

■ REPORT

SA ranked among top Aids research producers

STAFF WRITER

AHEAD of World Aids Day on December 1, a new international report by Elsevier Analytical Services on the global state of HIV/Aids research has identified South Africa as one of the leading research producers worldwide.

UCT has also been singled out as the most influential HIV/Aids research institution globally, based on the impact of its published papers.

It is joined on the list by the University of the Witwatersrand

According to the "HIV/Aids research insights: Impacts, trends, opportunities" report, South Africa's research output in the field accounts for 6823 publications.

The data in the report comes from Elsevier's SciVal and Scopus database and covers research published between 2014 and 2018.

The report found South Africa's leading position may reflect the high priority HIV/Aids research has taken in countries where the incidence rate is high and suggests strong support for research overall.

The report shows that the relative activity in HIV/Aids research is highest in four countries with a high burden from the disease: South Africa, Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria.

Professor of Medicine at the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre, UCT, and the immediate past president of the International Aids Society, Linda-Gail Bekker, said: "This report shows the tight relationship between burden of disease and research publishing.

"South Africa is a relatively small country but has carried a massive HIV burden and punched well above its weight in research publishing. It also shows that, like

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The African countries most impacted are producing more papers

Professor Salim S Abdool Karim
DIRECTOR OF CAPRISA

the epidemic, the response has been global, with significant north-south collaboration.”

The US produced the greatest number of research publications on the topic, followed by the UK.

South Africa takes third place and generates the greatest amount of research into the disease of any developing country across the world, the report found.

One of the driving successes behind South Africa's output is international collaboration – about 72% of the research produced by UCT and Wits involved international collaborators.

Professor Salim S Abdool Karim, director of the Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in SA (Caprisa) and Caprisa Professor of Global Health at Columbia University, added: "This analysis clearly demonstrates that the African countries most impacted by the Aids epidemic are producing disproportionately more HIV papers in relation to their country's total research publications. In particular, South Africa, which has about one fifth of the global HIV burden, is highly ranked globally for having the third-highest number of HIV publications, many of which emanate from international collaborations and are being highly cited."