

Soft-Funded Academic and Research Staff (SFARS) funding scheme

Research synopsis for each awardee

Dr John Ataguba: Public Health and Family Medicine

Dr John Ele-Ojo Ataguba is a Commonwealth scholar and a Senior Lecturer at the Health Economics Unit, University of Cape Town (UCT). He holds a PhD in Economics from UCT and has research experience in many African countries. His primary research interests include health inequality, equity in health and health care, social determinants of health, impact evaluation, economics of addiction, and health financing. He has several scholarly publications in these areas of research. He is also the recipient of several competitive awards. Among other accolades, he was recently elected a member of the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) in October 2014 for the advancement and application of science. He is also the recipient of the Claude Leon Merit Award for Young Lecturers in South Africa, and the Young Investigators' Best Publication Award for 2011 and 2012 by the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences. John is very passionate about Africa. Thus, looking into the future, he is interested in deepening his research activities especially those that relate to the poor and the marginalised within the continent and to becoming one of the world's leaders in his primary areas of research.

Associate Professor Aqiel Dalvie: Public Health and Family Medicine

Associate Professor Dalvie's research interests are broadly in the field of the aetiology of adverse health effects resulting from environmental and occupational exposure to toxic chemicals on rural and urban men, women and children which are of high public health relevance in South Africa, Africa and globally. More specifically his research interests include investigating the adverse effect of hormonally active chemicals especially pesticides such as DDT used for malaria control in South Africa and of agricultural pesticides used on farms; on reproduction, growth and development, neuro-behavioural effects and cancers in exposed populations. His other interests relating to toxic chemicals include air and water pollution, toxic metals, asthma and climate change. He also has a strong interest in understanding human exposure to toxic chemicals and in developing methodologies to assess these chemical exposures in the work place and in environmentally exposed communities. Additionally his research interests include the development and understanding of the methodological aspects of occupational and environmental epidemiology. He has a strong desire to develop local research capacity in the field of environmental and occupational epidemiology and to translate research findings into policy and practice.

Dr Mary-Ann Davies: Public Health and Family Medicine

Dr Mary-Ann Davies is a public health medicine specialist and senior researcher in the School of Public Health and Family Medicine. Her research interests include clinical epidemiology of paediatric infectious diseases especially HIV, as well as evaluation and surveillance of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) programmes. She leads a number of research

projects including both a regional and a global centre for paediatric HIV cohort research, based at UCT in collaboration with partners in the global South, Europe and the US. She regularly leads analyses to inform World Health Organization paediatric ART guidelines. She has authored >45 peer-reviewed publications and completed her PhD on Southern African paediatric ART programmes in 2013, for which she received the Brönte Stewart Research Prize for the most meritorious MD/PhD thesis in the Faculty of Health Sciences. In addition to postgraduate supervision, she co-convenes the Infectious Disease Epidemiology module on the Masters in Public Health programme. Mary-Ann is passionate about building epidemiological skills within the Southern African region to support locally relevant research.

Associate Professor Mark Hatherill: Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine

Associate Professor Mark Hatherill is Director of the South African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative (SATVI) in the Institute of Infectious Disease & Molecular Medicine (IDM). He has led several tuberculosis diagnostic, drug, and vaccine studies, including an NIH-funded trial of diagnostic sputum induction; an NIH-funded trial of isoniazid pretreatment before BCG vaccination; and an EDCTP-funded tuberculosis treatment-shortening trial (RIFAQUIN) (UCT PI). His current research focuses on tuberculosis vaccine development. In collaboration with Aeras and Sanofi-Pasteur, he leads a Phase 2b trial to evaluate the efficacy of the H4 candidate vaccine against tuberculosis infection among adolescents. He has secured British MRC and Wellcome Trust funding for an ongoing Phase 2a trial of the safety and immunogenicity of the MVA85A tuberculosis vaccine among infants of HIV infected mothers; and a planned Wellcome Trust and Aeras consortium-funded Phase 2b head-to-head trial will evaluate the efficacy of the novel tuberculosis vaccines ID93 and H56 against recurrent TB disease. He is currently pursuing new research interests in the field of biomarker-targeted clinical trials of tuberculosis prevention.

Dr Alison September: Human Biology

Dr Alison September is employed as a senior research officer within the Division of Exercise Science and Sports Medicine, Department of Human Biology. Her research interest involves molecular genetics and the field of complex diseases, which includes unravelling the biological mechanisms underpinning musculoskeletal soft tissue injuries such as Chronic Achilles Tendinopathy and ruptures of the anterior cruciate ligament using genetics as a tool. More recently, she has begun research on investigating risk factors (genetic and non-genetic) underpinning (i) concussion and recovery of concussion, (ii) susceptibility to breast cancer and diabetes mellitus. She directly contributes to the intellectual capital of these current research projects and is the leader, PI and fund holder of specific research groupings in these foci. She has authored or co-authored in excess of 30 manuscripts in local and international peer-reviewed journals. She is an NRF-rated scientist and has secured in excess of R6.2 million in grant funding as PI or co-PI. She describes herself as a committed mother of two school-going children (ages 6 and 10) who is passionate about changing the landscape of the next generation of leaders in STEM through active engagement with SA school learners.

