



Four NSTF Award Finalists for Faculty of Health Sciences

The Faculty is very proud of our four staff members who are finalists in the highly acclaimed National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) Awards 2016/2017. The annual NSTF Awards, presented in partnership with South 32, are referred to as the 'Science Oscars' of South Africa as they are the largest, most comprehensive and most sought-after national awards of their kind. >>



Faculty of Health Sciences

Fakulteit Gesondheidswetenskappe
Lefapha la Disaense tša Maphelo

Health Science Matters

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In South Africa, the NSTF is the most representative multi-stakeholder, non-profit forum for the promotion of science, engineering and technology (SET), and of innovation through collaborative efforts. The NSTF Awards were first introduced in 1998, at which time there were no comparable awards for research and development in the country. Over the years, an NSTF Award has become a prestigious accolade bestowed on researchers, teams and organisations, and even just being nominated is considered a great honour. The Faculty's nominees are:



Lifetime Award

(by an individual over a period of 15 years or more)

Prof Robert Pattinson

Chief Specialist and Clinical Head, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Director, Unit for Maternal and Infant Health Care Strategies, South African Medical Research Council



TW Kambule-NSTF Awards

Emerging researchers (by an individual - post-doctoral in a period of up to 6 years after award of a PhD or equivalent in research)

Dr Alisa Phulukdaree

Lecturer, Department of Physiology



NSTF-WRC Award

Sustainable water management, knowledge generation and solutions

(by an individual or an organisation to be awarded in recognition of demonstrated leadership and impact)

Prof Maureen Taylor

Prof Maureen Taylor - Professor and Rand Water Chair in Public Health



Special Annual Theme Award

(by an individual or an organisation, which contributes to or supports Sustainable Tourism for Development, in recognition of #IY2017)

Communication: Outreach and creating awareness

(by a team or individual)

Dr Ryan Blumenthal

Senior Specialist and Lecturer, Department of Forensic Medicine

The theme for the 2016/2017 NSTF-South32 Awards is Sustainable Tourism for Development, in recognition of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development as declared by United Nations.

From the desk of the Dean

Dear Colleagues

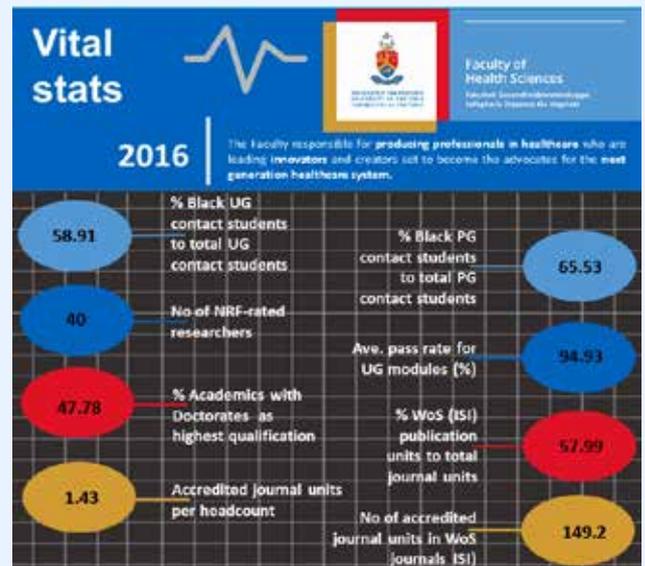
In the blink of an eye, or at least that is it how it feels, mid-year is upon us! For most organisations this is the time of the year when we review our performance of the previous year. Let me begin by sharing and celebrating a mostly positive review of the Faculty's 2016 performance against set targets.

We managed to meet and, in some instances, exceed the targets set on the institutional performance indicators. The figure presents some of the 2016 figures and 14 out of 22 targets were met or exceeded, with the exception of the two indicated in red. Upon reflection, this outcome is unsurprising as we saw significant institutional investment over the period 2011-2016. This investment was targeted at infrastructure support and improved systems and processes in aid of increased performance outputs. Year 2016 has seen some of these investments bear fruit.

Our success was augmented by the Faculty's commitment to the transformation process, which applied to both its management and its curricula. Throughout the process, we remained focused on delivering quality education and sustainable programmes, despite the constraints and challenges experienced across the higher education landscape during 2016. I would like to express my gratitude to all staff, academic and support, for your continued commitment to high quality service in all you do. Our next challenge is to sustain our high performance going forward and in this respect, I call on you to keep up the good work. Keep on asking difficult and interesting questions; try new approaches to solve old problems; share what you're learning; feel free to ask for help when and where needed. As management, we will continue to work at providing the infrastructure and platforms for teaching, learning and research.



Prof Tiaan de Jager, Dean; Faculty of Health Sciences



Vital Stats 2016 Faculty of Health Sciences

I am once again heartened by all the success stories and progress collated in this newsletter. The message from the *Centre of Ethics and Philosophy of Health sciences* is extremely important as we continue to advance scientifically and technologically. *'Health Ethics is an essential counter balance to the scientific nature of health care and reflects on the moral decisions that are required by health practitioners'*. Our students seem to understand this well and the stories of the Radiography students launching a project on breast self-examination and Saman Akhtar who earned seven distinctions whilst fighting cancer, reflect this. The stories reflect how our Faculty manages to produce high level outputs whilst managing to incorporate fun activities.

Thank you for all your contributions toward a Faculty of which we can be proud. Please continue to send us these "feel good" stories and be the change you want to see. Andy Warhol said *"They always say time changes things, but **you actually have to change them yourself.**"*

It's time for some new stories of great learning. It begins now. Go be awesome!

Tiaan de Jager
June 2017

Spotlight on the Centre of Ethics and Philosophy of Health Sciences (CEPHS)

The CEPHS is committed to the development of academic capacity and producing scholarly input that is responsive to South African and international trends and regulatory requirements. It provides a synergistic platform for research into ethics for both its associates and students.

The CEPHS collaborates with international, African and South African tertiary institutions to advance education, research and clinical interests in health ethics and the philosophy of health sciences. CEPHS associates offer a multi-disciplinary approach to the conceptual challenges posed by clinical research and the practice of health care.

The key research areas of the Centre are:

1. Ethics of Mental Health
2. Ethics of Pandemic Diseases
3. Ethics of Health Research
4. Person centeredness and Informed Consent to Health Interventions
5. Philosophy of Mental health
6. Values in Health Practice (Axiology of Health Practice)



Prof Werdie van Staden

According to Prof Werdie van Staden, Director of the Centre, "The modern era of medicine has come about because of scientific and technological progress. Health Ethics is an essential counter balance to the scientific nature of health care and reflects on the moral decisions that are required by health practitioners. It emphasises the human values of justice, fairness and empathy that contributes to a positive patient experience."

Graduation in numbers at the Faculty of Health Sciences

Undergraduate

School of Dentistry

Bachelor of Oral Hygiene	13
Bachelor of Dental Surgery	51

School of Healthcare Sciences

Bachelor of Occupational Therapy	47
Bachelor of Dietetics	32
Bachelor of Radiography	31
Bachelor of Nursing Science	
(Education and Administration)	117
Bachelor of Physiotherapy	50
Bachelor of Nursing Science	48

School of Medicine

Bachelor of Clinical Medical Practice	63
Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery	231

PHD's

Doctor of Philosophy (Physiotherapy)	2
Doctor of Philosophy (Nursing Science)	4
Doctor of Philosophy (Pharmacology)	1
Doctor of Philosophy (Medical Immunology)	3
Doctor of Philosophy (Internal Medicine)	1
Doctor of Philosophy (Medical Microbiology)	1
Doctor of Philosophy (Human Physiology)	2
Doctor of Philosophy (Anatomy)	1
Doctor of Philosophy (Public Health)	2
Doctor of Philosophy (Environmental Health)	2

Saman Akhtar earns seven distinctions while fighting cancer

In the middle of her Grade 12 year, Saman Akhtar, discovered a painful lump on her wrist. After the lump was removed by an orthopaedic surgeon, a biopsy confirmed Ewing sarcoma, which is a cancerous tumor of the soft tissue around the bone.

"The support from my family, friends and school was incredible. The chemo is the worst but in between the cycles, I try to keep fit and healthy. At times I do feel tired, but fortunately, my treatment is going well. I get Nuepogen injections, which stimulates the production of bone marrow and helps my platelet count." Despite the adversity, Saman achieved seven distinctions!



Saman Akhtar

"Ever since I was a young child, I always wanted to become a doctor. It is the only profession I can see myself working in. I would love to help others the way I have been helped, because I personally know how painful and uncomfortable being a patient can be," Saman says. "My favourite subjects at school were Chemistry, Mathematics and Engineering Graphics and Design."

I am currently a first-year MBChB – Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery student at the University of Pretoria, and enjoying my lectures and university life very much!" "Cancer did not limit my ability to work hard and to achieve my goals. The only thing that can limit you is your mind-set. Everything is possible!"

"Dreams can come true, even if you are afflicted with difficulties, never give up. Be positive, focus on the end goal and don't let anything stand in the way of your dreams! I have completed my chemo cycles and will go for a follow up scan in the near future."

Saman is an avid supporter of the **Reach for a Dream Foundation**, **CANSA** and **The Sunflower Fund** and she is appealing to you to donate to these three worthy organisations.

Breast self-examination awareness campaign

Final year radiography students ran a Breast Self-examination Awareness Campaign. The campaign formed part of their curriculum which include community engagement health days and health promotion, a subsection of the Primary Health Care unit in the Radiography Practice module.

The objectives of the campaign were to:

- Educate the community on abnormalities of the breast that can be detected early if breast self-examination is done regularly.
- Investigate how much knowledge targeted communities have about breast self-examination.
- Demonstrate how to do a breast self-examination.

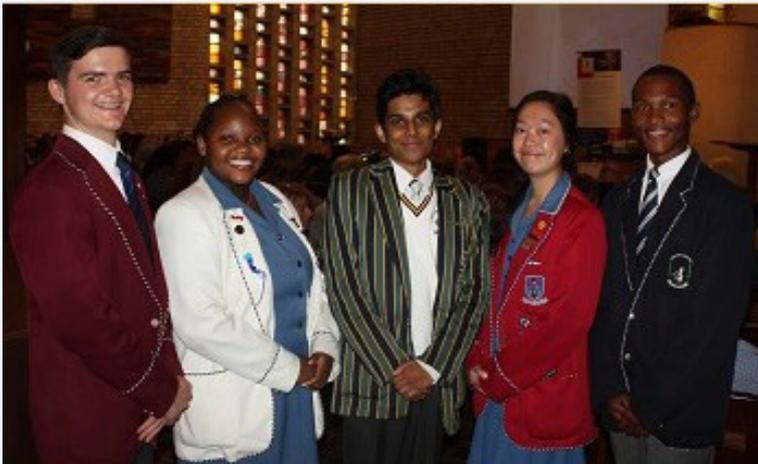
The campaign was a great success, yielding positive results for the students and communities alike.



What prospective students think of the Faculty of Health Sciences at UP

The word 'different' popped up several times in conversations with grade 12 learners from across Gauteng at the Faculty of Health Sciences Junior Tukkies Open Day, which was held earlier this year. The event was a success, hosting more than 500 learners and parents.

When asked to describe UP using just one word, 'gobsmacking', 'amazing', and 'awesome' were just a few that the learners chose. Lethabo Kgatuke said that UP was beautiful, both in terms of its facilities and its environment. Shaylan Moodley said his research showed that UP has a good track record and that studying here would ensure that the world becomes his oyster. 'Once I have completed my studies at UP, it will open doors to the rest of the world for me,' he said.



From left to right: Albertus Hercules, Patricia Zongelolo, Shaylan Moodley, Courtney Yip and Lethabo Kgatuke

Patricia Zongelolo said that she has always dreamt of being a student here. 'I want to study at the best university and that is UP,' she said. Courtney Yip said, 'I was intrigued and knew then that I wanted to come here.' She believes that UP can help her make the world a better place by training her for a career in the field of health sciences.

Professor Tiaan de Jager, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, shared a quote by American film director Jerry Zucker: 'It's great to plan for your future. Just don't live there, because really nothing ever happens in the future. Whatever happens, happens now, so live your life where the action is - now.'

Prof Zhangyi Qu visits the Faculty of Health Science



Dr Janet Mans, Prof Kuku Voyi, Prof Maureen Taylor, Prof Oleg Reva, Prof Zhangyi Qu, Prof Marietjie Venter

Prof Zhangyi Qu, from the Department of Microbiology, School of Public Health, Harbin Medical University, China recently visited the Department of Medical Virology, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Pretoria under the BRICS framework program on Inter-Disciplinary Collaboration. Prof Qu, whose research fields include molecular biology of viruses, molecular evolution of viruses, taxonomy of viruses and the screening of anti-virus herb drugs and the development of recombinant adenovirus vaccines, held meaningful discussions with Prof Marietjie Venter (Center for Viral Zoonoses) and Drs Janet Mans and Walda van Zyl (Enteric Virus and Environmental Research Group) with regard to possible research collaboration. At the Department of Medical Virology's weekly research meeting, which was attended by staff and students from the Departments of Medical Virology and Medical Microbiology and representatives from the School of Health Systems and Public Health, Prof Qu gave an overview of his research activities and highlighted the potential for collaboration within the BRICS framework. Researchers should monitor the UP website for upcoming NRF calls to support research collaboration between South Africa and China.

Nursing: A caring profession for all time



International Nurses Day is celebrated annually on 12 May, on the birthday of Florence Nightingale, one of the pioneers of the nursing profession. The theme for this year was 'Nurses: A voice to lead – achieving the Sustainable Development Goals'. This theme recognises the efforts made by nurses all over the world towards achieving these goals.

South Africa has only 36 nurses per 10 000 population, and a high percentage of these nurses work in the private sector. Encouragingly, there has been some movement of nurses back into the public sector since the adoption of the Occupation Specific Dispensation for nurses, which provided much needed structure to the regulation of the profession in South Africa. Acute nursing shortages persist in rural areas and the current nursing population is also ageing. The need to increase the number of nurses is crucial for our country's healthcare needs, which means that nursing currently offers great career opportunities for prospective students interested in the field.

The Department of Nursing Science at the University of Pretoria offered the first degree programme in nursing in South Africa and has played a leading role in nursing education in South Africa since its inception in 1956. The Department strives for excellence in its teaching and research programmes and focuses on promoting the intellectual, cultural and personal development of all its students.

As the largest group of healthcare professionals, present in all settings, nurses have an enormous impact on the resilience of health systems. Every decision that is made in practice can make a significant difference in the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire system. Whether it is in clinical practice, or through community support and development programmes, national health initiatives, and policy or international commitments and agreements to improve access to, and quality of healthcare. At every level, nurses have a significant role to play.

The Department of Nursing Sciences at the University of Pretoria would like to acknowledge all nurses who give their best every day to save lives and care for their patients.

UP / Ampath agreement



Prof Anton Ströh, Vice-Principal of Institutional Planning, University of Pretoria, and Dr Jan van Rooyen, Chief Executive Officer, Ampath Laboratories.

On the 11th of May 2017, the University of Pretoria (UP) entered into a memorandum of agreement with Ampath Laboratories for the establishment of two research chairs in the fields of Chemical Pathology and Cancer Genomics which fall under the faculties of Health Sciences and Natural and Agricultural Sciences, respectively. The document was undersigned by Prof Anton Ströh who is Vice-Principal of Institutional Planning at the University of Pretoria, and Dr Jan van Rooyen who is Chief Executive Officer, for Ampath Laboratories.

Ampath has identified the need to enhance education and research in these areas and wishes to contribute towards the establishment of these two research chairs thereby tapping into the expertise, experience and infrastructure available at UP.

This co-funded initiative signals an exciting time for students within these two scientific domains as this investment allows for the appointment of research leaders, student development and capacity building in niche areas such as Genetics and Molecular Biology, Forensic Science and Toxicology, registrar training and research projects for MMed, and the development and validation of new assays, such as the nanobody project.

Malaria Awareness Week



World Malaria Day (WMD) is commemorated annually on 25 April and this year's theme was "End Malaria for Good". This year the University of Pretoria Institute for Sustainable Malaria Control (UP ISMC) decided to raise awareness about malaria in a series of events that took place over the week, 19 – 26 April. The theme for the week was "Are you aware?". Aside from informing and educating people about malaria, the week was aimed at informing people about the UP ISMC and the research happening there.

The UP ISMC conducted various activities at the Hatfield and Mamelodi campuses. Tuks FM hosted a malaria themed slot from 10:00 to 12:00 each day. An MSc student from the School of Health Systems and Public Health working on malaria hosted the slot. She conducted a series of daily interviews with postgraduate UP ISMC students about their malaria focused research and experiences with malaria. The UP ISMC believes that malaria will not be beaten by repeatedly using the same old tactics. To "End Malaria for Good" we need to incorporate new and innovative methods with classic methods.

Other people interviewed included Prof Tiaan de Jager, Director of the UP ISMC; Prof Lucille Blumberg from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD); Mr Sherwin Charles, CEO of Goodbye Malaria (GBM); Ms Ginny Stone, creator of the children's informative book series Sibob and specifically "Sibob fights Malaria"; and Dr Taneshka Kruger, Project Manager of the UP ISMC. The release of version 1.2 of the Institute's App, "Malaria Buddy", co-developed with Travel with Flair, was also announced on Tuks FM on the 26th of April.

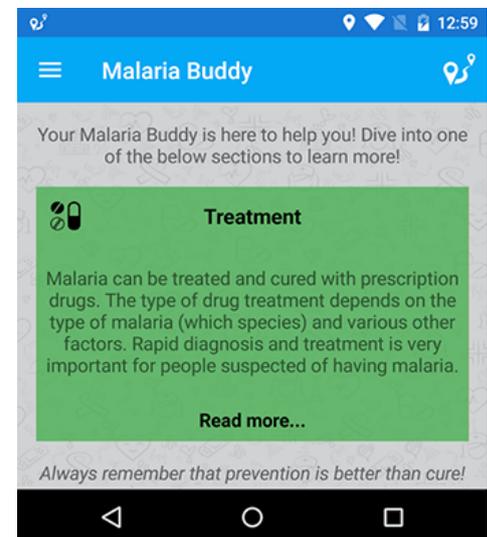
The Merensky 2 library on Hatfield campus held a two-week long, informative malaria display comprising of books on malaria, UP ISMC student forum research posters, Institute banners and an informative video on malaria and the Institute. On the 24th of April, Prof Blumberg (NICD) presented a public lecture on malaria in general, traveling malaria and the recent media reporting on malaria cases.

At the Mamelodi campus, representatives from the UP ISMC together with Tuks FM hosted a daily lunch hour malaria awareness campaign where they interacted with students and informed them about malaria and the Institute. On WMD, 25 April, the UP ISMC student forum participated in an awareness event at the Piazza at Hatfield campus. GBM representatives joined the students and sold merchandise, including their 'Relate bracelets' and famous GBM pyjama pants, to raise funds for their Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) initiative in Mozambique.

The Malaria Awareness Week had very positive outcomes. If only one person learnt something new about malaria and the UP ISMC, then the awareness week was a success. At the same time the Institute's students also gained. Not only did they share malaria information with students and staff at the university, they also had the opportunity to share their research to a wider audience.



Tuks FM hosted a malaria themed slot



Institute's App, "Malaria Buddy"

Genome of prostate cancer tumour mapped for the first time

In the Western world, prostate cancer has the highest incidence of all male-associated cancers and the second highest mortality rate. In African countries, including South Africa, the incidence of this type of cancer among non-migrant Africans is uncertain, but there is a trend towards patients being diagnosed at an earlier age. It is estimated that among South African men, at least one in every 23 will develop prostate cancer within their lifetime.

Researchers from the University of Pretoria (UP), the Garvan Institute of Medical Research and the University of Sydney in Australia, have mapped the entire genome of a prostate cancer tumour for the first time. The team, led by Prof Vanessa Hayes, Head of the Human Comparative and Prostate Cancer Genomics Laboratory at the Garvan Institute, published their findings in the journal *Oncotarget* in March 2017. Prof Riana Bornman, Senior Research Professor in the School of Health Systems and Public Health (SHSPH) at UP's Faculty of Health Sciences, a co-author of this paper, has been involved with prostate cancer research, specifically among African men, for many years and has been collaborating with Prof Hayes since 2008. Prof Hayes also holds an extraordinary professorship at the SHSPH at UP.



Prof Riana Bornman

Their study is the world's first comprehensive next-generation mapping of an entire prostate cancer genome. The team uncovered ten times more chromosome genomic rearrangements than detected with previous technology. The study proves that next-generation mapping is feasible for cancer studies and has clinical potential for prognosis, diagnosis and therapeutics. It could also eventually help to define African-specific risk areas and the genomic signature of prostate cancer in South African men.

'Whole genome sequencing opened many doors for our understanding of prostate cancer – next-generation mapping just doubled the number of doors,' says Prof Hayes. 'I believe this technology will compliment next-generation sequencing as a key to personalised medicine for prostate cancer.'

Prof Francois De Wet retires from the UP Dental School

Prof Francois de Wet, head of the Department of Odontology, School of Dentistry, at University of Pretoria recently retired after 40 years of service to the dental profession.

Prof de Wet started his training at the Dental School at the University of Pretoria in 1970 and qualified as a dentist in 1975 (BChD – Cum Laude). He completed his BChD (Hons) in Dental Materials in 1976 with a distinction. He concluded his M. Dent degree (Cum Laude) in 1978, and in 1981 he completed the University Education Diploma (Cum Laude), with distinction in all subjects. In 1996, he was awarded his DSc (Odont) degree.

Prof de Wet plans to use his free time to travel, and to “give lots of attention to his children and 4 grandchildren”. His son Jacques is a dentist in Wallaroo, Australia. His daughter, Lizelle, is an oral hygienist and his son-in-law also a dentist, practising in Pretoria. He is currently doing a few sessions per week at the UP Dental School and is still supervising a PhD student, who aims to complete later this year.



Prof Francois de Wet

Faculty Fun Day for Children with Disabilities



The Faculty of Health Sciences hosted its annual community engagement event, the Fun Day for Children with Disabilities in May. This event has been running for 22 years and is definitely one of the highlights on the Faculty calendar.



The main objective of the day is to give disabled learners a day where they can have fun and enjoy themselves with other disabled learners. The learners get to take part in fun activities in different categories according to their choice and ability. More than 400 disabled learners from the greater Tshwane and Johannesburg area took part in the event this year.

Students from all the different disciplines within the Faculty take part in this event. The Fun Day has made a real difference in the lives of all those involved: the disabled learners, UP staff and students.



Open Day 2017



Dr Flavia Senkubuge appointed as Chairperson of the Health Systems Trust Board of Trustees

Dr Flavia Senkubuge, from the Division of Health Policy and Management in the School of Health Systems and Public Health, has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Health Systems Trust (HST) board of trustees.

The HST is a non-profit organisation working to develop comprehensive health systems in southern Africa. Using a primary health care approach, they specialise in conducting health research, providing technical support and disseminating information. Their strategies are designed to promote equity and efficiency in health and healthcare delivery. The Board of Trustees independently guides and oversees the HST. It comprises a diverse group of individuals with professional standing and expertise in health systems development in South Africa and abroad.

Dr Senkubuge currently holds multiple senior positions. She is the Junior Vice President of the Colleges of Medicine South Africa and the first black woman to occupy such a senior leadership position.



Dr Flavia Senkubuge

She is the current Vice-President of the African Federation of Public Health Association and Secretary of the African Advisory Council on Research and Development. Dr Senkubuge's research interests include global health diplomacy, health policy and management, leadership and the social determinants of health. At heart, she is a philanthropist and is passionate about mentoring young people.

Prof Mahmood Ally appointed as Deputy Chairperson of the National Health Research Committee

The Faculty would like to congratulate Prof Ally on his appointment as Deputy Chairperson of the National Health Research Committee. The roles of the National Health Research Committee (NHRC) members are to: identify and advise the Minister on health research priorities, develop an integrated national strategy for health research and advise the Minister on the application and implementation thereof.

The NHRC is further mandated to determine the health research to be carried out by public health authorities, co-ordinate the research activities of public health authorities and ensure that health research agendas and health research resources focus on key health problems.

We wish Prof Ally every success in his role as Deputy Chairperson and we are confident that he will make a valued contribution to the Committee.



Prof Mahmood Ally

Funding success for the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health

The Department of Paediatrics and Child Health have successfully secured a grant from the Collaborative Initiative for Paediatric HIV Education and Research (CIPHER) of the International AIDS Society (IAS) for a research project entitled "Assessment of factors impacting on fetal and infant immunity and growth in HIV and antiretroviral-exposed uninfected children".

CIPHER aims to optimise clinical management and delivery of services to infants, children and adolescents affected by HIV in resource-limited settings through advocacy and research promotion. CIPHER is designed to complement existing global initiatives and create partnerships to maximise investment in paediatric HIV research and improve paediatric health outcomes.

Principle investigators on the project:

Prof Ute Feucht (Department of Paediatrics),
Prof Theresa Rossouw (Department of Immunology)

Obstetrics:

Prof Robert Pattinson (UP and MRC),
Dr Felicia Molokoane

Paediatrics:

Prof Ameena Goga (UP and MRC),
Prof Mphele Mulaudzi

International collaborators: Carleton University, Canada

Prof Kristin Connor (Developmental Origins of Health and Disease)
Prof Edana Cassol (Immunology and Infectious Diseases)

The grant is allocated over 2 years (1 November 2017 to 31 October 2019), with a total funding of US\$ 149,793.82. The award will be presented at the upcoming 9th IAS Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2017) in Paris, July 2017.

Students from the Faculty of Health Sciences receive special recognition award



Well done to the students from the Centre for Viral Zoonoses, a cross faculty initiative between the Faculty of Health Sciences, Natural Sciences and Veterinary Sciences. The students received a special recognition award of \$500 from the International One Health Platform for their One Health Day initiative. This is an excellent achievement as their event was recognised out of 150 events organised internationally. One Health Day answers the urgent need for a One Health trans-disciplinary approach towards solving current critical global health challenges. It is a timely initiative that gives scientists and advocates a powerful voice to join human, veterinary and environmental health forces to deal with emerging zoonotic infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, climate change, environmental pollution, food safety, comparative/ translational medicine and many other problems in a holistic approach.

Team Health Sciences is looking forward to the 2017 event and competition.

Remembering Ontlametse Phalatse – a progeria patient and inspiration

Progeria is a genetic disorder that occurs as a result of a mutation in a gene which codes for a protein called lamin A, which maintains the normal architecture of the nucleus inside the cell. This abnormal form of lamin A, called progerin, is responsible for the premature aging seen in affected individuals, causing cellular instability. Hardening of the arteries, or atherosclerosis, is an almost universal consequence of the aging process, and is responsible for most heart attacks and strokes. One of the most prominent features of progeria is an accelerated form of atherosclerosis.

On 11 April, Ontlametse Phalatse, one of two South African girls living with progeria, died at the Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital in Ga-Rankuwa, outside Pretoria. Ontlametse defied the norms of the disease by living to the age of 18 years, which she celebrated shortly before her death. She met President Jacob Zuma only two days before her eighteenth birthday, and he referred to her as 'the special child of South Africa'.



Prof Michael Pepper is the director of the Institute for Cellular and Molecular Medicine, and a professor in the Department of Immunology in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Pretoria.

The President has taken it upon himself to look after her family according to her wishes. The moving encounter between Ontlametse and President Zuma can be watched on the video link below.

Ontlametse referred to herself as the 'first lady' as the first black child to be reported with progeria (the other South African girl referred to above is white). Ontlametse's life and her struggle with progeria were an inspiration to many. She epitomized the fact that, despite its devastating nature and relentless course, progeria does not affect cognitive function. She completed matric, and was very optimistic about her future: 'I would like to be a psychologist, [...] so that I can work on the problems of other people and so that they can accept the way that they are because they can see that I accept the way I am'. President Zuma described her as 'very sharp and articulate', and paid her the following tribute: 'She was very special indeed. I was impressed by her sharp intellect, warm personality, brilliant ideas and her determination to use her condition to motivate others that they can achieve their goals regardless of any challenges. A brave young fighter has fallen'.

As human beings we are constantly under threat, both from within and from our environment. We take so much for granted in the normal course of our busy lives. To be healthy or even to be afflicted in some way and still be functional is truly a privilege. Ontlametse's life was cut short as a result of circumstances beyond her control, but her positive yet realistic approach to her condition serves as an illustration of the fact that although we may not have complete control over our destiny, we certainly can choose the way in which we wish to undertake the journey.

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ks4KvABKml>



We would love to hear more from departments and staff.
Please e-mail your ideas and contributions for the next edition to Ronel Leyds
Email: ronel.leyds@up.ac.za