



CAPRISA

CENTRE FOR THE AIDS PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA



CAPRISA IS A UNAIDS COLLABORATING CENTRE FOR HIV PREVENTION RESEARCH

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In this issue...

Microbicides as a preventative HIV strategy are the focus of the August issue of Best Practice and Research in Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology

Coverage of the event marking 10 years of partnership between CAPRISA and the community appears on page 2.

On page 3 is an update on new HIV/TB drug resistance testing technologies.



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Best practice and research in microbicides

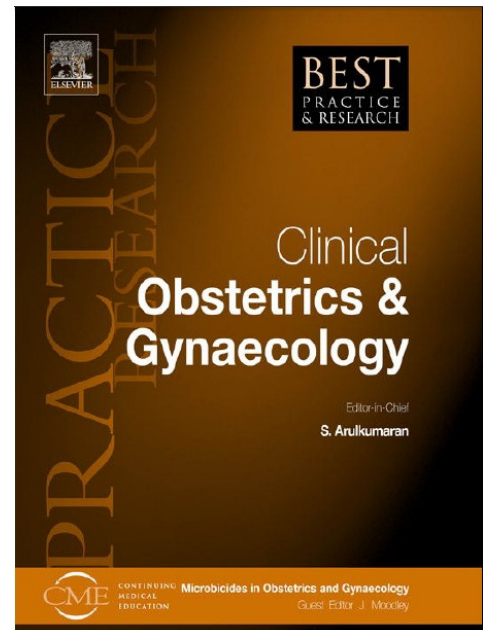
A special issue in the journal of Best Practice and Research in Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology discusses the viability of microbicides as a preventative HIV strategy in an increasingly feminised pandemic.

A series of contributions by leading microbicides scientists in the August edition of *Best Practice and Research in Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology* discusses a range of issues on the use of microbicides as an HIV prevention tool.

The first of eight papers discusses the urgent need for a women-controlled method to prevent HIV infection. Following significant progress in microbicides development, there is optimism that a safe and effective microbicides, in the form of tenofovir gel—as demonstrated by the encouraging results of the CAPRISA 004 trial - is possible.

The review in chapter two on the biology and anatomy of the vaginal tract examines the relationship between increased risk for HIV infection in women and sexually transmitted diseases and vaginal inflammation. The next research priority involves investigations into breakthrough infections in women who became infected with HIV, despite using tenofovir gel, with the aim of improving the efficacy of microbicide gels.

Chapter five highlights the reproductive challenges arising during microbicides studies, as the study participants are young women. The authors recommend intensive contraceptive counselling programmes that encourage 100% contraception uptake by the female participants. A further proposal by



the contributors concerns continuous follow-up of pregnant women until the pregnancy outcome has been established.

Relationship dynamics and disparities between men and women are traced in chapter six in a historical exploration of sexual and reproductive health issues pre- and post-HIV era. Here, the authors emphasise the role of women in transforming societies and the pressing need to advance female-initiated HIV prevention technologies.



Partnership milestone celebrated with community leadership

A celebration marking a decade of partnership with community leadership was held at the Vulindlela Clinic on Sunday 26 August 2012.

Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim recounted the invitation in 2001 by the traditional leader, Nkosi Zondi, for CAPRISA to partner with the community in finding solutions to the devastating impact of HIV.

The subsequent work in the district yielded valuable knowledge about infection rates, particularly amongst adolescent pregnant girls, as well as behavioural factors that contributed to the spread of HIV. Over time, the antiretroviral treatment programmes provided evidence that people with HIV would live a normal and healthy life.

In more recent years, attention has also been given to HIV prevention work. The CAPRISA 004 tenofovir gel study has great significance in women's empowerment and ability to control their HIV risk.

Prof Abdool Karim also stressed the importance of eradicating discrimination about HIV by encouraging every-



Top photo: Prof Salim Abdool Karim and Inkosi Zondi senior
Middle photo: Induna Zuma and Prof Quarraisha Abdool Karim
Bottom photo, back, left to right: Mrs Zuma (wife of Induna Zuma), Ms Makhaye (councillor), Ms Lungi Songo (councillor), Mrs Khumalo (CRSG), Dr Carl Montague, Mrs Sokhela (SRSG), Ms Hlela (SRSG), Dr Janet Frohlich. Front: Mrs Mkhize (wife of Arch Bishop Mkhize), Sister Mkhize (Mafakatini Clinic Operations Manager), Mrs Mazeka (Ngcedomphophe High School Principal)

one to be tested and to know their HIV status. She said: "Whether you are HIV positive, or HIV negative, options for treatment and prevention are available to everyone in the form of abstinence, behaviour change, condoms, knowing your status, counselling, circumcision, treatment as prevention, oral or gel ARVs." In conclusion, she acknowledged the community for being an inspiration of strength, courage and resilience.

In response, guest of honour, Inkosi Zondi Senior—Chairperson of the House of Traditional leaders—recognised the importance of the community gathering during Women's Month.

He stated that thanks to the tenofovir gel study there was a light at the end of the tunnel and he hoped that a cure for AIDS would soon be available. He thanked CAPRISA for all the good work done in the district.

The proceedings concluded with the handing over of certificates of appreciation to the traditional councils in the area as well as a gesture of gifts to local councillors and the community and schools research support group members (CRSG and SRSG).

Continued from page 1

Lastly, a paper on scaling up HIV programmes explores opportunities to translate small-scale trials into effective roll-out strategies in constrained healthcare systems. In providing a framework to evaluate the use of microbicides as a public health tool, the paper proposes the introduction of the quality-improvement approach to strengthen health systems using existing points of care, such as family planning clinics.

For further reading:

- Abdool Karim SS, Baxter C, Overview of microbicides for the prevention of human immunodeficiency virus, *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 2012, 26: 427-439.
- Roberts L, Liebenberg L, Barnabas S, Passmore J-A, Vaginal microbicides to prevent human immunodeficiency virus infection in women: Perspectives on the female genital tract, sexual maturity and mucosal inflammation. *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 2012, 26: 441-449.
- Sibeko S, Cohen G, Moodley J, Contracep-

tion and pregnancy in microbicides trials, *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 2012, 26: 473-486.

- Abdool Karim Q, Humphries H, Stein Z, empowering women in human immunodeficiency virus prevention. *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 2012, 26: 487-493.
- Gengiah T, Abdool Karim Q, Implementing microbicides in low-income countries, *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 2012, 26: 495-501.



Creating access to HIV/TB drug resistance testing

During July, the acclaimed researcher, Dr Tulio de Oliveira from the Southern African Treatment Research Network (SATuRN), was invited to CAPRISA to visit CAPRISA's eThekweni Clinical Research Site. He also presented latest developments on affordable HIV and TB drug resistance testing and open access, public, drug resistance databases to CAPRISA's management team, followed by discussions on possible opportunities for collaboration.



Dr Tulio de Oliveira

Together with its 24 research partners, SATuRN has collated over 7000 resistance genotypes linked to treatment and clinical information in Southern Africa. Its research and development strategy has drastically reduced the cost of drug resistance genotyping and, as part of its capacity building efforts, the network has delivered training in drug resistance testing and management to 1346 physicians and nurses in southern Africa. Later this year it will hold its 7th annual workshop at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

Dr de Oliveira is a senior researcher at the Wellcome Trust-Africa Centre for Health and Population Studies in Mtubatuba, KwaZulu Natal. He is also a director of the (SATuRN) in KwaZulu Natal, which has developed the advanced diagnostic technologies. Using genotyping analysis, SATuRN aims to create cost effective HIV and TB resistance testing, which Dr Oliveira would like to see being widely implemented to patients and providers.

For more information, visit: www.bioafrica.net/saturn

NIH funding workshop

Ms Marian Swart, Chief Operations Officer for CAPRISA, was recently invited to co-facilitate a University of KwaZulu Natal sponsored workshop on National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant applications processes.

The two-day workshop, which was attended by 20 researchers, PhD candidates and research administrative staff from the university, allowed participants to gain in-depth understanding of NIH poli-

cies, funding opportunities, application processes, budgeting, management of awards and reporting.



Ms Marian Swart discusses with workshop attendees the NIH's financial support mechanisms for biomedical research.

Women in Science Awards

Dr Senge Sibeko was named as the first runner-up in the South African Department of Science and Technology's Women in Science Award 2012 in the category of *Development of Rural Women: Emerging Researchers*. Dr Sibeko was until earlier this year a study gynae-

cologist with CAPRISA. She is currently an Oxford University Fellow.

Dr Senge Sibeko



Post-Doc Forum takes off

Since its inception in March 2012, the monthly Post-Doctoral Forum — an initiative of CAPRISA, HPP and K-RITH — has hosted respected guest scientists from the University of KwaZulu Natal, John Hopkins University, University of the Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town and New York University.

The Forum was established to promote communication, interaction and collaboration between post-doctoral fellows within the three institutes. Participants are encouraged to use the forum to share relevant novel technologies, complementary research interests, noteworthy journal articles and funding opportunities.

More recently, the Forum has identified an opportunity for its post-doctoral members from CAPRISA, HPP and K-RITH to host basic science lecture series outside their research project scopes to discuss virology, immunology and genetics. It is envisaged that postgraduate students at the DDMRI will be invited to attend these sessions.

The meetings are being sponsored in rotation by Professor Salim Abdool Karim from CAPRISA, Professor Thumbi Ndung'u of HPP and Prof William Bishai of K-RITH.

For more information, contact:

Dr Lenine Liebenberg, CAPRISA - Liebenberg@ukzn.ac.za, or

Dr Christina Thobakgale, HPP - Thobakgalec@ukzn.ac.za



Photograph taken at the inaugural Post-Doctoral Forum held in March 2012. Left to right: Dr Muki Shey (CAPRISA), Dr Lilian Sacks (K-RITH), Dr Ravesh Singh (HPP), Dr Richard Kangethe (HPP), Dr Bridgette Cumming (K-RITH), Dr Kamini Gounder (HPP), Dr Derseree Archary (CAPRISA), Dr Jacklyn Wright (HPP), Dr Paradise Madlala (HPP), Front row: Co-ordinators Dr Lenine Liebenberg (CAPRISA), Dr Christina Thobakgale (HPP)



Research papers published in 2012



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

www.caprisa.org

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- 32 Wecker M, Gilbert P, Russell N, Hural J, Allen M, Pensiero M, Chulay J, Chiu Y-L, **Abdool Karim S, Burke D.** Phase I safety and immunogenicity evaluations of an alphavirus replicon HIV-1 subtype C gag vaccine (AVX101) in healthy HIV-1 uninfected adults. *Clinical and Vaccine Immunology* 2012; Aug 22. [Epub ahead of print]
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* continued from previous issue

Scientific Reviews

Abstracts submitted for review		Manuscripts submitted for review		Ancillary studies submitted for review	
Total#	Cumulative [^]	Total#	Cumulative [^]	Total#	Cumulative [^]
0	279	1	219	1	36

for month, [^] since committee initiation

Conference & Workshop Reminders

Conference	Dates	Deadlines		Website
		Abstracts	Registration	
AIDS Vaccine 2012 Boston, USA	9-12 Sept 2012	8 July 2012	31 Aug 2012	www.vaccinenterprise.org/conference/2012/
Tuberculosis 2012 Paris, France	11-15 Sept 2012	15 June 2012	15 June 2012	www.pasteur.fr/infosci/conf/sb/tuberculosis2012/index.html
6th Annual Workshop on Advanced Clinical Care (AWACC) – AIDS Durban, South Africa	4-5 Oct 2012	N/A	23 Sept 2012	http://www.mccord.org.za/cause_data/images/1285/AWACC_2011_Registration_Form.pdf
International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections World Congress 2012 Melbourne, Australia	15-17 Oct 2012	8 June 2012	4 Oct 2012	www.iusti2012.com
7th Southern African HIV/TB Drug Resistance & Treatment Monitoring Workshop Cape Town, South Africa	28-29 Nov 2012	N/A	1 Oct 2012	www.bioafrica.net/workshops/7th-saturnresistanceworkshop.html
8th Federation of African Immunological Societies Conference Durban, South Africa	2-5 Dec 2012	19 Sep 2012	From 2 Sep 2012	www.faisconference2012.com

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