



Bridget Hodkinson

Appointed January 2018

Why I chose this field

I have worked and trained in the field of musculoskeletal diseases for 15 years, researching, in particular, rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus and osteoarthritis. Treating patients with chronic illnesses, such as arthritis, in an outpatient setting attracted me from an early stage in my career. As a medical registrar at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, Soweto, I discovered that rheumatologists have the opportunity to establish long-term relationships with their patients, and can change patients' lives not only by developing excellent clinical examination skills, applying diagnostic reasoning, and prescribing therapies based on current evidence, but also by interacting with a multidisciplinary team to motivate and support patients as they lead their daily lives. My work is driven strongly by a commitment to improve health care for all South Africans.

I am excited about my work

These are exciting times for rheumatologists and their patients. Rheumatology is a rapidly evolving field, with a growing set of diagnostic tools and new therapies. Clinicians in resource-constrained settings such as ours need to explore novel ways to deliver excellent clinical care to their patients, whilst advancing understanding of the pathogenesis and burden of musculoskeletal diseases affecting Africans. Excitingly, the relevance of clinical and laboratory research from the “developing world” is increasingly recognised. Studies assessing cost-effective strategies in resource-constrained settings might also provide important lessons for the recession-hit healthcare systems of many developed countries.

Professor



Isaac Albow Chair &
HOD Rheumatic Disease Unit



Dept. of Medicine



Faculty of Health Sciences



**Bridget
Hodkinson**

I aim to achieve...

Young South African doctors are excellent clinicians, but are frequently overwhelmed by heavy patient-loads and long working hours, and need role models and support to avoid burn-out. In addition, with appropriate supervision, clinicians can undertake novel and meaningful research that informs clinical practice. Hence, I believe that mentorship of young health care workers is vital, so that young clinicians are retained in clinical medicine and consider academic careers. This will amend the dearth of published work and health information arising from Africa and other parts of the developing world.

