

President Mbeki to open the ICGEB

The International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) will be opened by President Thabo Mbeki on 10 September 2007. Mosibudi Mangena, Minister of Science and Technology and Professor Francisco Baralle, Director General of the ICGEB in Trieste, Italy will also attend the inauguration at the IIDMM.

There will be restricted access on the day. Staff will be informed about the restricted areas before the event.

Mayosi on-line

Professor Bongani Mayosi's inaugural lecture on "The Future of Medicine" was a *tour de force* as he meandered through the origin of medicine in Egypt, to Hippocrates, the Greek physician, returning to African traditional medicine, the colonial and apartheid period and health inequality.

Finally, Mayosi focused on the challenges ahead. The full text is available at www.news.uct.ac.za/lectures/misc/ if you missed this epic journey.



Professor Marian Jacobs hands over the laptop to Dr Mashiko Setshedi.

Vodacom donates laptop to registrar

Vodacom has donated a laptop to Dr Mashiko Setshedi to support her studies. Setshedi will spend three months in Dr Chris Mulder's GIT unit in Amsterdam to learn the Double Balloon Endoscopy procedures and Endo-Ultrasonography. Setshedi will also be exposed to other procedures and patient management, particularly of conditions seen predominantly in developed countries.

Setshedi is a senior registrar in training in the GIT Unit at Groote Schuur Hospital.

Inaugural Lecture by Rodney Ehrlich

Professor Rodney Ehrlich trained in economics at UCT and Oxford before switching to Medicine which he completed at UCT in 1981.

He subsequently worked for the National Centre for Occupational Health in Johannesburg where his interest in lung disease in miners was kindled.

He qualified as a specialist in Community Health at UCT in 1992. He has worked in the Occupational

Diseases Clinic at Groote Schuur Hospital since 1990, enabling him to combine clinical medicine with public health.

His research interests are in social epidemiology, workers' health, tuberculosis and other chronic lung disease. He has held adjunct Faculty appointments at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine and the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, both in New York. In 2005 he was awarded a Fellowship by peer review of the College of Public Health Medicine, South Africa and elected to the



Rodney Ehrlich

Collegium Ramazzini, an international college of occupational and environmental health scientists in Carpi, Italy.

Title: The body as history: On looking at the lungs of miners

Date and time: Wednesday 26 September at 17h30

Venue: Student Learning Centre Lecture Theatre, Anatomy Building, Faculty of Health Sciences

NIH grant for research on HIV vaccine

Professor Anna-Lise Williamson has recently been awarded a grant from the National Institute of Health (NIH). The NIH award is a "Phased Innovation award in AIDS vaccine research (R21/R33)." The title is "BCG as an HIV vaccine vector". William is the principal investigator with co-investigators Dr Ros Chapman, Dr Helen Stutz, Professor Enid Shephard and Professor Ed Rybicki.

More than 11% of South Africa's population are

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DEAN'S CORNER

In the classical world, the augur was a priest or an official whose main duty was to foretell future events by interpreting the flight of birds – a process known as "taking the auspices". More contemporary society drew on this practice in instituting inauguration as a formal ceremony through which an individual assumes office or a position of authority – in academic circles, a professorship. And the academic inaugural address has traditionally provided an opportunity for the newly invested professors to highlight their fields of interest and for colleagues, members of the university community and the general public to learn more about the work

being undertaken in the university, and the possibilities for the future.

Bongani Mayosi's inaugural lecture on "The Future of Medicine" reminded us that reducing the burden of Africa's diseases is attainable, and that a strong, indigenous intellectual base is critical in this mission. As an augur, he drew on Africa's rich history in medical science to predict that the revitalisation of clinical science, and the production of "1 000 PhDs" through an All Africa Institute of Clinical Research at UCT could be the tipping point.

But in the midst of such optimism, we were also reminded that there are stories which still

need to be told about our own institution, and pain that still needs to be addressed – pain suffered by those who were victims of institutional discriminatory practices, and by those who still stand accused of being complicit in such practices. While these stories must be told, I believe that finding the appropriate time, place and means to share these stories will help us all move towards coming to terms with our past – with compassion, dignity, respect, and commitment to the principles of our Faculty Charter.

Tough challenges, indeed, but the birds are aligned and the auspices are taken – what is left for us to do is to act.

Publication of the Month

This month's publication addresses the resources and political will required to address the tuberculosis epidemic: Maartens G, Wilkinson RL "Tuberculosis" *The Lancet*, DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(07)61262-8, Published Online August 21.

This 14-page article with over 200 cited references is written as a Seminar for *The Lancet* which featured the recommendations by Gary Maartens and Robert Wilkinson in a press release dated 23 August 2007. Their affiliations with UCT (Robert is also affiliated with Imperial College, London) were prominent and the re-

lease quoted from their paper.

According to our colleagues, "Tuberculosis has troubled mankind throughout history. It has been a leading cause of death throughout the world, and still is in low-income and middle-income countries." They added: "The limitations of existing methods of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of tuberculosis have been emphasised by the increased susceptibility of HIV-infected people to develop the disease, and by the emergence of drug resistant strains."

The authors concluded: "The rapid expan-

sion of basic, clinical, and operational research, in addition to increasing knowledge of tuberculosis, is providing new diagnostic, treatment, and preventative measures. The challenge is to apply these advances to the populations most at risk. The development of a comprehensive worldwide plan to stop tuberculosis might facilitate this process by coordinating the work of health agencies. However, massive effort, political will, and resources are needed for this plan to succeed." The article can be accessed via UCT library's subscription.



Victor Claasen (left) with Professor Lionel Opie

Long service award

Veteran UCT staffers were honoured at a luncheon hosted by Professor Njabulo Ndebele, Vice-Chancellor on 21 August 2007.

Long service awards were presented to staff that have been at UCT for 15, 25 and 35 years.

Among the awardees was Victor Claasen, laboratory assistant at the Hatter Institute for Cardiology Research.

Claasen received an award for 35 years of service, 33 of which he has worked with Professor Lionel Opie, director of the Hatter Institute.

Monthly Quiz

This month's question is a follow-up to the outstanding inaugural lecture by Bongani Mayosi. What is the name of the Father of Medicine who came from Egypt and by how many years did he pre-date Hippocrates? Send your answers to: kit.vaughan@uct.ac.za

Answer to last month's quiz: Harry Zwarenstein's PhD supervisor was AV Hill who won a Nobel Prize for his work in muscle physiology. Zwarenstein's indiscretion that upset UCT's authorities was to write an article on "Sex and Society" in the student journal *Cathartic*. Tahir Pillay was first with the answer and wins the book voucher.

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infected with HIV-1. There is an obvious need for a prophylactic HIV-1 vaccine. The focus of the application was the use of *Mycobacterium bovis* bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) as an HIV vaccine vector. BCG (better known as the tuberculosis vaccine) is widely used to immunise infants. Among the benefits are its adjuvant potential in humans and animals, it can be administered orally, it is inexpensive to produce, it is heat stable, it elicits long-lasting cellular immune response as well as having a low rate of complications.

These characteristics make BCG an attractive vehicle for recombinant vaccines. This vaccine is likely to induce good cellular immune responses but it does not neutralise antibodies. Despite these advantages, there are also problems expressing viral antigens in BCG, which result in low immunogenicity and genetic instability.

The vaccine will be designed for South Africa where HIV-1 subtype C is the dominant circulating subtype.

International accolade for doctor

"There's fire in the woman's belly," I thought when I met Dr Biddy Buchanan-Lee, Senior Specialist in the Department of Medicine and senior lecturer in the Faculty.

Dr Buchanan-Lee has been elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in July 2007, a day she recalls as "one of the most special days in my life".

Dr Biddy Buchanan-Lee received a special acknowledgement from the President of the Royal College of Physicians for her innovative teaching programme in Khayelitsha for 4th year medical students.

The programme developed by Dr Buchanan-Lee exposes students to the real world of patient overcrowding and poor facilities. Students are taught how to manage complicated diseases to reduce morbidity and mortality and improve the quality of life of patients at a primary health care level. Patients are empowered with health knowledge in their own language to improve compliance and reduce the cost of health care. Students are encouraged to do a "lot more thinking" she says.

It is clear that Dr Biddy Buchanan-Lee sees her work as a calling judging from the glint in her eye and her obvious passion and energy.

I'm interrupted by Dr Buchanan-Lee's cell phone



Dr Biddy Buchanan-Lee

call from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), who want to recruit her students to work in African countries. Students they know are well trained.

Dr Buchanan-Lee retires next year.

"People like you don't retire," I claim.

"Yes," she quips. (NN)

To braid or not to braid

Braided hair, extensions and chemically "relaxed" or straightened hair can cause hair loss.

This was the finding of research led by Dr Nonhlanhla Khumalo, a Dermatologist in the Department of Medicine. The results were published in the *British Journal of Dermatology* entitled "Hairdressing and the prevalence of scalp disease in African adults".



Dr Nonhlanhla Khumalo

The study was conducted with 2 000 adults and children in South Africa.

It found that one in seven schoolgirls and a third of women suffered from "traction alopecia", hair loss caused by excessive and prolonged pulling of the hair. One in five children with relaxed hair had traction alopecia compared with one in twenty of those with natural hair.

Hair loss was found to be common in children whose hair was straightened and among adult women with either "relaxed" or braided hair. Hair extensions also contributed to hair loss.

The results were published on *BBC News*, the *Times*, London, and locally in the *Sunday Times*. The full text of the journal article is available through www.blackwell-synergy.com