



Jessica Opie

Appointed May 2018

Why I chose this field

As an undergraduate medical student at UCT in the 1990's, I was inspired by the speciality of Haematology, which uniquely links the disciplines of Pathology, Internal Medicine and Oncology. I was fortunate to learn from wonderful teachers in Haematology, lead at that time by Professor Peter Jacobs, who had developed the haemopoietic stem cell transplant unit at Groote Schuur Hospital. I later worked as a junior doctor in the United Kingdom in various Haematology units including the Royal Marsden Hospital and St Bartholomew's Hospital, London and decided to pursue a career in this exciting and diverse field. After further training in Internal Medicine with the Royal College of Physicians (UK), I moved to Sydney where I was fortunate to join the training program of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia and qualified as specialist Haematology Pathologist. I returned to Cape Town in 2005 after a 10-year absence from South Africa with a strong need to give back to this country and contribute to the haematology teaching, training and medical care. I joined the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) at Groote Schuur Hospital and in the last 13 years have been stimulated by the depth and spectrum of haematology pathology in our unique local setting, much of which is related to HIV. I have learnt from my registrars and colleagues who I have been privileged to train and work with.

I am excited about my work

My focus has been on developing and maintaining a high quality haematology diagnostic service whilst simultaneously focusing on postgraduate teaching, training and supervision of doctors specialising in Haematology.

Associate Professor



Div. Head Haematology



Dept. of Pathology



Faculty of Health Sciences



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I anticipate that our lymphoma research group will be critical in unravelling the pathophysiology and molecular biology of the HIV related lymphomas whilst the translation of relevant and cost-effective research techniques into the diagnostic platform will have ongoing benefits for patient clinical care.

I aim to achieve...

My vision as Head of Division includes building collaboration locally and internationally, assisting junior colleagues to reach career fulfilment, and simultaneously to improve the research outputs and transformation profile, whilst meeting the changing needs for test provision. I am conscious of maintaining an excellent diagnostic service in the setting of budget constraints for the improved health of our population.

