



# CAPRISA

CENTRE FOR THE AIDS PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

## Newsletter

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### CAPRISA 012C: A 22-year journey of science, collaboration and community

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**C**APRISA Head of HIV Pathogenesis and CAPRISA 012C Principal Investigator Dr Sharana Mahomed released the results of the Phase II CAPRISA 012C clinical trial, evaluating long-acting broadly neutralising antibodies (bnAbs) for preventing HIV infection in young women, at the International Aids Conference in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

CAP256V2LS was developed by a partnership of South African and US scientists following the discovery of this bnAb in the 256th participant enrolled in a CAPRISA study in 2004. In combination with VRC07-523LS, a bnAb developed by the Vaccine Research Center of the US National Institutes of Health, the two antibodies combine high potency (the strength to kill HIV) and high breadth (ability to kill a range of different strains of HIV). These bnAbs target conserved regions on the virus's outer envelope ie parts of HIV that are difficult for the virus to change without reducing its ability to survive.

Following the Phase I first-in-human CAPRISA clinical trial of CAP256V2LS, this Phase II double-blinded randomised control trial, evaluated CAP256V2LS and VRC07-

523LS administered subcutaneously (under the skin) at 6-monthly intervals in young women. 1023 HIV negative participants were enrolled in CAPRISA's clinics in eThekwin and Vulindlela as well as in Lusaka at the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ).

The study showed that both the bnAbs were safe. The overall HIV incidence rate was 3.0 per 100 women-years in this clinical trial. A total of 39 women acquired HIV infection; 17 in the placebo group and 22 in the bnAb group. There was no statistically significant difference in the HIV incidence rates in women who received the bnAbs and those who received placebo, ie. there was no overall protective benefit. Unexpectedly, 25 of the 39 viruses from the women who acquired HIV, were resistant to both bnAbs while 12 of the remaining 14 were resistant to one of the two bnAbs. A positive finding was that there was a trend towards protection when the viruses were sensitive to both or one of the two bnAbs compared to when the viruses were resistant to both bnAbs.

The ongoing high rates of new HIV infections in young women underscores the importance of enhancing HIV prevention and continuing to develop a vaccine and a cure. The CAPRISA 012C trial is a culmination of 22 years of research – while it has not led to a new HIV prevention product, it provides valuable information to guide further bnAb research. Sensitivity to bnAbs in contemporary circulating viruses will need to be factored into planning future trials of bnAbs.

*Dr Sharana Mahomed presenting the CAPRISA 012C Phase II clinical trial results in the Co-Chair's Special Session at IAS 2026*

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**AIDS 2026**  
26–31 July

## More highlights from IAS 2026



CAPRISA research clinician Kirusha Naidoo was among the recipients of the prestigious IAS/ANRS MIE Lange/van Tongeren Prize for Young Investigators. Since 2006, the International AIDS Society (IAS) and the ANRS Emerging Infectious Diseases (ANRS MIE), through its Start programme, have joined forces each year to recognise the work of young researchers for its quality, innovation and originality in the field of HIV/AIDS research. In the category of Clinical Research, Naidoo was recognised for her presentation: *“Safety and virological outcomes of CAP256V2LS and VRC07-523LS administered at ART initiation with analytical treatment interruption: preliminary results from the NeutART HIV cure trial”*. She is seen here being congratulated by Professors Salim and Quarraisha Abdool Karim.



Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim and AVAC Executive Director Mitchell Warren co-chaired a Special Session to allow for a more in-depth discussion of the CAPRISA 012C trial results. Among the invited scientists were Peter Piot, Bob Eisinger and Grace Kumwenda. Pic (bottom, left): Professors Salim and Quarraisha Abdool Karim, SA Deputy Health Minister Dr Joe Phaahla, SANAC CEO Dr Thembisile Xulu, the SAMRC's Professor Glenda Grey and CAPRISA's Head of HIV Pathogenesis, Dr Sharana Mahomed. To see more of Team CAPRISA's engagements at the 2026 International Aids Conference, visit our gallery at <https://www.caprisa.org/Galleries>



**P**rofessor Quarraisha Abdool Karim has been selected as a member of the World Health Organisation's Science Council. The Council acts as the voice of scientific leadership directly advising the Director-General about high-priority scientific issues, and advances in science and technology that could directly impact global health. The Science Division, and the Chief Scientist Dr Sylvie Briand, facilitates the Council's activity in setting the top WHO science, research and innovation priorities.



## CAPRISA-FEMIN: Collaboration for the win

**T**he CAPRISA–FEMIN partnership, the brainchild of Lasker Laureate- Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim and Nobel Laureate Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi has moved firmly into a new phase, with the collaboration between European and South African researchers carried forward into a regular, structured engagement. On 24 June 2026, the network convened its bi-annual Scientific Meeting via a hybrid virtual platform, chaired and co-chaired by Elisabeth Menu and Derseree Archary, uniting basic scientists, clinicians and trainees in a shared mission to advance women's health and prevent HIV and STI infections in adolescent girls and young women. Collaborative studies took centre stage, including the impact of the vaginal microbiota on chlamydia-induced inflammation and CT or CT/HIV co-infections, alongside bioinspired mucin-based drug delivery systems to rewire the vaginal mucosal environment. Training and capacity development discussions spanned laboratory training, specimen sharing, joint publications, and the responsible use of AI. A key focus was standardising Standard Operating Procedures and sharing them across the network, so that specimen collections and assays can be harmonised across the mucosal immunology field. Clinical updates featured the VIBRANT trial results and progress on PedMab.– Dr Nomusa Zondo and Prof Derseree Archary



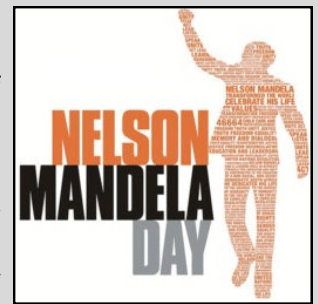
*Pics: Each one teach one: senior and up and coming researchers and scientists came together for the bi-annual CAPRISA-Femin scientific meeting*

**C**APRISA Deputy Director Professor Kogie Naidoo and CAPRISA Head of Laboratories Doctor Natasha Samsunder attended the ACTG annual network meeting in Washington DC. As a voting member of the ACTG/ IMPAACT Laboratory Technologist Committee, Dr. Samsunder attended all protocol meetings on which she serves as the laboratory technologist. She also attended the laboratory centre director's session. In her capacity of vice chair, Professor Naidoo co-led the TB-TSG plenary session and TB-TSG symposium. In addition, she chaired the TB Mycobacteriology working group session and co-chaired the TB-TSG business session where she also provided a status update on the A5421 study. "The TB-TSG symposium provided an exciting overview of clinical trials of new drugs and regimens currently in development that offer the potential for shortened TB treatment and a makes the vision of a PAN-TB regimen realisable", said Professor Naidoo.



## Mandela Month: Partners in Purpose

**T**o mark Mandela Day, CAPRISA Fellows dedicated their 67 minutes of service to Mpande High School in Vulindlela, rolling up their sleeves to help paint and restore school facilities. In under-resourced rural areas, hands-on support makes a tangible difference. We're proud of our team for stepping up to support the school's efforts to build a better environment for their learners. School Principal Madlala Gezani Goodman said, "Support from organisations like CAPRISA makes a meaningful difference. We are deeply grateful for CAPRISA's commitment to empowering education through initiatives like this." ***Look out for our Mandela Day give back finale in our August newsletter!***



The partnership between the South African National Taxi Council and CAPRISA's Community Outreach team continues for another year. Representatives from both organisations came together to support a group of learners in need of school uniforms.



# A selection of scientific papers published in 2026

- 41 **Abdool Karim S.** Africa's response to this Ebola outbreak shows how to shape global health. *Nature*. 2026 Jul;655(8123):549. doi: 10.1038/d41586-026-02148-6
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- 44 Bardon AR, Zondi M, Simoni JM, **Tihaku K**, **Munatsi P**, **Bhengu N**, Hill E, **Khanyile M**, Gandhi M, **Dorward J**, **Garrett N**, Drain PK. Acceptability and perspectives on clinic-based urine tenofovir testing for antiretroviral therapy adherence monitoring: qualitative findings from a randomized controlled trial in South Africa. *AIDS Care*. 2026 May 26:1-15. doi: 10.1080/09540121.2026.2670486
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- 46 Ssemaganda A, Kahia N, Oo MM, Rozenberg D, Nuhu F, Jahan N, Mulhall F, Downing K, Sandberg B, Elands H, Groff R, Altman AD, Robinson C, Keynan Y, Bernstein CN, Poliquin V, Arsenio J, **McKin-non LR**. Enumeration, Phenotyping, and Clinical Associations of Tissue-Resident T Cells in the Ecto- and Endocervix of Women Attending a Colposcopy Clinic. *Am J Reprod Immunol*. 2026 Mar;95(3):e70222. doi: 10.1111/aji.70222
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- 48 Lawal O, Okon M, Blanco N, Riley C, Onyemata J, Winters A, O'Connor T, Xiong C, Abimiku A, Chaurat M, Stafford KA; **INFORM Africa Study Group**. Place susceptibility index mapping at local government scale from population-based survey for Sub-Saharan Africa. *PLoS One*. 2026 Feb 17;21(2):e0340782. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone
- 49 Mlay JP, Ntlantsana V, Gcabashe N, Jamieson L, Naidu T, Bhengu BS, Thela LT, Paruk S, Burns JK, Chiliza B, **Lessells R**, Tomita A. Unmet needs of young adults following first-episode psychosis in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa: Baseline findings from a pilot randomised controlled trial of basic income support. *S Afr J Psychiatr*. 2026 Feb 16;32:2455. doi: 10.4102/sajpspsychiatry.v32i0.2455
- 50 Mchunu NN, Mwambi H, Reddy T, **Yende-Zuma N**, Rizopoulos D. Optimizing personalized screening intervals for clinical biomarkers using extended joint models. Optimizing personalized screening intervals for clinical biomarkers using extended joint models. *J Appl Stat*. 2026 Jan 25;53(2):171-202. doi: 10.1080/02664763.2025.2505636

For the complete list of publications see here: <https://www.capriza.org/Publication/1/1>



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