

Harvard magazine honours three SA scientists leading public health in Africa



HIV scientists Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim and her husband Professor Salim Abdool Karim, as well as drug development pioneer Professor Kelly Chibale. Pictures: CAPRISA and Michael Hammond/UCT

Cape Town - Three leading South African scientists have been named in the Harvard Public Health Magazine's [list](#) of 25 standout voices in African public health.

HIV scientists Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim and her husband Professor Salim Abdool Karim, as well as drug development pioneer Professor Kelly Chibale have been honoured for being leaders in shaping policy and practice on the continent.

The prestigious magazine listed Professor Salim Abdool Karim, director of the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA), for his work in the prevention and treatment of HIV and tuberculosis.

“Karim’s clinical research revealed that antiretrovirals can prevent sexually transmitted HIV infection and genital herpes in women,” according to the Harvard magazine. Karim has also been one of the leading voices in South Africa's Covid-19 fight as he led the country’s Ministerial Advisory Committee on Covid-19.

Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim was honoured for developing HIV prevention solutions for women since 1990 when she led the country’s first community-based HIV prevalence study.

Scientific director of CAPRISA, Quarraisha developed several woman-controlled HIV prevention methods, including vaginal microbicides and rings infused with antiretrovirals. She also co-chairs a UN expert group advising governments on using science and technology for sustainable development.

Director of the University of Cape Town’s (UCT) Drug Discovery and Development Centre (H3D), Professor Kelly Chibale was honoured for drug discovery in Africa.

Together with his team at H3D, they developed antimalarial drugs now in early-phase human clinical trials – a first for an African drug discovery team.

Speaking to UCT News, Chibale said there had been great efforts to keep public health in Africa high on the global health agenda.

“The role that African health sciences and communities have played in the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the fore “out of Africa” innovation, capacity and infrastructure that are not currently acknowledged,” he said.