Local experts show way in tailoring drugs for continent

“Local” is at least a quarter of the world’s disease burden in sub-Saharan Africa, yet the continent is still largely overlooked when it comes to the discovery of medicines. As a result, many of the drugs and vaccines that are critical to the health of our communities are either not available or are too expensive for most people to afford.

In an effort to change this, the University of Cape Town (UCT) has launched a new initiative to foster the development of local expertise in drug discovery and development. The initiative, called Health@home, aims to provide a platform for researchers, policymakers, and healthcare providers to collaborate on the discovery and development of new medicines.

“Health@home is a game-changer,” says Khululekani Moyo, a professor of pharmacology at UCT and the director of the Institute for Discovery and Innovation. “It will allow us to take a much more proactive approach to the discovery of new medicines, and to ensure that these medicines are available and affordable to everyone who needs them.”

One of the key initiatives of Health@home is the creation of the African Medicines Discovery Centre (AMDC), which will focus on the discovery and development of new medicines for the treatment of diseases that are prevalent in Africa.

“The AMDC will be a truly innovative and world-class facility,” says Moyo. “It will be the first of its kind in Africa, and will provide a platform for researchers from across the continent to collaborate on the discovery of new medicines.

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