

FEATURES

Top honours for UKZN medical student 2 years in a row

SAMA Communications

He has been described by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) as someone who embodies excellence and one who advances the institution's motto of "inspiring greatness". He is widely known among his colleagues as one who displays high levels of respect, integrity and intellectual prowess. His name is Mohamed Hoosen Suleman, a 5th-year medical student at UKZN's Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine in Durban, and he has been awarded the "best student researcher" and "best student innovator" accolades by the university's College of Health Sciences for the second consecutive year. Suleman received these awards at the Tea with the Deans event, reserved for top achievers, which takes place annually at the university. The UKZN deans of the Schools of Laboratory Medicine and Medical Sciences and Clinical Medicine, Profs Musa Mabandla and Ncoza Dlova, congratulated Suleman on the double award and wished him well during his time as an undergraduate medical student.

Suleman is known for his selfless contributions to science and medicine

The "best student researcher" award is granted to a student who is productive and active in research, with the "best student innovator" award bestowed on a student who displays innovation in harnessing ideas and solutions to pre-existing health challenges. This includes bringing about ideas that are assessed for their novelty, feasibility and sustainability in tackling important health challenges, both locally and abroad.

Suleman boasts a history of academic excellence at the institution, with multiple awards and accolades already beside his name. His works in academia have also been rewarded by the WHO, having been invited to their headquarters in Geneva and also being awarded the prestigious Changemaker Scholarship Award, making him one of only three medical students globally to receive



Mohamed Hoosen Suleman

this incredible honour. Counted among SA's Top 200 South Africans under the age of 35 by the *Mail and Guardian*, he is one of two SA editorial board members among a team of 40 academics and experts globally who undertake peer review of scientific articles submitted to the *International Journal of Medical Students*. Suleman is also a research placement intern at the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA), which looks at research into HIV/AIDS.

Under the supervision of the dean of the medical school at UKZN, Prof. Ncoza Dlova, one of his current research projects involves investigating hair loss in women of African ethnicity. He also leads a host of research projects, one of which examines the knowledge, attitudes and practices of final-year nursing students regarding vaccines.

During the peak waves of the COVID-19 pandemic in SA, Suleman was regularly invited by radio and TV stations to share a youth's perspective on the evolving novel coronavirus and the instrumental role that science and innovation play in managing the ravaging effects of the pandemic. He has also been lauded for his advocacy efforts and leadership skills in combating COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, and tackling fake news and misinformation about science.

He was chosen by the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations to form part of the official youth delegation

to the WHO African Regional Meeting in Togo in August 2022, alongside two other medical students, one from Cameroon and another from the Gambia, and was involved in drafting five statements to the WHO-Afro Regional Committee and the heads of African member states present. These covered a range of topics that included universal health coverage, mental health, human resources for health, health insecurities, and environmental determinants of health. The youth delegation was also tasked with analysing and making contributions to the current healthcare policies that African countries have in place.

He has been described by UKZN as someone who embodies excellence and one who advances the institution's motto of "inspiring greatness"

Suleman, who will undertake clinical rotations in the City of Pietermaritzburg this year, is known for his selfless contributions to science and medicine. As an undergraduate student, he hopes to create a SA wherein healthcare for all is genuinely recognised. His social work includes fostering social cohesion and the adoption of togetherness with the spirit of ubuntu, where he is regularly invited to address youth gatherings. He also volunteers at the Childhood Cancer Foundation of South Africa (CHOC), a non-profit organisation that supports the wellbeing of children and teenagers diagnosed with cancer or life-threatening disorders. He has led many projects with CHOC, both in his personal capacity and as president of the Golden Key International Honour Society medical school branch. SAMA believes that the country needs more medical students like Suleman.