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On page 1 we report on the visit to CAPRISA by Professor Berhanu Abegaz, Executive Director of the African Academy of Sciences, on 18-19 March 2015.

On page 2, we highlight the Implementation Science workshop held on 23 March 2015 to showcase trainees of a PEPFAR funded supplemental grant.

The MRC and NIH grant to fund studies to improve STI care and reduce HIV risk and the training of fellows and mentors affiliated to the Swaziland Health Research Training Program (HRTTP) is highlighted on page 3.



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## Building Capacity for Science & Technology in Africa

**D**uring his recent visit to CAPRISA, Professor Berhanu Abegaz, Executive Director of the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) met with senior CAPRISA staff to gain insights into how to establish a world class research institute in Africa.

During meetings with CAPRISA's senior leadership he explored the organisation's vision and goals and met with administrative and science support staff to appreciate the synergy between components of the Centre. Systems to manage multiple grants, research support cores, research infrastructure were of particular interest to him.

The AAS, which was established in 1985, aims to be a major player in 'driving sustainable development in Africa through science, technology and innovation'. Professor Abegaz said an academy needed to work closely with the government it was associated with as well as with the 'political echelons' but it also had to maintain its distance to ensure independence.

Professor Abegaz delivered a public lecture at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) titled: Capacity Building for Science and Technology in Africa – an African Academy of Sciences Perspective hosted by UKZN Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Deresh Ramjugernath. In his lecture Professor Abegaz highlighted the challenges and opportunities facing Africa and said that the future of the continent depended on the youth, its greatest asset. He outlined the AAS Young Affiliates' Programme which is aimed at early to



From left: Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim with Professor Berhanu Abegaz and Professor Deresh Ramjugernath

mid-career professionals and emphasised the value of inspiring young people and providing good mentors to nurture the next generation of research leadership. He said a total of 25 affiliates will be selected every year and provided with 'inspirational, tangible support' for five years.

The AAS has a strategic partnership with the African Union and NEPAD and has honoured over 300 fellows, three of whom are Nobel Prize winners. It is open to all sciences - life and physical sciences, applied and social sciences and the humanities, including indigenous knowledge. "Our academy is an academy of all knowledge and is not discipline specific or restricted to any discipline," said Abegaz.



## Successful Implementation Science Training Workshop held at CAPRISA



Front from left to right: Nalini Anand (Director, Division of International Science Policy, Planning, and Evaluation FIC/NIH), Kogie Naidoo, Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Ms Frances Chisholm (US Consul-General), Chalone Savant (PEPFAR Provincial Liaison, KZN), Rachel Sturke (Deputy Director, Division of International Science Policy, Planning, and Evaluation FIC/NIH), Ayesha Kharsany, Marian Swart with the trainees and mentors of the Implementation Science Programme.

**C**APRISA hosted an Implementation Science (IS) workshop on 23 March to showcase the projects undertaken by the trainees of a PEPFAR funded supplemental grant to the CU-SA Fogarty AIDS Training Programme (CU-SA AITRP) through the Fogarty International Center of the National Institutes of Health.

Delegates were welcomed by Ms Frances Chisholm, US Consul-General and Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim Director of the CU-SA Fogarty AIDS Training Program.

In her presentation entitled: Building implementation science research capacity in KwaZulu-Natal South Africa, Professor Abdool Karim said that the purpose of the IS programme was to build a critical mass of well trained public health implementation scientists in KwaZulu-Natal “to enhance our response to the HIV and AIDS and TB epidemics through, among others, bridging the gap between proof of concept studies and programmatic scale-up of interventions.” She cautioned that “now is not the time to slow down our HIV and AIDS efforts”.

The workshop was divided into three sessions. The first session focused on “Enhancing TB Management”, the second on “Surveillance, HIV Testing and Linkage to Care” and the third on “Introducing New Interventions in Communities and Reaching Key Populations”. Mentors and members of the evaluation panel provided valuable feedback.

The winners of the three best presentations

were Dr Marian Loveday (1<sup>st</sup> prize) from the Medical Research Council for her project on “Decentralised management of MDR-TB patients in KZN – final outcomes”, Roger Phili (2<sup>nd</sup> prize) from the National Health Laboratory Service for his project on “Feasibility of implementation of MMC in public sector health facilities in KwaZulu-Natal” and Nelisile Ngcobo (3<sup>rd</sup> prize) from CAPRISA for her project on “Implementation of voluntary medical male circumcision using a school-based recruitment programme in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa”.

### CAPRISA hosts UNAIDS Country Director



Professor Salim Abdool Karim, CAPRISA's Director, takes Dr Erasmus Morah, UNAIDS Country Director and Ms Eva Kiwango on a tour of CAPRISA offices and laboratories during their visit to CAPRISA on 18 March



## MRC and NIH fund studies to improve STI care and reduce HIV risk

The Medical Research Council of South Africa and the National Institute of Health in the United States have awarded a \$297 000 grant that will enable scientists to study the effects of reducing genital inflammation and HIV risk through improved STI care. This proof-of-concept study aims to establish if a new model of diagnosing and treating STIs can reduce genital inflammation in women, thereby reducing the risk of HIV acquisition.

Principal investigators of the study Dr Nigel Garrett, Head of Vaccine and Pathogenesis at CAPRISA, and Professor Anne Rompalo at Johns Hopkins University will lead the studies over a two year period. "STIs are extremely common in South African women and treatment is currently based on symptoms alone, for example, vaginal discharge, rather than detecting and diagnosing specific organisms. Up to 80% of these STIs present with no symptoms, and therefore remain undiagnosed," explained Dr Garrett.

The proposed work will include the evaluation of the GeneXpert (Cepheid) point-of-care technology to diagnose and treat STIs immediately on the same visit. This technology is currently used in South Africa to diagnose tuberculosis. In addition, "the study will explore better ways of



Dr Nigel Garrett

partner notification and expedited partner therapy interventions to prevent re-infection," said Dr Garrett.

The co-investigators are Professor Jo-Ann Passmore (UCT), Dr Lenine Liebenberg (CAPRISA), Professor Adrian Mindel from Australia, Professor Koleka Mlisana (UKZN) and Dr Kerry Leask (CAPRISA).

## ICAP Swaziland HRTP delegation



back row L-R: Ms Charlene Harichund, Dr. Harriet N-Biribonwoha, Ms. Thembi Ntshakala, Ms. Bonsile Nsibandze, Ms. Faith Dlamini, Ms. Sakhile Masuku, Dr. Sifiso Sithole, Ms Tanuja Gengiah, Mr. Bongani Dlamini front row: L-R: Ms. Zanele Nxumalo, Prof. Priscilla Dlamini, Mr. Maswati Simelane, Ms. Gloria Dube, Ms. Thembi Ntshakala, Ms. Wendy Dlamini

Over the last 2 years CAPRISA facilitators Tanuja Gengiah and Charlene Harichund have provided an 'Introduction to regulatory considerations, GCP and human subject protections in clinical trials' training to fellows and mentors affiliated to the Swaziland Health Research Training Program (HRTP).

This initiative is spearheaded by ICAP and Swaziland Ministry of Health. From 4-6 February 2015 a delegation of 12, including 6 fellows, 4 mentors and 2 facilitators spent time at the CAPRISA eThekweni research site and CAPRISA DDMRI where they received practical exposure to enhance their understanding of clinical trial conduct and the associated regulatory and GCP considerations.



## Scientific papers published in 2015

16 van Loggerenberg F, Gray D, **Gengiah S**, Kunene P, **Gengiah TN**, **Naidoo K**, Grant AD. A Qualitative Study of Patient Motivation to Adhere to Combination Antiretroviral Therapy in South Africa. *AIDS patient care and STDs* 02/2015; DOI: 10.1089/apc.2014.0293

17 **Loveday M**, Wallengren K, Brust JCM, Roberts J, Voce A, Margot , Ngozo J, Master I, Cassell G, **Padayatchi N**. Community-based care vs. centralised hospitalisation for MDR-TB patients KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *The International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease* 2015; 19(2):163-71

18 **Moodley D**, Moodley P, Sebitloane M, Soowamber D, McNaughton-Reyes H, Groves A, Maman S. High Prevalence and Incidence of Asymptomatic Sexually Transmitted Infections during Pregnancy and Post Delivery in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 2015; 42(1):43-7

19\* **Singh JA**. Humanitarian Access to Unapproved Interventions in Public Health Emergencies of International Concern. *PLoS Medicine* 2015; 12(2): e1001793. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001793

20 Laeyendecker O, Redd AD, Nason M, Longosz AF, **Abdool Karim Q**, **Naranbhai V**, **Garrett N**, Eshleman SH, **Abdool Karim SS**, Quinn TC. Antibody Maturation in Women who Acquire HIV Infection While Using Antiretroviral Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis. *Journal of Infectious Diseases* 2015; doi: 10.1093/infdis/jiv110

21 Sheward DJ, Ntale R, **Garrett NJ**, Woodman ZL, **Abdool Karim SS**, Williamson C. HIV-1 superinfection resembles primary infection. *Journal of Infectious Diseases* 2015; doi: 10.1093/infdis/jiv136

\*continuation from previous newsletter

## Scientific Reviews

Abstracts submitted for review		Manuscripts submitted for review		Ancillary studies submitted for review	
Total#	Cumulative^	Total#	Cumulative^	Total#	Cumulative^
0	326	3	207	1	57

# for month, ^ since committee initiation

## Conference & Workshop Reminders

Conference	Dates	Deadlines		
		Abstracts	Registration	Website
<b>International Conference on HIV and AIDS</b> - London, United Kingdom	25-26 May 2015	25 Nov 2014	25 Jan 2015	<a href="https://www.waset.org/conference/2015/05/london/ICHA">https://www.waset.org/conference/2015/05/london/ICHA</a>
<b>7th South African AIDS Conference</b> - Durban, South Africa	9-12 Jun 2015	20 Jan 2015	22 May 2015	<a href="http://www.saaids.co.za/">http://www.saaids.co.za/</a>
<b>8th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2015)</b> - Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada	19-22 July 2015	27 Jan 2015	25 Feb 015	<a href="http://www.ias2015.org/">http://www.ias2015.org/</a>
<b>46th Union World Conference on Lung Health</b> - Cape Town, South Africa	2-6 Dec 2015	24 Apr 2015	20 Aug 2015	<a href="http://capetown.worldlunghealth.org/">http://capetown.worldlunghealth.org/</a>
<b>World STI &amp; HIV Congress</b> - Brisbane, Australia	13-16 Sept 2015	13 April 2015	31 August 2015	<a href="http://www.worldsti2015.com/ehome/index.php?eventid=91027&amp;">http://www.worldsti2015.com/ehome/index.php?eventid=91027&amp;</a>
<b>International Conference on AIDS &amp; STI in Africa (ICASA)</b> - Hammamet, Tunisia	8-13 Nov 2015	May 2015	29 Oct 2015	<a href="http://icasa2015tunisia.org/">http://icasa2015tunisia.org/</a>

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 Organisation

Registration Number: 2002/024027/08

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