

African Longitudinal Facial Appearance and Health study



About

Longitudinal studies are studies that involve a group of participants over a length of time. These studies are extremely effective at identifying the key elements that influence people's health. For example, identifying how people's diet or the conditions they live in can influence their chance of getting diabetes. Or how people's diet, genes and behaviours can influence what they look like. Most longitudinal studies are done in developed countries, such as the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, and are extremely rare in Africa. This is one of the reasons why we still know so little about the genes, behaviours and living conditions that influence the development of diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, in African populations.

The African Longitudinal Facial Appearance and Health (ALFAH) study is the first of its kind in Africa. The initial study will recruit 4000 African men and women over a period of five years and then follow up on the health and wellbeing of these participants over the next three decades. The first phase of the study will collect a range of health measures, genetic information and facial images from participants.

Who we are

The study is based at the University of Pretoria. The team is led by Dr Vinet Coetzee and includes researchers from Penn State University (Prof Mark Shriver) and Philipps-University Marburg (Prof Dominik Endres).

Funding

The first phase of the initial study is funded by the South African National Research Foundation. We are currently applying for funding to include more participants from more African countries.

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