Anxiety and Stress. *NeuroRegulation* [Scopus]
7. De Lange, S., Kearns, A., Fuhrer, L., Dobbe, J.H.M., Mielke, K., Hulme, L., Lim, A., Oueslati, R., Acampora, M., De Mol, Z., & Khaleghzadegan, S. (2024). Creating a rewarding research experience in the early-career stages: Challenges and insights from the rEACH Summer School participants. *Patient Education and Counseling*
8. Marchetti-Mercer, M., Laher, S., Watermeyer, J., & Hassem, T. (2024). Loadshedding, safety concerns and mental health in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*. [WoS]

BOOK CHAPTERS – IN PRESS

1. Natrass, R., Watermeyer, J. (in press). Intercultural moments in emergency calls: Issues of access, accommodation, and attitude. Invited chapter for J. Crichton and G. Martin (Eds.), *The Handbook of Intercultural Communication in Health Care*. Mouton deGruyter.
2. Watermeyer, J. (in press). Access and Equity. Invited Lead Chapter for J. Crichton and G. Martin (Eds.), *The Handbook of Intercultural Communication in Health Care*. Mouton deGruyter.

JOURNAL ARTICLES – IN PRESS

1. Natrass, R., & Watermeyer, J. (2024). Where trouble starts: Communication breakdown in a complex emergency call. *Health Communication*. [WoS]
2. Scott, M., Watermeyer, J., & Wessels, T-M. (2024). A balancing act: Non-directive counselling, risk perceptions, and meeting patient needs in genetic counseling: A South African Case Study. *Journal of Genetic Counseling*. [WoS]
3. Watermeyer, J., & Kanji, A. (2024). Lessons from a qualitative survey on simulation opportunities for clinical learning in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology in South Africa. *Teaching and Learning in Medicine*. [WoS]
4. Watermeyer, J & Aylward, C. (2024). Modifications to consent documentation with adults with communication disorders following brain injury: an exploratory trial. *Developing World Bioethics*. [WoS]
5. Kanji, A., & Watermeyer, J. (2024). Simulation approaches for communication and counselling skills in clinical education in audiology programmes around the world: A scoping review. *American Journal of Audiology*. [WoS]
6. Kanji, A., Watermeyer, J., & Hassim, A. (2024). Audiology students' clinical communication during simulated peer role play consultations: An exploratory study. *American Journal of Audiology*. [WoS]

JOURNAL ARTICLES - UNDER REVIEW

1. Barber, N., Watermeyer, J., Neille, J., & Coutts, K. Unlocking the potential of an adapted extended pillar integration process: investigating its role in programme evaluation of clinical education in speech-language pathology. *Journal of Mixed Method Research*. [WoS]
2. Natrass, R., & Watermeyer, J. Inside, outside, upside down: Reflections on perspective taking and positionality in a speech-language pathology clinical education research project. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*. [WoS]
3. Watermeyer, J., Coutts, K. & Natrass, R. Simulation approaches for clinical education in speech-language therapy programmes around the world: A scoping review. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*. [WoS]
4. De Lange, S., Muller, D., & Dafkin, C. Descriptive characteristics of children with autism at schools for autism in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. [WoS]
5. Madonsela, S., Watermeyer, J., Ware, L., & Scott, M. Are South African Adolescents ready for mobile mental health support? Perspectives from Sowetan adolescents in a mixed-methods study. *Advances in Mental Health*.

[Scopus]

6. Neille, J., & Watermeyer, J. Ethnography as a teaching tool: promoting students' sensitivity to contextual and sociological issues in rural community contexts in the speech and hearing professions. *Qualitative Health Research*. [WoS]

Publications from visiting Prof. Tom Koole

1. Koole, T., & Gosen, M. N. (2024). Scopes of reciprocity: An organization of responses to informings. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 222, 25-39. [WoS]
2. Koole, T. (2024). Meaning as referential work: Reflections on the research object of Interactional Semantics. *Interactional Linguistics*.
3. Unger, S., Ongena, Y., & Koole, T. (2024). Expanded and non-conforming answers in standardized survey interviews. *Text & Talk*, (0). [WoS]
4. van Balen, J., Gosen, M. N., de Vries, S., & Koole, T. (2024). 'What would you do if...?': On asking Experience Questions within classroom discussions, with a view to making room for subjectification. *Research on Children and Social Interaction*, 8(1), 116-138.
5. Berenst, J., de Glopper, K., & Koole, T. (2024). Gespreksvaardigheid in het Nederlands onderwijs: een ontbrekend ontwikkelingsperspectief. *Tijdschrift Taal*, 15(25), 10-15.
6. van Balen, J., Gosen, M. N., de Vries, S., & Koole, T. (2024). Peer-to-peer-talk in whole-classroom discussions. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 125, 102354. [WoS]
7. Knol, L., Huiskes, M., & Koole, T. (2024). Het doorbreken van stilte: een conversatie-analytisch perspectief op het therapeutisch duet. *Tijdschrift voor Psychotherapie*, 50(2), 115-130.





PRESENTATIONS

Prof. Watermeyer at SAAHE

PRESENTATIONS: INTERNATIONAL

1. Scott, M. (2024). Non-directive communication and meeting patients' needs in genetic counselling. A paper presented at an invited symposium: The place of non-directiveness revisited, European Society for Human Genetics (ESHG), 1-4 June, Berlin, Germany.
2. Araujo, M., Urban, M., Watermeyer, J. & Scott, M. (2024). Genetic counsellor perspectives of the communication and testing pathway for patients & families with hereditary breast cancer. Paper presented at the Southern African Society for Human Genetics (SASHG) Conference, 27-29 October, Sun City, South Africa
3. Coutts, K., Watermeyer, J., & Natrass, R. (2024). Simulation approaches for clinical education in Speech-Language Pathology programmes around the world: A scoping review. Paper presented at the Southern African Association of Health Educationists (SAAHE) conference, 26-28 June 2024, Umhlanga.
4. Barber, N., Watermeyer, J., Neille, J., & Coutts, K. (2024). Flipping clinical supervision for Speech-Language Pathology students: Exploring the role of inquiry-based learning in the development of critical thinking skills. Paper presented at the Southern African Association of Health Educationists (SAAHE) conference, 26-28 June 2024, Umhlanga.
5. Kanji, A., Watermeyer, J., & Gardee, Z. (2024). Facilitating Audiology students' clinical communication practices during initial consultations: Exploring the use of written cues as a strategy. Paper presented at the Southern African Association of Health Educationists (SAAHE) conference, 26-28 June 2024, Umhlanga.
6. Watermeyer, J., & Kanji, A. (2024). Serendipity and leftovers: Finding joy in Health Professions Education research. Paper presented at the Southern African Association of Health Educationists (SAAHE) conference, 26-28 June 2024, Umhlanga.
7. Madonsela, S., Watermeyer, J., Ware, L.J., & Scott, M. Are South African adolescents ready for mobile mental health support? Perspectives from SoweTan adolescents in a mixed-methods study. 7th Annual Africa Interdisciplinary Health Conference (AFIHC), 21- 23 August 2024.

OTHER PRESENTATIONS AND OUTPUTS

Guest lecturers and workshops

1. Watermeyer, J. (2024). Considerations for student-led simulated learning experiences in the speech and hearing field. Webinar for the SAAHE Simulation Special Interest Group, 28 November 2024.
2. Watermeyer, J. (2024). Considerations for student-led telehealth practicals. Webinar for the SAAHE Central Group, 18 April 2024.

3. Watermeyer, J. (2024). Putting care back into healthcare: The central role of communication. Inaugural lecture, University of the Witwatersrand, 29 August 2024.
4. Scott, M. (2024). Genetic testing for hereditary cancer. Sandton Oncology Multidisciplinary Meeting, Mediclinic Sandton, 8 March 2024.
5. Scott, M. (2024). Genetics in dermatology. Division of Dermatology, Internal Medicine, Faculty of Health Science, University of the Witwatersrand, 18 September 2024.
6. Scott, M. (2024). When change happens. BrightRock Change Exchange podcast series with Ruda Landman. 10 June 2024.

JOURNAL REVIEWS

HCRU members completed reviews for the following journals, all internationally accredited (WoS):

JW – South African Journal of Science; Health Communication (x2); Journal of Interactional Research in Communication Disorders

SDL – SAfrican Journal of Primary Healthcare and Family Medicine, South African Medical Journal

JB – PLOS One, South African Journal of Psychiatry

SM – SGlobal Mental Health, Journal of Medical Internet Research (JMIR), Health SA Gesondheid

MS – Health Education & Behavior, Current Genomics, Journal of Community Genetics, BMC Medical Ethics, Journal of Health & Social Behavior

RN – Qualitative Health Communication; Health Communication



A close-up photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair wearing a light-colored, vertically striped button-down shirt. She is seated at a wooden desk, writing in a notebook with a pen. A laptop is partially visible to her right. A red horizontal bar is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'HCRU ACTIVITIES' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

HCRU ACTIVITIES

HCRU Activities

Shut up n Write group

Our weekly Friday writing group continues to flourish, providing a now hybrid space for students and staff in the SHCD to support each other in the writing process. This initiative has enabled the Unit to establish clear publication pipelines which ensures continuity of outputs throughout the year.

Research Kickstart

This informal activity happens on most Monday mornings. Started by Jennifer Watermeyer and Amisha Kanji, it has enabled more structured time to be carved out of our busy weeks to focus on research related activities such as data analysis, conceptualisation of papers, or strategic planning on projects.

Methodology Matters Journal Club

In 2023 we initiated a monthly hybrid journal club which specifically deals with qualitative research matters. We held nine sessions, tackling topics such as imposter participants in qualitative research, questioning data saturation as a useful concept in qualitative research, and exploring ethical issues in qualitative. These topics were deliberately selected to coincide with relevant and current methodological quandaries encountered by HCRU team members. Recordings of our sessions are available on our YouTube channel. The sessions are advertised across the School, with attendees from outside of Wits. We expanded the journal club to a formally accredited CPD event in 2024.

Coffee Contemplations

Megan Scott initiated this monthly session, which provides space primarily for HCRU staff and a few other SHCD members to share research experiences and gain psychosocial support from each other.

VISITING SCHOLARS

Prof. Tom Koole (Department of Communication Studies, University of Groningen, and Visiting Professor to the HCRU) was hosted by the Unit again in 2024. Prof Koole officially retired from the University of Groningen in 2021 but has retained a position as Professor Emeritus. His primary contribution in 2024 was assisting Johanni Beukes to prepare an article from her PhD for publication.



Postgraduate Students

	Completed	Ongoing
PhD	Nancy Barber (0300242G) Cynthia Sawasawa (2526458)	Sonto Madonsela (870073) Lavanya Naidoo (2440792) Saleha Kola (0701536F) Monica Araujo (711533)
Masters	Micaela Stonestreet (707851) – MA Audio Angelica Iacovitti (1627582) Nokuthula Maseko (2507498) Suzan Makomu (2530566) Bongi Matshiana (2515396)	Natasha Wookey (069096W) – MMed Paediatrics Sibongile Zembe (875652) Kirstie Hughes (671322) Romaiza Jamal (2115121) Agnetha Gallant (1891283) Onalerona Manana (2166364) Sibongile Zembe (875652)
Honours/4th year research reports	Nafees Wahab (2305152) Sipho-Esihle Khumalo (2329403) Mia Bronkhorst (2433856) Naeemah Moola (2322222) Sameerah Bagus (2436751)	Mmatshepo Motlokoa (2559500) Amna Noori (2433421) Maria Khan (2538690)
Totals	12	14

COMPLETED HONOURS/4th YEAR PROJECTS

Mia Bronkhorst: Caregiver experiences of telepractice in private practice
Nafees Wahab: Professional identity of speech-language therapy students across the years of undergraduate study
Sipho-Eshile Khumalo: Professional identity of audiology students across the years of undergraduate study

Naemah Moola: Evaluating the accuracy of Google Translate as a tool for interpreting in speech-language therapy encounters
Sameerah Bagus: Evaluating the accuracy of Google Translate as a tool for interpreting in audiology encounters

ONGOING MASTERS PROJECTS

Natasha Wookey: Doctors' experiences of breaking bad news in a paediatric hospital environment
MMed Paediatrics
Supervisors: Karl Technau (Paediatrics) and Jennifer Watermeyer

Kirstie Hughes: Speech-language therapists' experiences of accessing knowledge and engaging with evidence-based practice via social media
Supervisor: Jennifer Watermeyer

Romaiza Jamal: Caregivers' experiences of navigating healthcare services for their child with craniofacial abnormalities
Supervisors: Jennifer Watermeyer and Mignon Botes (SPPA)

Agnetha Gallant: Caregivers' experiences of food security and access in a rural township for their child with autism
Supervisors: Jennifer Watermeyer and Skye Adams (SPPA)

Onalerona Manana: Caregivers' experiences of discharge processes for their child following a NICU stay
Supervisors: Jennifer Watermeyer and Cynthia Sawasawa

Sibongile Zembe: Facilitators and Barriers to Meal Ordering for Adults with Neurological Disorders in an Acute care facility in South Africa
Supervisor: Jennifer Watermeyer

COMPLETED MASTERS PROJECTS

Micaela Stonestreet: An exploration of audiologists' communication behaviours and patient perceived effectiveness in South African adult tinnitus management sessions.
MA Audiology
Supervisors: Amisha Kanji (SPPA) and Jennifer Watermeyer

Angelica Iacovitti: Experiences of SLPs working with patients with burns in South Africa

Supervisor: Jennifer Watermeyer

ONGOING PHD PROJECTS

Sonto Madonsela: mHealth services for adolescent mental health: A focus on Soweto

Supervisors: Jennifer Watermeyer, Lisa Ware (FHS Clinical Medicine/Health Hubb), Megan Scott

Lavanya Naidoo: An exploration of how feeding decisions are made for children who require non-oral feeds in a public healthcare hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa*

Supervisors: Jennifer Watermeyer, Joanne Neille (SPPA)

Monica Araujo: Genetic risk factors for breast cancer in South Africa: a testing and counselling pathway for patients and families

Supervisors: Megan Scott, Michael Urban; advised by Jennifer Watermeyer

Saleha Mahomed-Kola: Factors that influence health literacy in individuals living with Parkinson's Disease

Supervisors: Aline Ferreira-Correia and Jennifer Watermeyer

COMPLETED PHD PROJECTS

Nancy Barber: Flipping the lecture hall for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Students: The role of inquiry-based learning in the development of critical thinking skills

Supervisors: Joanne Neille (SPPA), Jennifer Watermeyer, Kim Coutts (SPPA)

Cynthia Sawasawa: The health-seeking behaviours of caregivers of children under the age of 5 years who have been diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy

Supervisors: Jennifer Watermeyer, Khetsiwe Masuku (SPPA)



Funding

Our activities in 2024 were primarily supported by an NRF grant for 2022-2024 and by J Watermeyer's RINC funds.

Grant funding awarded for 2024:

1. NRF CPRR grant (although a rollover of 2022 funds not spent was not granted)
2. NIHSS postdoctoral funding for J Beukes
3. Wits centennial postdoctoral funding for S de Lange
4. Wits centennial postdoctoral funding for M Scott
5. NRF doctoral funding for S Madonsela

Grant applications under review:

1. NRF CPRR grant
2. Spencer Foundation grant

Unsuccessful funding applications:

1. NRF CPRR grant - on loadshedding with Maria Marchetti-Mercer
2. UCDP grant – IPE simulation
3. Vice Chancellor's Research Award





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