“Clinical Outcomes with Second-Line Dolutegravir in People with Virological Failure on First-Line Non-Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor-Based Regimens in South Africa,” was recently published in the Lancet Global Health journal. The study was led by Mr Kwabena Asare and the SHAPE study team supervised by Prof Nigel Garrett and Dr Jienchi Dorward; it compared the effectiveness of Dolutegravir-based regimens to Lopinavir boosted ritonavir for second-line HIV treatment in Kwazulu-Natal.

Dolutegravir, an Integrase strand transfer inhibitor, has shown superior efficacy and tolerability in LMIC settings like South Africa. Recommended for first-line treatment since 2019, it is now also suggested for second-line treatment in cases of virologic failure on first-line regimens without Dolutegravir. This study confirmed previous trial findings, showing Dolutegravir’s superiority over Lopinavir-ritonavir in routine healthcare settings.

While adherence issues were noted in routine care, the study supports transitioning to Dolutegravir-based regimens in LMICs, aligning with WHO recommendations. The findings urge improvements in adherence counselling and monitoring for those with virologic failure. This research contributes to updating national guidelines to benefit individuals on failing regimens and those on Lopinavir-ritonavir who could benefit from Dolutegravir.

This study aims at improving treatment outcomes by informing clinical decision-making, especially of patients who need to initiate second-line therapy.

For further reading: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(23)00516-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(23)00516-8/fulltext)
CAPRISA recently concluded its annual Strategic Planning Meeting, a gathering that brought together key stakeholders and leaders to outline the organization’s upcoming studies. The meeting provided a platform for CAPRISA’s researchers, particularly the emerging scientists, to present their fresh ideas.

During the sessions at the CAPRISA Strategic Planning Meeting, Mrs. Lara Lewis discussed the potential impact of Dolutegravir on cardiovascular disease (SHAPE-NCD), providing a unique perspective at the crossroads of healthcare and research. Dr Freedom Moropa shared a comprehensive study on the transmissibility of asymptomatic TB, shedding light on how this unnoticed threat spreads within communities and advancing our comprehension of tuberculosis. Prof Penny Moore also showcased the potential for HIV mRNA vaccine candidates, based on CAPRISA bnAbs. More updates on this pioneering research are on the horizon.

Looking ahead, Prof Salim Abdool Karim expressed optimism about CAPRISA’s trajectory, highlighting the organisation’s history of achievements and its continuous contributions to TB and HIV research and beyond.

In closing, Abdool Karim expressed gratitude to all participants, speakers, and organisers whose involvement was integral to the success of the CAPRISA Strategic Planning Meeting. Their dedication and expertise play a vital role in shaping CAPRISA’s future and fulfilling its mission to enhance health outcomes and uplift communities.

Natasha Samsunder, the Director of CAPRISA Laboratories, was recently honoured with the IMPAACT Service Recognition Award during the IMPAACT annual meeting in Washington, DC. This award was in recognition of her dedication and invaluable contributions to IMPAACT studies, particularly her significant role within the Laboratory Technologists Committee.

Currently overseeing the laboratory component of three IMPAACT network studies, Natasha is responsible for designing Laboratory Processing Charts (LPC) and ensuring their successful implementation at clinical research sites. She actively participates in the Laboratory Technology Committee, collaborating with an international laboratory team, the ACTG and IMPAACT laboratory teams, and representatives from DAIDS. Professor Salim Abdool Karim congratulated Natasha and presented her with the CAPRISA Achievement Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions to laboratory technology and research.

Photo caption:
The award was presented by Chiraphorn Kaewkosaba, who is the co-chair of the ACTG/IMPAACT LABORATORY TECHNOLOGIST COMMITTEE.
The CAPRISA-FEMIN Workshop, held on February 6th and 7th, 2024, at the Coastlands Musgrave Hotel in Durban, marked the inception of a dynamic partnership between 12 European researchers, 13 CAPRISA basic science researchers, clinicians, epidemiologists, and 6 post-doctoral and PhD fellows. At the core of this initiative lies the Female Mucosal Immunology Network (FEMIN), envisioned by Nobel Prize Laureate Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi from the Pasteur Institute in France and Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim, distinguished figures in HIV Prevention Science. This collaborative workshop focused on a critical mission: preventing infections in adolescent girls and young women. It showcased groundbreaking advancements in basic research, including miniaturized in vitro models and pre-clinical small animal models, offering insights into the efficacy of various products, and paving the way for future studies and human testing.

The workshop commenced with an enlightening session by Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts and bilateral funding to propel scientific endeavors. This sentiment was echoed in the closing session by Glaudina Loots from the DST. Throughout the workshop, discussions revolved around key themes such as Mucosal Immunology, pre-exposure prophylaxis options, broadly neutralising antibodies, HIV & Maternal and baby health, STIs, and the Vaginal Microbiome. This face-to-face meeting, following a virtual partnership establishment in June of the previous year and a joint publication in Frontiers, signifies a significant step towards advancing women’s health. Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi’s role as the Chair of the CAPRISA Scientific Advisory Board underscores the commitment to driving impactful research and innovations in HIV prevention science.

Empowering Collaboration: The Inaugural CAPRISA-FEMIN Workshop Advances Female Mucosal Immunology for HIV Prevention

Nelson Mandela Medical School Students Shine in Vietnam Exchange Programme with CAPRISA

University of KwaZulu-Natal medical students, Saien Govender and Mohamed Hoosen Suleman, recently embarked on a transformative experience through the CAPRISA / VinUniversity Exchange Programme in Hanoi, Vietnam. Upon their arrival on 14 January, they were warmly welcomed by the College of Health Sciences team at VinUniversity. A meticulously planned two-week itinerary curated by VinUniversity awaited them, providing a comprehensive experience for the CAPRISA Research Placement Programme Mentees.

The students began by showcasing the impactful work of CAPRISA and the exchange programme at the South African Embassy in Vietnam, receiving commendation for their dedication. During the first week, Saien and Mohamed engaged in discussions with the College of Health Sciences Leadership at VinUniversity.

They then immersed themselves in clinical rotations at VinMec Private Hospital, exploring various medical specialties under the guidance of professionals. Interactions with specialists and witnessing surgical procedures provided invaluable insights. Transitioning into the second week, they actively participated in ward rounds and patient examinations at Military 108 Hospital. A meeting with Major General Professor Lam, Head of Craniofacial and Plastic Surgery, resulted in constructive feedback for program enhancement.

An exclusive visit to the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in Vietnam offered insights into infectious disease prevention strategies. Saien and Mohamed’s collaborative efforts have fostered lasting connections with VinMec and VinUniversity, paving the way for future collaborations and inspiring fellow students to embark on similar journeys of growth and learning.

Saien Govender and Mohamed Hoosen Suleman at the VinUniversity Cultural Day in Hanoi, Vietnam
In a notable visit last December, senior officials from Gilead Sciences embarked on a journey to CAPRISA’s research sites, fostering collaboration and innovation in medical research. Dr. Dennis Israelski, Head of Global Patient Solutions for Medical Affairs; Ms. Sinit Mehtsun, Executive Director of Health Systems Engagement; and Mr. Aquarius Gilmer, Associate Director of Corporate Alliance, and Policy, joined by Prof. Ayesha Kharsany, Senior Scientist, and Mr. Patrick Mdletshe, Head of Community Programme, on this insightful visit.

On December 12, the delegation, led by Dr. Disebo Potloane, Site Director of CAPRISA’s Vulindlela Research clinic, visited the clinical facilities and gained a comprehensive understanding of ongoing research studies. Prof. Kharsany elaborated on the RHIVA trial and HIV phylogenetic studies conducted in schools in Vulindlela, fostering engaging discussions with the research team. Continuing their exploration on December 13, the visitors met with Prof. Kogie Naidoo, Deputy Director at CAPRISA’s headquarters, for a laboratory tour and in-depth discussions.

The visit culminated with a warm reception at the eThekwini Research clinic, where Prof. Nigel Garrett, Head of Vaccines and Pathogenesis Research, and Dr. Sharana Mahomed, Senior Research Clinician, hosted the delegation, further strengthening collaborative efforts in research and clinical advancements.

CAPRISA recently honored its dedicated and long-serving staff at a celebration held at the Durban Coastland Hotel. Prof Salim Abdool Karim, CAPRISA’s Director, led the ceremony, personally recognising each employee for their years of service and contributions.

The Long Service Awards highlight the employees’ unwavering commitment, with many having served CAPRISA for a significant period. Abdool Karim commended the staff for their excellence and passion in advancing TB and HIV research. He expressed gratitude for their efforts and dedication, stating, “CAPRISA is privileged to have such a talented and resolute team.” He emphasised the team’s importance and anticipated continued collaboration and success.

CAPRISA congratulates Dr. Felix Made on his PhD success

CAPRISA congratulates Dr. Felix Made, Head of Statistics at CAPRISA, on achieving his PhD from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Dr. Made’s PhD was in Public Health, specialising in Biostatistics.

Under the supervision of Distinguished Professor Derk Brouwer (Wits University), Professor Ngianga-Bakwin Kandala (Western University, Canada), and Professor Jerome Lavoue (University of Montreal, Canada), Dr. Made’s research focused on “Preventing Coal Mine Dust Lung Disease: Application of Bayesian Hierarchical Framework for Occupational Exposure Assessment in the South African Coal Mining Industry.”

The CAPRISA community celebrates Dr. Made’s dedication and academic success in advancing public health and biostatistics research.
A SELECTION OF PUBLISHED SCIENTIFIC PAPERS


* continuation from previous newsletter

For the complete list of publications see here: http://bit.ly/3IRvjZd