

### *In this issue.*

In our main story this month focuses on Dr Sandra Lehrman's visit to CAPRISA. CAPRISA was privileged to host Dr Lehrman, the Director of the Therapeutics Research Program from the NIH from 2-4 October.

The CAPRISA-Fogarty AITRP Masters level post-graduate course in Epidemiology was also initiated during the month of October and began with a course on the evolution of epidemiologic ideas which was presented by a world renowned epidemiologist, Prof Alfredo Morabia, from Queens College and Columbia University in New York. For more details see page 2.



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## Director of the Therapeutics Research Program at DAIDS visits CAPRISA



Senior members of the CAPRISA Women and AIDS team spent a morning with Dr Lehrman discussing HIV prevention challenges. (L-R): Dr Anna Meyer-Weitz, Dr Ayesha Kharsany, Ms Silvia Maarschalk, Dr Senge Sibeko, Ms Melanie Mackay, Dr Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Dr Sandra Lehrman, Ms Nelisiwe Ntumba, Mr Henri Carrara, Dr Mary Latka, Mr Thulani Phakathi, and Mr Vivek Naranbhai

***Dr Sandra Lehrman from the Therapeutics Research Program at the NIH, recently spent two days in Durban visiting CAPRISA, University of KwaZulu-Natal NIH Projects and the MRC's HIV Research Programme. Dr Lehrman engaged with the various CAPRISA researchers to discuss research on HIV prevention, microbicides and TB-HIV treatment.***

During her two day visit, Dr Lehrman had an opportunity to tour the clinical research facilities at the CAPRISA eThekweni Unit and to see the START and SAPIT TB/HIV Projects first hand. She also met with Community Research Support Group where they discussed some of the challenges in community engagement and implementation of AIDS treatment research. On the second day, she had a chance to discuss the challenges in HIV prevention (including microbicides) in South Africa's generalised HIV epidemic with CAPRISA's Women and AIDS team.

Dr Lehrman also met with University of KwaZulu-Natal researchers who are Principal Investigators on NIH grants, visited the AACTG and PACTG units and met with Dr Gita Ramjee from the Medical Research Council.

Dr Lehrman presented in the Doris-Duke Distinguished Lecture Series on "HIV/AIDS Therapy: Advances and Opportunities". Her presentation at the Medical School, which was so well attended that there was standing room only, was a comprehensive description of the incredible achievements that have already been accomplished in HIV/AIDS therapy. Some of the exciting new future research developments that are underway were also presented.

Dr Lehrman is currently the Director of the Therapeutics Research Program, Division of AIDS, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), National Institutes of Health (NIH) and part of the DAIDS leadership on the prevention (except vaccines) and treatment Networks.



## Getting to grips with epidemiological concepts



Participants from the History of Epidemiology Course included: front row (L-R): Jacqueline Hadingham, Saba Shembe, Alfredo Morabia, Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Sengeziwe Sibeko, Middle row (L-R): Dinesh Singh, Tanuja Gengiah, Thuli Mthiyane, Nadine Rapiti, Pam Rapiti, Nelisiwe Ntumba, Melanie Mackay, Anneke Grobler, Cheryl Baxter, Back (L-R): Vivek Naranbhai, Roxana Rustomjee, Hopolang (Cliff) Maise, Shuaib Kauchali, Terence Moodley, Sibusiso Ntsele, Stephen Knight, Rashid Khan, Henri Carrara, Janet Frohlich, and James Hudspeth.

**As part of a joint initiative between CAPRISA and the CU-SA Fogarty AITRP, a Masters level post-graduate training programme in Epidemiology, Infectious Diseases and Biostatistics has been established at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.**

This training programme is part of a wider initiative to build and strengthen epidemiology and biostatistics at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine. It is hoped that this local training programme will contribute to the much needed high level capacity needed in epidemiology, biostatistics and data management in South Africa.

The first course of this training programme was conducted from the 23-27th October and focused on the Evolution of Epidemiologic Ideas. Professor Alfredo Morabia, a world renowned epidemiologist from New York, was the lecturer for the course.

Professor Morabia is currently a lecturer at the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems, Queens College, New York and Professor of Epidemiology at Columbia University. Before moving permanently to New York he was Professor and Head of the Division of Clinical Epidemiology at the University Hospital of Geneva. He became board certified MD in Internal Medicine at the University Hospital of Geneva specializing in Occupational Medicine,

before going to the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health to obtain a PhD in Epidemiology and an MHS in biostatistics.

The course he ran in Durban was mainly for mid-level researchers and included several past CU-SA Fogarty AITRP Fellows as teaching assistants. The course focused on the historical evolution of methods (eg. study designs) and concepts (eg. confounding, bias, interaction and causal inference) in epidemiology. For each topic, the historical contexts and some landmark studies that led to specific innovations in terms of performance of group comparisons, population thinking and framing of hypotheses were reviewed and discussed. The historical conditions for the emergence of epidemiology as a scientific discipline, the phases it went through and its potential, future developments were also discussed.

Several former Fogarty AITRP trainees, including Ayesha Kharsany, Dinesh Singh, Tanuja Gengiah, Roxana Rustomjee, Shuaib Kauchali, and Henri Carrara served as teaching assistants for the course and facilitated small group discussions and student presentations. It is anticipated that through this type of multiplier effect the local skills and capacity to undertake critically important HIV and TB research in South Africa will be expanded.



## UNAIDS-CAPRISA collaboration on HIV Prevention



UNAIDS is leading a new thrust on HIV prevention and a new guidance document has been developed. Salim Abdool Karim co-chaired the meeting in Geneva to refine this guidance document, as part of CAPRISA's contribution as a UNAIDS Collaborating Centre for HIV Prevention Research. After a long day at the workshop, Salim Abdool Karim, Katherine Hankins, Eleanor Gouws and Barbara de Zaluondo, all of UNAIDS, are taking a break for dinner at a Geneva restaurant



## Conference and scholarship announcements



The Keystone Symposia on HIV Vaccines: From Basic Research to Clinical Trials will be held in Whistler, British Columbia from 25 - 30 March 2007. This symposia promises to be an excellent meeting focusing on the basic science of HIV pathogenesis and vaccine development. All eligible applicants are encouraged to apply for the Global Health Series Travel Awards. These valuable awards are to assist attendance of scientists, physicians, fellows, or students from countries where the meeting topic health problems are indigenous. The purpose of providing travel awards is to add to the diversity of experiences represented by participants at each meeting. The award will cover conference related expenses to include: registration fee, lodging, airfare and ground transportation from host airport to the resort.

For more details visit the Keystone Symposia website:

<http://www.keystonesymposia.org/default.cfm>



### Dira Sengwe "Take Action" 3rd South African AIDS Conference

The 2007 South African AIDS conference will be held in Durban from 5 - 8 June 2007. This conference aims to serve as a platform for deliberations on the key contentious issues relating to prevention, treatment and care. In particular, the conference will highlight state-of-the-art developments in prevention technologies; new approaches to prevention; the long-term impact of highly active antiretroviral therapy on incidence, prevalence, morbidity and mortality; the role of nutrition in HIV/AIDS; and the role of research into the use of complementary and traditional medicines in HIV/AIDS.

For more information visit the SA AIDS conference website:

<http://www.sa-aidsconference.com/>

## Research update - September 2006

CAPRISA is a multi-institutional collaboration, incorporated as an independent non-profit AIDS Research Organisation

Registration Number:  
2002/024027/08  
<http://www.caprisa.org>

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Study	Stage / Site	Screened		No. Enrolled	
		Total	Cumulative	Total	Cumulative
Acute Infection	Phase I	0	776*	0	245*
	Phase II	2	44	2	44
CAT	Vulindlela	48	2218	33	771
	eThekwini	52	1444	16	412
Sero-incidence (050)	Vulindlela	0	785*	0	369*
Sero-incidence (051)	Vulindlela	23	245*	28	108*
	eThekwini	0	1408*	0	104*
SAPIT	eThekwini	31	489	14	166
START	eThekwini	15	58	12	26

\* enrolment completed, # for month, ^since committee initiation

## CSRC update - September 2006

Abstracts submitted for review		Manuscripts submitted for review		Ancillary studies submitted for review	
Total <sup>#</sup>	Cumulative <sup>^</sup>	total <sup>#</sup>	cumulative <sup>^</sup>	total <sup>#</sup>	cumulative <sup>^</sup>
0	48	1	23	0	4

# for month, ^since committee initiation

## Upcoming Conference & Workshop Reminders

Conference	Deadlines for abstract submission		Registration deadline	website
	CAPRISA SRC	Conference		
CROI	29 Sept 2006	3 Oct 2006	25 Jan 2007	<a href="http://www.retroconference.org/2007">www.retroconference.org/2007</a>
4th IAS conference	1 Mar 2007	7 Mar 2007	1 Feb 2007	<a href="http://www.ias2007.org/">http://www.ias2007.org/</a>
3rd SA AIDS Conference	18 Dec 2006	31 Jan 2007	18 May 2007	<a href="http://www.sa-aidsconference.com/">http://www.sa-aidsconference.com/</a>

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