

Welcome

Welcome to the third CRI quarterly newsletter. The newsletter showcases cancer-related research activities in the Faculty of Health Sciences to research colleagues, clinicians, funders and the public. The newsletter is distributed quarterly via email and published on the CRI website:

www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/research/groupings/cri

This third quarter has been a tumultuous one as we mourn the loss of our esteemed colleague, Dr Leon van Wijk, and stand in solidarity with those combatting gender-based violence. However, the cancer research community remains strong as evidenced by the many events, awards and publications reported here. We wish you peace and success as we enter the final quarter of 2019.

News & events

• **Congratulations** to **Dr Georgia Schäfer** who was recently awarded the **European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) Senior Research Fellowship**. Dr Schäfer's research focuses on Kaposi sarcoma-associated herpes virus (KSHV) in HIV-infected patients. Read more about her research and award here: <https://bit.ly/2YYtZPk>

• The **Cancer Research Trust** held its annual meeting on 28 August attended by trustees, cancer researchers and faculty staff. Three presentations by **Dr Arul Jothi Nagarajan (Division of Cell Biology)**, **Mr Linda Mbuthini (Cancer Research Initiative)** and **Prof Alan Davidson (Department of Paediatrics and Child Health)** demonstrated the breadth and depth of cancer research funded by the Trust. The Trust was recognised for its ongoing support of cancer research at UCT and a critical part of sustainable national research funding. For more information on the Trust, visit their website here: <http://cancerresearch.org.za/>

• The **CRI's** resident database guru, **Linda Mbuthini**, hosted two **REDCap** skills transfer seminars in July and August. The seminars were attended by database managers supported by the CRI from across the **UCT/GSH/RCWMCH hospital complex**. The two seminars expanded user's knowledge of REDCap's different functionalities, including external modules. A big thank you to **Annemie Stewart** from the **Clinical Research Centre (CRC)** for hosting the seminars and to guest speaker **Amanda Jackson** from **IDM CIDRI-Africa**.



• Events at the Clinical Research Centre (CRC):

- Oncologists from across Africa participated in a 5-day intensive training workshop on **Clinical Trials Development** at the CRC under a **National Cancer Institute (NCI)** training grant.
- The **All Africa Clinical Trials Consortium Summit** was held in August with high levels of attendance from oncologists. A big thank you to co-chairs of the summit: **Dr Delva Shamley (UCT)**, **Dr Ifeoma Okoye (AGCPN & UNN)** and **Dr Folakemi Odedina (CaPTC & UF)**.



• Postgrad CRI Events: The PG CRI Group hosted 3 successful events this quarter:

- A **cross-disciplinary lab visit** to the **Prince lab** in the Division of Cell Biology on 10 July. The visit aimed to build awareness and collaborations among postgrad cancer researchers. A big thank you to **Prof Sharon Prince** for access to the lab and to PG student **Saif Khan** for demonstrating equipment and answering questions related to research in the division.
- A seminar presentation by **Love Your Nuts Founder** and **testicular cancer survivor, Torsten Koehler**, on 25 July. The seminar was attended by 18 people across 10 FHS departments and included Torsten's survivorship journey, establishment of his foundation, potential research opportunities and practical tips for testicular cancer screening.
- A **mini-symposium** for postgrad cancer researchers was held on 26 September. Presentations were conducted across a range of topics by **Linda Mbuthini (SPHFM)**, **Saif Khan (Human Biology)**, **Neelakshi Mungra (IBM)** & **Sanele Cingo (IBM)**. A big thank you to **Dr Jane English** head of the **Professional Communication Studies Department** for her insightful comments on improving oral & poster presentation skills.



New database launched

- A new **paediatric cancer database** supported by **CANSA** has been launched at **RCWMCH**. The Database collects detailed information on all children under the age of 15 years diagnosed with cancer in the UCT complex. It aims to create a **research ready dataset** in **REDCap** to determine factors associated with stage at presentation, progression, treatment response, survival and outcome. **Lungiswa Nikani** has been officially appointed as the database administrator under **Prof Alan Davidson** as PI. The database is a key step in developing clinician-researcher capacity at UCT, evidence-based treatment and public policy recommendations for paediatric cancers in South Africa.



Upcoming events

- ❖ **Translational Research: Bridging the Gap between the Laboratory and the Clinic:** 30 October 2019.
RSVP to melis.blumenthal@gmail.com

For details on events and more visit:

CRI website:

www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/research/groupings/cri

Twitter: [@UctCri](https://twitter.com/UctCri)

New website launched

- The new **AWACAN** (African Women Awareness of CANcer) tool measuring **awareness of breast and cervical cancer** has been launched. Visit the website here: <https://www.awacan.online/>



Recent Cancer Publications

1. Dalvie S. (2019). *Head and neck cancer in Africa*. S.A. Journal of Oncology 3(0): a67.
<https://doi.org/10.4102/sajo.v3i0.67>
2. Lubbe DE, Mankahla N, Carrara H, & Semple P. (2019). *Surgical intervention for binocular blindness in pituitary apoplexy*. Interdisciplinary Neurosurgery 18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.inat.2019.100490>
3. Moodley J, Scott SE, Mwaka AD, Constant D, Githaiga JN, Stewart TS, et al. (2019). *Development and validation of the African Women Awareness of CANcer (AWACAN) tool for breast and cervical cancer*. PLoS ONE 14(8): e0220545.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220545>

In memoriam

It is with great sadness that we remember the passing of **Dr Leon Van Wijk** in August. Dr van Wijk, a consultant in the **Department of Radiation Oncology** since 1988, ran the **Gynaecology Oncology clinic** at **Groote Schuur Hospital**. He was a distinguished physician who will always be remembered for his dedication to his patients and formidable work ethic. We will be sorely missed by his patients, trainees, and colleagues. Our deepest condolences to his family and all who had the pleasure of knowing him.



Please send any cancer-related news, events, publications and conference information for the period October-December 2019 for inclusion in our next quarterly newsletter to:
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