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USAID pioneer prize awarded to CAPRISA

Inaugural award recognises excellence in the use of science and technology to solve development challenges

In January, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced CAPRISA as the winner of the Science and Technology Pioneers Prize.

The prize, which is being inaugurated this year, recognises excellence in the use of science and technology to solve development challenges.

The CAPRISA 004 Tenofovir gel trial, conducted in KwaZulu-Natal, was funded by USAID and the South African Department of Science and Technology, and conducted by a group of South African and US researchers. It provided proof of concept that an antiretroviral gel used before and after sex can protect women against HIV.

The microbicide gel, containing 1% Tenofovir, an antiretroviral usually used for treatment, was 39% effective in preventing HIV infection in women. It also had the welcome and unexpected benefit of 51% effectiveness in preventing genital herpes infections. These protective effects were even higher for those women who used the gel most of the time.

The ultimate triumph came when the results were revealed to the world at the 2010 International AIDS Conference in Vienna, Austria.



Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim demonstrates how to use the tenofovir gel applicator to CAPRISA 004 study participants during the trial.

As the final results were announced, it led to a standing ovation, a rare occurrence at scientific meetings of this nature. The follow-on confirmatory trial, FACTS 001, involving up to 2900 women is currently under way at nine research clinics across South Africa.

"Research on the gel shows how fruitful international partnerships between US and South African scientists can be, in this case addressing one of the biggest challenges facing our country – the AIDS epidemic. Over the past decade, CAPRISA has played an instrumental role in HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment research, making some groundbreaking discoveries. We commend the outstanding work they have done in the quest to find an effective HIV prevention technology for women," said Minister of Science and Technology, Derek Hanekom.



New biomarker study kicks off with CEPHIA visit



From left: Professor Adrian Mindel, Ms Nelisile Majola, Ms Lise Werner, Ms Kara Marson (CEPHIA), Mrs Natasha Samsunder, Dr Jennifer Osborn (Gates Foundation), Professor Christopher Pilcher (CEPHIA), Dr Lenine Liebenberg, Dr Nigel Garrett

The Consortium for the Evaluation and Performance of HIV Incidence Assays (CEPHIA) led by Professor Chris Pilcher from the University of California, San Francisco visited the CAPRISA clinical sites and laboratories to prepare a study which will collect sam-

ples from participants to look for new biomarkers to measure HIV incidence (number of new cases per year). The CAPRISA 002 Acute Infection study has been following women from early HIV infection, allowing precise estimates of duration of infection to be conducted.

Measuring HIV incidence (rather than prevalence) is crucial to understand the epidemic as it will allow the monitoring of the number of newly-infected cases in a population. The CEPHIA Project is funded by the Gates Foundation.

- Nigel Garrett

Continued from page 1

David Stanton, Director of USAID's Office of HIV/AIDS, remarked: "The CAPRISA 004 trial was a key milestone in an ongoing journey towards an approved microbicide product for women, putting us one step closer to an AIDS-free generation."

Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Associate Director of CAPRISA and leader of the research team for this trial, said: "The team is honoured and humbled by this recognition. We will be using the \$200 000 (R2,2 million) prize on research to understand why and how HIV spreads so rapidly in young women in South Africa."

Fellows' open day at CAPRISA



In February, CAPRISA held an open day for its fellows with the aim of providing an opportunity to interact, present updates on the status of their projects during their fellowship period and to gain a broader understanding of other research projects being undertaken by co-fellows.



MTN's Sharon Hillier visits CAPRISA

Professor Sharon Hillier, Principal Investigator for the Microbicide Trials Network, Vice Chair for Faculty Affairs and Director of Reproductive Infectious Disease research at the Magee-Womens Research Institute at the University Of Pittsburgh School Of Medicine, recently visited CAPRISA. Professor Hillier's main areas of interest focus on women's health and HIV prevention, as well as variations in the vaginal microbiome and the influence this has on genital tract infections and HIV.

Professor Hillier held in-depth discussions with the MTN 020 (ASPIRE) study team, pharmacists and a Community Advisory Board member at the CAPRISA eThekweni Prevention Clinic, where they shared their experiences working across the VOICE and ASPIRE studies, the differences in implementing the studies and

the lessons learnt from VOICE which were used to achieve the high quality standards in the ASPIRE study thus far. A particular area of Professor Hillier's interest related to staff interactions with participants in the community post study enrolment.

She also met with two ASPIRE study participants to garner their opinions on HIV prevention, study participation and future options for HIV prevention such as combination HIV prevention and contraceptive strategies.

During the visit, Professor Hillier



From left: Dr Lulu Nair, Professor Sharon Hillier, Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Mrs Marian Swart, Dr Nesri Padayatchi.

delivered a presentation on "Changing the contraceptive mix in high incidence HIV populations", which was followed by a dynamic question and answer session.

- Lulu Nair

Andy Gray awarded Donald E Francke Medal



The Donald E Francke Medal for 2014 has been awarded to Andy Gray by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP), one of the largest associations representing pharmacists who practice in hospitals and other health systems. This award will be presented to Andy at the 2014 ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting and

Exhibition, 7-11 December 2014, Anaheim, California.

"Looking at the list of previous awardees, I am honoured to be included amongst them. I have served with many of them on various committees and have benefited from those experiences. I hope that I can continue to contribute in the myriad ways they have, across the globe," said Andy.

Andy is CAPRISA's consultant pharmacist and a Senior Lecturer in UKZN's Discipline of Pharmaceutical Sciences. He has practiced and been involved in community pharmacy, hospital pharmacy, as well as academia and research since 1992. His research interests include policy examination, particularly in terms of improvement and effectiveness of national medicine policies.

- UKZN Ndaba Online

KZN Province award for Quarraisha



At the Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) for Health's Annual Service Excellence Awards, Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim received special recognition for her "overall contribution for health care especially focusing on HIV prevention and women's health through research." Professor Abdool Karim (middle) is pictured with Head of Department for the Kwa-Zulu-Natal Department of Health, (KZNDoH) Dr Sibongile Zungu (left) and the MEC for KZNDoH, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo. The event took place at Durban's International Convention Centre.



Scientific papers published in 2014

- 15* **Naidoo K, Abdool Karim Q, Bhushan A, Naidoo K, Yende-Zuma N, McHunu PK, Frohlich J, Karim F, Upfold M, Kocheleff P, Abdool Karim SS.** High rates of Tuberculosis in patients accessing HAART in rural South Africa. *J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr.* 2013; doi: 10.1097/QAI.0000000000000060
- 16 **Tomita A, Garrett N, Werner L, Burns J, Mpanza L, Mlisana K, van Loggelenberg F, Abdool Karim SS.** Health-related Quality of Life Dynamics of HIV-positive ART-naïve South African Women: Evidence from the CAPRISA 002 Acute Infection Cohort Study *AIDS & Behaviour* 2013; DOI 10.1007/s10461-013-0682-y
- 17 **Redd AD, Mullis CE, Wendel SK, Sheward D, Martens C, Bruno D, Werner L, Garrett NJ, Abdool Karim Q, Williamson C, Porcella SF, Quinn TC, Abdool Karim SS.** Limited HIV-1 superinfection in seroconverters from the CAPRISA 004 microbicide trial. *Journal of Clinical Microbiology* 2014; doi:10.1128/JCM.03143-13
- 18 **Gray GE, Moodie Z, Metch B, Gilbert PB, Bekker L-G, Churchyard G, Nchabeleng M, Mlisana K, Laher F, Roux S, Mngadi K, Innes C, Mathebula M, Allen M, McElrath JM, Robertson M, Kublin J, Corey L, on behalf of the HVTN 503/Phambili study team.** Recombinant adenovirus type 5 HIV gag/pol/nef vaccine in South Africa: unblinded, long-term follow-up of the phase 2b HVTN 503/Phambili study. *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, 2014; doi:10.1016/S1473-3099(14)70020-9

* continuation from previous month

Scientific Reviews

Abstracts submitted for review		Manuscripts submitted for review		Ancillary studies submitted for review	
Total [#]	Cumulative [^]	Total [#]	Cumulative [^]	Total [#]	Cumulative [^]
4	308	2	178	2	52

for month, [^] since committee initiation

Conferences and Workshops

Conference	Dates	Deadlines		Website
		Abstracts	Registration	
Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections — Boston, USA	3-6 Mar 2014	Closed	Closed	www.croi2014.org/
Keystone Symposia: HIV Pathogenesis—Virus vs Host — Banff, Canada	9-14 Mar 2014	Closed	Closed	www.kestonesymposia.org/14X4
AIDS 2104 — Melbourne, Australia	20-25 Jul 2014	24 Feb 2014 late breakers	2 May 2014	www.aids2014.org/
Southern African HIV Clinicians Society — Cape Town, South Africa	24-27 Sep 2014	3 Mar 2014	1 May 2014	http://sahivsoc2014.co.za/;
HIV Research for Prevention 2014: AIDS Vaccine, Microbicide & ARV-based Prevention Science — Cape Town, South Africa	28-31 Oct 2014	25 Jul 2014	15 Oct 2014	www.hivr4p.org

Board of Control: AC Bawa (Chair) SS Abdool Karim R Bharuthram D Clark LP Fried (US) S Madhi S Naidoo DP Visser ZM Yacoob

Scientific Advisory Board: C Hankins (Chair) SM Dhlomo FG Handley HL Gabelnick R Hoff Y-R Lo Y Shao

Executive Committee: SS Abdool Karim Q Abdool Karim HM Coovadia N Amla C Baxter A Carr-Hartley H Dawood J Fröhlich NJ Garret M Geldenhys

T Gengiah CM Gray A Grobler C Harichund A Kharsany L Mansoor K Mngadi CT Montague D Moodley L Morris K Naidoo

G Nair N Padayatchi J-A Passmore N Samsunder J Singh JCM Swart E van der Lingen C Williamson



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

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