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In our feature article this month we pay tribute to Professor Mervyn Susser who sadly passed away on 14 August 2014 at age 92.

On page 2, we highlight the collaborations between CAPRISA and the Centres for Disease Control in Sichuan, a province in south west China.

We also congratulate Mrs Nonhlanhla Yende-Zuma for receiving the Tata Africa Scholarship at the Women in Science Awards 2014 and feature the CAPRISA Young Adults Work Experience programme.



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Tribute to Professor Mervyn Susser



Dr Mervyn Susser (seated, third from left) with several of the trainees who benefitted from the Fogarty-funded Columbia University-southern African AIDS International Training and Research Program

Sadly, Mervyn Susser, anti-apartheid freedom-fighter, community doctor and world-renowned medical researcher in epidemiology, passed away on the 14th August 2014. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Zena Stein, their children, Ezra, Ida and Ruth as well as their families.

Mervyn was born in 1921 in South Africa and spent his early school-years at DPHS (Durban Primary). After Mervyn, as a young man, had served with the Allies in North Africa during World War I, he returned to South Africa to study medicine at Wits University. After graduating, he and Zena pursued their interest in social medicine and primary health care, by running the Alexandra Community Health Centre in Johannesburg. They initiated the collection of reliable statistics on births, diseases and deaths in the community for epidemiological analysis to inform a newly growing trend of comprehensive care encompassing both individual patient care plus community action for

health promotion, disease prevention and wider social development. They then joined the community medicine department of the black medical school at the University of Natal. Together with Zena, he wrote a seminal article on one of the first studies of community health in the developing world, published in 1955 in the *Lancet*, under the title, "Medical care in a South African township".

Throughout, Mervyn was an anti-apartheid activist and ANC supporter, working alongside Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada and Bram Fischer during the 1950s. In the late 1950s, Mervyn left with his family for the UK following the persecution of communists by the apartheid security machinery. He became Professor of Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Manchester and went on in 1966 to become Professor and Head of Epidemiology at Columbia University in New York. In 1978, he founded the Sergievsky Center and served as Sergievsky Professor of

Epidemiology at Columbia University until his retirement in 1990. He then served as Editor of the *American Journal of Public Health* until the mid-1990s. During this period, Mervyn remained active in the anti-apartheid struggle and now a supporter of the ANC in exile.

During the early 1980s, Mervyn created and led the Committee on Health in Southern Africa (CHISA) that played a vital role in promoting the academic boycott of apartheid South Africa and connecting the progressive South African medical fraternity within the country to those in exile and studying abroad. In April 1990, Mervyn, together with Zena and others, organized a CHISA conference in Maputo, Mozambique bringing together public health experts from inside South Africa, from the exile community and from the United States to focus on the imminent threat of HIV facing South Africa.

In 1994, he was one of the ANC veterans invited by President Mandela to celebrate the country's new



Tribute to Mervyn continued...

-born democracy at the Union Buildings. He advised the first post-Apartheid South African government and Minister of Health on rebuilding primary health care and medical research in South Africa. That year, he served on a review panel to advise the South African Medical Research Council's (MRC) Centre for Epidemiological Research in Southern Africa (CERSA), emphasizing the importance of a research programme to reduce the potential impact of HIV/AIDS. In 1999, Mervyn and Zena served as joint Directors of the Africa Centre that had been established jointly by the MRC, University of Natal and University of Durban-Westville in the rural community of Hlabisa in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

Mervyn and Zena were part of the creation of the Centre for the AIDS Programme in South Africa (CAPRISA), which is headquartered in the Doris Duke Medical Research Institute of the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine in Durban. During its first 6 years, they visited CAPRISA every year to review its research and to advise on its future direction. Mervyn was pivotal to much of CAPRISA's ground-breaking research in AIDS, continually encouraging us to focus on scientific excellence in CAPRISA's research programmes.

One of his most important and lasting legacies is his involvement in training South African epidemiologists, initially through the Rockefeller programme and subsequently through the Fogarty programme; the latter in conjunction with Zena as well as Salim and Quarraisha Abdool Karim. In his generous and gentle way, Mervyn has contributed enormously to training epidemiologists in the southern African region. Through his training, he has left an indelible mark on at least 3 of South Africa's leading medical research organisations CAPRISA, Africa Centre and CERSA/MRC.

Mervyn will be missed by his students, friends, colleagues and family throughout the world. His hallmark of rigorous science, social justice and caring will ensure his lasting legacy.

Hamba Kahle Mervyn.

Professor Salim S. Abdool Karim
Director: CAPRISA

CDC-Sichuan and CAPRISA formalise links



Bo Du Deputy Director, Health Department, Sichuan Province and Salim Abdool Karim formalize the relationship between CAPRISA and the CDC Sichuan Province

Senior officials from the Centres for Disease Control in Sichuan, a province in south west China, visited CAPRISA in August to gain insights into CAPRISA's AIDS research and to sign a cooperation agreement between CDC-Sichuan and CAPRISA. Led by Dr Bo Du, Deputy Director, Health Department, Sichuan Province, the delegation included senior members of the Health Department of Sichuan Province, Sichuan CDC and the Sichuan Medical Information Research Institute.

In addition to learning about CAPRISA's experiences in AIDS prevention and control programs, the delegation spent time during their visit to learn the latest developments on antiretroviral treatment, treatment for opportunistic infections and the use of antiretrovirals to prevent HIV transmission. The visit followed an exploratory visit by Sichuan CDC to CAPRISA last year and formalised the relationship between the two organisations. The relationship will allow for the Sichuan CDC scientists to spend time at CAPRISA and acquire further skills in HIV and AIDS patient management and HIV clinical research. In addition, CA-

PRISA's senior staff will be invited to visit the CDC-Sichuan to provide on-site training and support.

Professor Salim Abdool Karim Director of CAPRISA welcomed the visit, and said, "This agreement symbolises the geographic reach of CAPRISA's scientific contributions, extending to several BRICS countries and multilateral agencies."

The delegation spent over five hours with senior scientists at CAPRISA and visited the CAPRISA eThekweni Clinical Research site where they met with CAPRISA's deputy director, Dr Nesri Padayatchi. This was followed by a tour of the CAPRISA laboratory at the DDMRI offices, presentations and a meeting with Professors Salim and Quarraisha Abdool Karim. The CDC presentation titled: 'HIV/AIDS Prevalence and Comprehension Prevention and Treatment in Sichuan Province' highlighted the critical importance of enhancing HIV treatment mechanisms in that province.

Dr Nesri Padayatchi and Dr Kogie Naidoo will visit the HIV clinical centres and HIV research organisations in Sichuan province in October this year as guests of the Sichuan CDC.

9TH INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON

HIV TRANSMISSION

PRINCIPLES OF INTERVENTION

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA • 25-26 OCTOBER 2014



Registration and information:
www.virology-education.com



SA Women in Science Awards 2014—Tata Scholarship for CAPRISA Statistician

Statistician Nonhlanhla Yende-Zuma received a Tata Africa Scholarship valued at R60 000 which will sponsor her PhD studies. The announcement was made at the DST Women in Science Awards 2014 held in Johannesburg in August. The prestigious award in 'recognition of her outstanding academic and research ability' was presented by Minister of Science and Technology Mrs Naledi Pandor at a special awards dinner. Nonhlanhla is registered for her PhD in biostatistics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Her research focuses on the statistical methods of estimating the causal effect of treatment in randomised controlled trials using an instrumental variable. Her supervisor, Professor Henry Mwambi Academic Leader in UKZN School of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science, who strongly recommended Nonhlanhla for the award said that "the work will definitely propel Nonhlanhla's Biostatistics skills to even higher heights and be among top mentors in Biostatistics to other upcoming young Statisticians".

In nominating Nonhlanhla Professor Quarraisha Abdoel Karim, CAPRISA's Associate Scientific Director said: "as one of the Statisticians at CAPRISA, she has been involved in several pivotal studies where she has made substantive contributions to study design statistical analysis and interpretation of the data. Several of these studies have been published in high impact journals and Nonhlanhla's contributions are recognized as a co-author".

"Mrs Yende is already playing a critical role in terms of her contribution to undertaking large and complex studies in HIV/AIDS and TB that is changing the prevention and treatment landscape. Her PhD will further enhance her understanding and capacity to analyse large, complex datasets with multiple timepoints, manage the quality of study conduct through generation of monthly reports, and meaningfully interpret the data and to contribute to manuscript preparation and methodological advances in Statistics."



Mrs Nonhlanhla Yende-Zuma (centre) being congratulated on her award by CAPRISA's Deputy Director, Dr Nesri Padayatchi (left), and Dr Kogie Naidoo (right)

Deputy Director of CAPRISA Dr Nesri Padayatchi hosted a special function to congratulate Nonhlanhla for her 'outstanding achievement'. Nonhlanhla paid tribute to CAPRISA and her mentors for the "opportunities to advance her career and for being part of the team that transforms raw data that is collected at our clinics into meaningful and useful information". "As a mother of two, it's not easy juggling between raising children, my full time job and my studies. But time management and the support I get from my family helps me a lot. In the midst of it all, I make time to work on my PhD. In addition, having a wonderful and supportive mentor and head of department like Anneke Grobler keeps you motivated to do the best all the time."

CAPRISA Young Adults Work Experience programme

On the 7th July 2014, the CAPRISA HR team welcomed 6 excited and enthusiastic young adults between the ages of 15 and 17 to participate in the CAPRISA Young Adults Workplace Experience programme over 4 days.

The programme was aimed at exposing young adults to the "world of work" in a clinical research Organisation, as well as enabling learners to make more informed choices about future careers.

The programme commenced with an overview of CAPRISA and the various departments and functions, presented by Dr Carl Montague. This was followed by a session on career choices and interests, facilitated by Dr Devi Rajab and the HR Team.

The young adults then spent time in various departments, such as the Prevention, Treatment, Medicine, Pharmacy, Laboratory, IT and Finance teams, based on their individual interest and possible career choices.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive from the students and they found the information shared to be helpful in the decisions regarding which career to pursue.



Participants of the CAPRISA young adults work experience programme



Scientific papers published in 2014

- 53* **Kharsany ABM**, Buthelezi TJ, **Frohlich JA**, **Yende-Zuma N**, **Samsunder N**, Mahlase G, **Williamson C**, Travers S, Marais JC, **Dellar RC**, **Abdool Karim Q**, **Abdool Karim SS**. HIV infection in rural South African high schools: Role of transmissions among students. *AIDS Research and Human Retroviruses* 2014; doi: 10.1089/AID.2014.0110
- 54 Masson L, **Mlisana K**, Little F, **Werner L**, Mkhize NN, Ronacher K, Gamielidien H, **Williamson C**, Mckinnon LR, Walzl G, **Abdool Karim Q**, **Abdool Karim SS**, **Passmore JA-S**. Defining genital tract cytokine signatures of sexually transmitted infections and bacterial vaginosis in women at high risk of HIV infection: a cross-sectional study. *Sexually Transmitted Infections* 2014; DOI: 10.1136/sextrans-2014-051601
- 55 **Gengiah T**, Botha J, Soowamber D, **Naidoo K**, **Abdool Karim SS**. Low rifampicin concentrations in tuberculosis patients with HIV infection. *Journal of Infection in Developing Countries* 2014; 8(8):987-993.
- 56 Hyle EP, **Naidoo N**, Su AE, El-Sadr WM, Freedberg KA. HIV, Tuberculosis, and Noncommunicable Diseases: What Is Known About the Costs, Effects, and Cost-effectiveness of Integrated Care? *J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr* 2014;67:S87-S95
- 57 Hicks RM, **Padayatchi N**, Shah NS, Wolf A, **Werner L**, Sunkari VB, **O'Donnell MR**. Malnutrition associated with unfavorable outcome and death among South African MDR-TB and HIV co-infected children. *International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease* 2014; 18(9): 1074-1083

*continuation from previous newsletter



Scientific Reviews

Abstracts submitted for review		Manuscripts submitted for review		Ancillary studies submitted for review	
Total#	Cumulative [^]	Total#	Cumulative [^]	Total#	Cumulative [^]
0	325	2	200	0	52

for month, [^] since committee initiation



Conference & Workshop Reminders

Conference	Dates	Abstracts	Deadlines	
			Registration	Website
Southern African HIV Clinicians Society —Cape Town, Spout Africa	24-27 Sept 2014	Closed	1 May 2014	http://sahivsoc2014.co.za/
Third Global Symposium on Health Systems Research — Cape Town, South Africa	30 Sept - 3 Oct 2014	Closed	2 June 2014	http://hsr2014.healthsystemsresearch.org
HIV Research for Prevention 2014: AIDS Vaccine, Microbicide, & ARV-based Prevention Science — Cape Town, South Africa	28-30 Oct 2014	Closed	15 Oct 2014	www.hivr4p.org
9th International Workshop on HIV Transmission - Cape Town, South Africa	25-26 October	29 August	15 Sept 2014	www.virology-education.com
8th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2015) - Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada	19-22 July 2015	27 Jan 2015	25 Feb 015	http://www.ias2015.org/
International Conference on HIV and AIDS - London, United Kingdom May 25 - 26, 2015	25-26 May 2015	25 Nov 2014	25 Jan 2015	https://www.waset.org/conference/2015/05/london/ICHA

CAPRISA is an official research institute of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Columbia University.

CAPRISA was established in 2002 through a CIPRA grant from the NIH, as a multi-institutional collaboration, incorporated as an independent non-profit AIDS Research Organization

Registration Number: 2002/024027/08

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