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# EASTERN EYE

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INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN THE

# MEDICAL FIELD





Dr. Ridwan Mia  
PLASTIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGEON



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## PROF SALIM ABDOOL KARIM

Visionary Leader and World-Renowned AIDS Expert

By: Sanabelle Ebrahim

**F**ounding Director of the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA), and CAPRISA Professor of Global Health in Epidemiology at Columbia University in New York, Prof Salim S. Abdool Karim, FRS is a world-renowned AIDS expert and clinical infectious diseases epidemiologist. He is globally recognised as a visionary leader, scientist, policy-advisor and human rights activist whose scientific discoveries have made a major contribution to the global response to HIV. Abdool Karim is an Adjunct Professor at Cornell and Harvard Universities and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Born in Lorne Street in Durban, he attended Gandhi-Desai High School before completing his medical studies at the University of Natal's medical school (known today as the Nelson R Mandela Medical School of the University of KwaZulu-Natal). He completed his Fellowship in Public Health Medicine with the South African College of Medicine and simultaneously graduated with a Masters in Medicine degree in Community Health from the University of Natal in 1992. He also studied at Columbia University in New York and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. His seminal discoveries in AIDS have impacted HIV prevention and have contributed to saving thousands of lives. The CAPRISA 004 tenofovir gel trial, that he co-lead with his wife Prof Quarraisha Abdool Karim, provided the first evidence for the concept of antiretroviral pre-exposure prophylaxis against HIV infection. His clinical research on TB-HIV treatment has shaped international guidelines on the clinical management of co-infected patients. Abdool Karim was appointed to lead the South African Ministerial Advisory Committee on Covid-19 (MAC) in April this year and has become a familiar face in the media as he explained and unpacked complex scientific jargon that could be clearly understood. He currently serves as the co-Chair of MAC and as a Member of the Africa Task Force for Coronavirus. Prof Salim Abdool Karim serves on the Lancet COVID-19 Commission created to help speed up global, equitable, and lasting solutions to the pandemic. He was one of 28 commissioners selected for his leadership in health science and delivery, business, politics, and finance from across the world. The Commissioners will be working together towards a comprehensive outlook on how to stop the pandemic and how best to promote an equitable and sustainable recovery. He has made major contributions to global HIV policy and has served as an advisor to governments and international agencies in AIDS and global health such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS). He is the Chair of the UNAIDS Scientific Expert Panel and Chair of the WHO Strategic and Technical Advisory Committee for HIV and Hepatitis, a Member of the Scientific Advisory Board for Global Health at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, a member of the WHO HIV-TB Task Force, and a Member of Board of the Population Council. He and his wife, Quarraisha, are ranked among the 50 all-time "Legends of South African Science" by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). He is a recipient of the African Union's "Kwame Nkrumah Continental Scientific Award", arguably the most prestigious scientific award in Africa. He is the only South African scientist to be elected as a member of both the US National Academy of Medicine and as a Fellow of the Royal Society in the UK. In his election to the Royal Society in London, Prof Abdool Karim joins a fellowship of over 1,600 scientists, engineers and technologists from the UK and the Commonwealth, including around 80 Nobel Laureates, who have made a "substantial contribution to the improvement of natural knowledge."

A portrait of Prof Salim Abdool Karim, a middle-aged man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit, a light-colored striped shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred office or laboratory setting.

*"At the end of the day what I stand for is the rigorous search for the truth and the universality of science. It doesn't matter who you are or what you do, striving for excellence with the goal of making a difference is the thing that binds us as scientists across boundaries and continents."*



# Living Legend Committed to HIV Prevention and Women's Health: Prof Quarraisha Abdool Karim

By Tashelle Eshwin



Associate Scientific Director of the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA), Quarraisha Abdool Karim, PhD is an NRF A-rated scientist and infectious diseases epidemiologist. Prof Abdool Karim is the recipient of more than 30 local and international prestigious awards. Her accolades include: South Africa's highest honour, the Order of Mapungubwe, from the President of South Africa in 2013 for outstanding work in the field of HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis Research and Health Policy Development; the 2013 African Union's Kwame Nkrumah Prize for Science and Technology; and the 2014 TWAS-Lenovo Prize From The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) "for her exceptional and distinguished contributions to HIV prevention and women's health". In 2014, she was awarded the ASSAf Science for Society Gold Medal for "outstanding achievement in scientific thinking to the benefit of society" and the South African Medical Research Council Gold Medal for her seminal scientific contributions in HIV research. She received the 2016 L'Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science award for Africa and the Arab States, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Institute of Human Virology, and the 2018 West Cates Spirit Award. The University of

Johannesburg conferred upon her the Honorary Philosophiae Doctor Honoris Causa and she is the UNAIDS Special Ambassador for Adolescents and HIV. Prof Abdool Karim's research for the past 28 years has focused on understanding the evolving HIV epidemic in South Africa; factors influencing acquisition of HIV infection in adolescent girls; development of interventions to prevent HIV infection in young women and sustainable strategies to introduce anti-retroviral treatment and new technologies and interventions for biggest impact on hyper-endemic epidemic settings. She was recruited by the Mandela Administration shortly after democracy to establish the first National AIDS and STI Programme for South Africa. Notably she was the Principal Investigator of the landmark CAPRISA 004 tenofovir gel trial which provided proof of concept that ARVs used by uninfected individuals can prevent HIV infection, highlighted by Science as one of the Top 10 scientific breakthroughs in 2010. She has over 200 peer reviewed publications; edited several books and/or contributed several book chapters including co-editing the 6th and 7th editions of the 'Oxford Textbook of Global Public Health.' She has delivered many invited keynote talks at national and international conferences. She is a Professor in Clinical

Epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, USA and is Pro-Vice-Chancellor for African Health, University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Between 1998 and 2015 she played a central role in building the science base in southern Africa through the Columbia University - Southern African Fugarty AIDS International Training and Research Programme that has trained over 600 scientists in southern Africa. She holds Fellowships at the National Academy of Medicine (considered to be one of the highest honours in the field of health and medicine), The World Academy of Science; Royal Society of South Africa, Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) and the African Academy of Science. Prof Abdool Karim is a member of the UNAIDS 2025 target setting and resource mobilization Steering Committee, Scientific Advisory Board member of the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). She is a Living Legend for the City of Durban - an honour bestowed by the city for citizens who have made an exemplary contribution to increase the profile of the city nationally and internationally.