

# Haematology News

The official Newsletter of Haematology, UCT



Welcome to the biannual newsletter for Haematology at the University of Cape Town.

This newsletter seeks to share the latest on local haematology-related news, activities, and achievements.

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# Sr. Anne-Louise Cruickshank: A Journey in Haemophilia Advocacy

By Karryn Brown

Sister Anne-Louise Cruickshank has dedicated the past 30 years to caring for people with haemophilia and other bleeding disorders in South Africa. Renowned for her unwavering compassion and exceptional expertise, she has dedicated her career to improving the lives of those living with these conditions. In this inspiring interview, Sr Anne reflects on her journey, shares valuable insights from her experience and highlights the rewards of working in this specialized field.



“It has been a truly rewarding journey.”

KB: Can you share your journey into becoming a haemophilia nurse?

A-L: I began my nursing journey with basic training at Groote Schuur Hospital and gained experience working in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, where I completed my midwifery training at Addington Hospital. Later, I specialized in Intensive and Paediatric Care in Johannesburg, working in the Paediatric ICU and eventually leading the Adult Respiratory ICU at Johannesburg Hospital for five years. After taking a break to raise my children, I returned to healthcare, working in laboratories at Lancet and then in the Coronary Care Unit at Millpark Hospital. My path into haemophilia care was unexpected—I had an aunt working in paediatric clinical haematology at Johannesburg Hospital, and one day Professor Cohn invited me to help out once a week because they were so short-staffed. That one day happened to be in the haemophilia clinic, and I’ve been here ever since.

Since 1991, I’ve been dedicated to haemophilia care. I spent 10 years at the Johannesburg HCCC (Haemophilia Comprehensive Care Clinic) at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital before moving to UCT in 2001, where the South African Haemophilia Foundation created a position for me. It’s been a truly rewarding journey.

KB: How long have you been working in haemophilia nursing, and what has been the most rewarding aspect of your career so far?

A-L: Thirty-three years and counting—the most rewarding part of my journey has been walking alongside patients as they navigate life's ups and downs. Watching them grow and thrive, despite the challenges of living with a chronic condition, is incredibly fulfilling.

Another highlight has been empowering others through the Haemophilia Nurses Training Course, equipping nurses and circumcision coordinators to care for this community. Sharing knowledge with compassion and understanding has always been a cornerstone of my work.

KB: How has haemophilia nursing changed since you started?

A-L: Really quite a lot. Today, it's far more patient-centered and directive compared to the past. Previously, we followed a one-size-fits-all approach—treating bleeds as they happened without considering individual needs. This approach, unfortunately, led to preventable complications in older patients. Now, care is individualised, focusing on shared decision-making with each patient. Prophylaxis has become the standard of care in South Africa, with home therapy being a crucial goal. I work tirelessly to ensure that this becomes a reality, not just in the Western Cape but across other provinces too. Unfortunately, this is not universal in South Africa due to various factors, and I will continue to work with SAHF to make this a reality for all.

KB: What is the most memorable or rewarding patient experience you've had during your career?

A-L: There have been several in my life. One story that stands out is about a young man with severe haemophilia A who overcame incredible challenges to fulfill his dream of becoming a paramedic. When I first met him, he was hospitalised with a severe knee bleed but determined to pursue his goal. Through dedication to a fitness program, regular prophylaxis and physiotherapy, he met the physical demands of the job. Despite initial rejection from a training program due to his haemophilia, the SAHF advocated for him and provided financial support. He not only graduated but went on to earn a Master's in Emergency Medical Care and now teaches emergency care and first aid. Together, we've spoken at training schools to challenge misconceptions, showing that with the right care and support, individuals with haemophilia can thrive in demanding professions.

KB: What advice would you give to someone considering a similar career?

A-L: I think you just need to be passionate and figure out how best you can fit into the system to make the most of it.

KB: Congratulations on winning the Leader in Haematology award this year. Tell us more about this award.

A-L: I was deeply honoured to be recognised as a leader in haematology by the South African Clinical Haematology Society. While the recognition was awarded to me, it truly reflects the collective effort of the Haematology and Haemophilia teams, the SAHF, and the mentors who have supported and guided me throughout my journey. Their vision and encouragement have enabled me to grow within both the local and international haemophilia communities.

This accolade is not mine alone—it belongs to the broader community that believed in and supported me every step of the way. I am truly humbled by this recognition and grateful for the incredible journey it represents.



Photograph above: Sister Anne and her family at the 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium in Cape Town, where she was honoured with the prestigious Leader in Haematology award.

## Recent events

Welcome

Haematology would like to welcome to the team:

- Haematopathology registrar, Dr. Wandile Mhlongo (photograph on the right).
- Clinical Pathology registrar Dr. Edward Koen who will be rotating through Haematology until June 2025.
- Clinical Haematology fellow, Dr. Marthinus Dicks.



## Baby steps

We recently gathered to celebrate two of our team members expecting little ones! The baby shower was filled with joy, thoughtful gifts, and heartfelt well-wishes. It was a special moment to support and celebrate our colleagues as they embark on this exciting new chapter.

Warmest congratulations to the proud parents and their families.

New arrivals:

- Noa May Bailey, born to Jenna Bailey (photograph on the right, above) on November, 26th.
- Caleb Thomas Adams, born to Dr. Ellouise Adams (photograph on the right, below. Ellouise is on the left) on October, 8th.



## A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Haematology Laboratory Teams

In late June the NHLS was hit by a cyber-attack that significantly disrupted the national laboratory information system. Despite challenges, the haematology laboratory staff at Groote Schuur and Red Cross Children's Hospital rose to the occasion, working tirelessly to ensure continued service delivery. For several weeks, they coordinated the reporting of results to clinicians using alternative platforms.

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to every technologist, scientist, student, registrar, fellow and pathologist who took on extra tasks, worked long hours and displayed outstanding dedication. To everyone who helped look up and send out (hundreds of) results, to those who found innovative solutions to optimise workflow, and to those who kept up an incredible positive and uplifting attitude - we salute you!

We are incredibly fortunate to have such remarkable haematology teams and exceptional laboratory managers. A special thanks to Ms. Delmaine Rousseau (GSH Haematology laboratory manager) and Ms. Zulfa Abrahams (RXH laboratory manager) for their leadership and unwavering commitment.



Photograph above: Some of the Haematology Laboratory team members at GSH. Front row (left to right): Dr. Athenkosi Kema, Dr. Edward Koen, Dr. Daleen Kriel, Ms. Rafiekah Abrahams. Second row (left to right): Ms. Annemie Lambrechts, Ms. Thandi Eleni, Ms. Bongiwe Hlaba, Ms. Cheryl Damon, A/Prof. Karen Shires. Third row (left to right): Ms. N Kondile, Ms. Jill Blackbeard, Ms. Delmaine Rousseau, Ms. Menhaaz Abdullah, Dr. Kathleen De John. Back row (left to right): Dr. Rory Shein, Mr. Mogamat Minkie, Mr. Patrick Williams, Mr. Donovan Adriaanse.

## Highlighting a Special Visit: Haematology Welcomes Novo Nordisk Haemophilia Foundation Fellows

This October, Haematology was privileged to host two visitors as part of the Novo Nordisk Haemophilia Foundation project. We welcomed two fellows who observed and engaged with our team for three weeks to gain insights into our Haemophilia Program.

We were joined by Dr. Barnabus (photograph below, right), a paediatrician from Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital in Uganda, who works with children with haemophilia, and Mr. Thadeo Peter Mushi (photograph below, left), a nurse from Benjamin Mkapa Hospital in Dodoma City, Tanzania. During their visit, they spent time with us at E5 Haematology, shadowing our team at various facilities, including clinics and wards at Groote Schuur Hospital, adult and paediatric clinics and wards at Tygerberg Hospital, and clinic and ward rounds at Ward G1 at Red Cross Children's Hospital.



A highlight of their visit was meeting the President of the World Federation of Haemophilia, who was in South Africa for a WFH program on Registries during their stay. This exchange was especially impactful for Dr. Barnabus, who returned to Uganda inspired to implement low-dose prophylaxis using clotting factor concentrate provided through humanitarian aid, aiming to reduce bleeding episodes in his young haemophilia patients. We wish him all the best with this endeavour.

We are grateful for their visit and the opportunity to collaborate and share knowledge. We want to give special notice and thanks to Sr. Anne-Louise Cruickshank who organised and oversaw this visit.

## Biopsy Training

Dr. Jonathan Oxley has been visiting Victoria, False Bay and Vredenburg Hospitals providing outreach, education and implementation of the principles for setting up rapid-access lymph node biopsy clinics. This has included education on lymphoma diagnosis and training in core-biopsy techniques (photograph below) and point-of-care imaging of lymph node masses. This has been supported by our CANSA grant.



## SparkLight: Photobiomodulation and Light-Based Techniques for Human Health

On November 11th, the [UCT MedTech](#) / UCT Biomedical Engineering Research Centre hosted a highly productive meeting. Under the leadership of Prof. Sudesh Svirasu and Dr. Jonti Oehley, representatives from Sechenov University in Moscow, the University of Johannesburg, the University of Birmingham and the CSIR gathered to discuss the potential of photobiomodulation in advancing human health. Topics covered included regenerative medicine, bioprinting, and strategies for overcoming multidrug resistant infections, to mention a few.

A special congratulations goes to PhD student Dr. Jonti Oehley, co-supervised by Prof. Svirasu and Prof. Louw, for his excellent presentation and outstanding organisational efforts.

This event was followed by another successful meeting with the University of Stellenbosch Experimental Research Unit in the Department of Medicine. Formal collaborative agreements between the participating universities are being established, paving the way for further joint research initiatives.

## Protocol Writing Course

Through our NIH Fogarty grant, Blood Research and Enhanced Training against HIV-South Africa (BREATH-SA), we hosted a manuscript writing course from 22 October to 15 November 2024. Masters and PhD students from UCT and SANBS were guided to develop their manuscripts. A/Prof. Estelle Verburgh and Ms. Karryn Brown helped facilitate the course, and our UCT participants included Dr. Andrea Coetzee, Dr Mahlatse Mankgele, Dr. Athenkosi Kema, Dr. Zahra Latib, Dr. Rory Shein and Ms. Thando Kubheka. (Photograph on the right)



## Cell Biology and miRNA Workshop

As part of the FIC NIH HIV Research Training D43 Program, in collaboration with colleagues at CPUT - SAMRC/CPUT Cardiometabolic Health Research Unit (CHRU), we hosted a “Cell Biology and miRNA Workshop” from September 9th to 17th. Week one was hosted within UCT’s Division of Haematology, led by A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla, and Drs. Rios, Ramorola and Saferdien, where trainees received theoretical and practical training in mammalian cell culture techniques used in research, followed by the essentials of working with RNA (extraction, quantification and assessment of quality).



Week 2 was hosted at CPUT, led by Prof. Glenda Davidson and Drs. Weal and Matshazi, where the trainees were exposed to miRNA profiling as a technique to study gene regulatory network processes, and data analysis. This intensive workshop equipped attendees, who were from UCT, CPUT and UFS, with molecular biology techniques and theoretical knowledge commonly used in cell and molecular biology research, contributing to their development as young researchers. (Photograph above)

## FOOD DRIVE

In August 2024, the Haematology Transformation and Equity Committee volunteered at a local feeding initiative for the homeless "OBS can feed you". Generous food donations were received from the staff and students in Haematology. Our food drive and volunteering will continue over the Christmas season. Our heartfelt gratitude to those who donated.



Photograph above: Thando Kubheka (left), Babalwa Yekelo (middle) and Jolene Brooks (right, front) with a volunteer from Obs Can Feed You.

[Obs Can Feed You](#) is a non-profit organisation that serves meals to our vulnerable community members.



## Conference presentations

From the marrow to the blood: Optimising the diagnosis of iron deficiency in the setting of inflammation. Richardson D, Brown K, Rusch J, Verburch E, Louw V, Opie J. Research oral presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium, Cape Town, 13-15 September 2024. [Prize for runner-up for best oral presentation at conference].

Implementation of a specialised lymphoma registry to accommodate new classification systems. Andera L, Chetty D, Mohamed Z, Oelofse D, Oosthuizen J, Brown K, Panchoo G, Antel K, Simba K, Kritzing G, Cassim S, Ramburan A, Opie J, Louw V, Verburch E. Oral presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium.

Diagnostic accuracy of a gene expression assay for the categorisation of lymphoma specimens in a South African population with a high HIV prevalence. Mabuza N, Oosthuizen J, Brown K, Alves de Souza Rios L, Latib Z, Mowla S, Antel K, Briercheck E, Weinstock D, Richardson D, McMillan B, Opie J, Chetty D, Mohamed Z, Verburch E. Poster presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium.

Status of the Programmed Death-Ligand 1 in HIV-associated Diffuse Large B cell Lymphoma. PhD candidate Zahra Latib (supervised by A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla, co-supervised by A/Prof. Estelle Verburch & Dr. Dharshnee Chetty). Oral presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium. [Prize for best oral presentation].

The impact of lymphoma factor Activation Induced Cytidine Deaminase (AICDA/AID) on epigenetic plasticity. M.Sc. candidate Lincon Makofane (supervised by A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla; co-supervised by Dr. Beatrice Ramorola). Poster presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium.

SOCS1 expression in DLBCL: potential roles in lymphomagenesis. Dr. Beatrice Ramorola (mentored by A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla). Poster presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium.

Evaluation of cell viability protocols for optimal storage of samples towards the establishment of a haematological biobank in a resource-constrained setting. M.Sc. candidate Maxine van der Schyff (supervised by Dr. Katherine Antel; co-supervised by A/Profs Estelle Verburch and Shaheen Mowla). Poster presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium.

Case-study: A coagulation cascade in crises. Oxley J. Oral presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium.

Plasma EBV DNA viral load testing is a promising biomarker in Hodgkin Lymphoma. Opie J. Research oral presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium.

A tale of 2 classifications: WHO vs ICC classification of AML and MDS. Opie J. Invited speaker. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium.

Haemophilia. Cruickshank A-L. Oral presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium, Nurses Meeting.

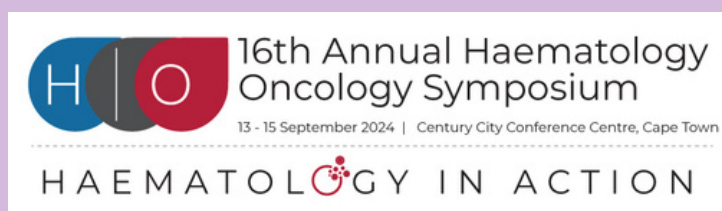
The Final Puzzle Piece: A Case Report of Hb Köln. Cornelissen HM, Irusen S, Loonat S, Bailly J, Nell EM. Poster presentation. 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium.

Thrombosis in Von Willebrand's Disease: A Case Report. Oxley J. (presented by Baloyi S. on behalf of Oxley J.). Oral presentation: 30th SAHF MASAC Educational Symposium 2024, 15th to 16th November 2024; Johannesburg, South Africa.

Patient Perspectives on Emergency Care for Sickle Cell Disease in South Africa. Peerbhai N, Popel K, Spencer C, Louw VJ. South African Society for Human Genetics (SASHG) Biennial Congress. 27-29 October 2024, Sun City, South Africa.

Defining the Functional Role of MAGE-C1 in Multiple Myeloma. Stone M and Shires K. South African Society for Human Genetics (SASHG) Biennial Congress 2024.

Beyond the Bleed: The Complexities of Von Willebrand's Disease Complicating with Pulmonary Embolism. Oxley J. ISTH Thrombosis and Hemostasis Congress 2024, June 22-26, Bangkok, Thailand.



Lymphoid neoplasms in a South African HIV endemic setting categorised according to the WHO-HAEM5. Andera LF, Chetty D, Mohamed Z, Oelofse D, Oosthuizen J, Brown K, Panchoo G, Antel K, Simba S, Kritzing G, Cassim S, Ramburan A, Opie JJ, Louw VJ, Verburgh E. Oral presentation. World Congress of Epidemiology 2024 conference, Cape Town, 24-27 September 2024.

From the marrow to the blood: Optimising the diagnosis of iron deficiency in the setting of inflammation. Richardson D, Brown K, Rusch J, Verburgh E, Louw V, Opie J. Western Australian Patient Blood Management Group Meeting, Perth, Australia [Hybrid meeting; virtual presentation], October 24, 2024.

Diagnostic accuracy of a gene expression assay for the categorisation of lymphoma specimens in a South African population with a high HIV prevalence. Mabuza N, Oosthuizen J, Brown K, Alves de Souza Rios L, Latib Z, Mowla S, Antel K, Briercheck E, Weinstock D, Richardson D, McMillan B, Opie JJ, Chetty D, Mohamed Z, Verburgh E. Poster presentation. 49th Department of Medicine Research Symposium, Cape Town, 13-15 September 2024.

The Clinical Haematology Nurses and Sisters (picture below) attended the Haematology Nurses & Allied Healthcare Professionals Group (HNNHCP) Educational Conference (virtual event). This event provided updates on recent developments and management of haematological/oncological disorders, as well as topics surrounding clinical practice. This was made possible through support from Roche and [BloodSA](#).



Presentations at the 28th South African Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (SASBMB), South Africa, , Polokwane, South Africa, 7 – 10 July 2024:

M.Sc. candidate Babalwa Yekelo (supervised by A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla). Title: Aqueous extracts of *Dodonaea viscosa* var. *angustifolia* induce potent and selective cytotoxicity against diffuse large B cell lymphoma. Poster presentation.

M.Sc. candidate Thando Kubheka (supervised by A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla; co-supervised by Dr. Leonardo Alves de Souza Rios). Title: Regulation of the lymphomagenic factor AICDA by miRNA-181b in HIV-associated aggressive B-cell Lymphomas. Poster presentation.

M.Sc. candidate Lincon Makofane (supervised by A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla; co-supervised by Dr. Beatrice Ramorola). Title: The impact of lymphoma factor Activation Induced Cytidine Deaminase (AICDA/AID) on epigenetic plasticity. Poster presentation.

Postdoctoral fellow Dr. Leonardo Alves de Souza Rios (mentored by A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla). Title: HIV infection and the risk of cancer - the development of a model to study the oncogenic effects of the HIV-1 Tat protein in lymphoma. Oral presentation.

Postdoctoral fellow Dr. Beatrice Ramorola (mentored by A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla). Title: Status and regulation of the Suppressor of cytokine signalling 1 (SOCS1) gene in DLBCL. Poster presentation.



The photograph was taken at the 28th SASBMB. From left to right: Babalwa Yekelo (PhD candidate), Leonardo Alves de Souza Rios (postdoctoral fellow), Beatrice Ramorola (postdoctoral fellow), Thando Kubheka (M.Sc. candidate) and Lincoln Makofane (M.Sc. candidate).

Beyond the Fatigue: Understanding Iron Deficiency Anaemia. Louw VJ. Oral presentation. Iron Academy Conference 2024, Zimbali, South Africa. 26 July 2024.

Beyond the Blood: The Widespread Impact of Iron Deficiency. Louw VJ. Oral presentation. Iron Academy Conference 2024, Zimbali, South Africa. 27 July 2024.

Iron deficiency in pregnancy. Louw VJ. Oral presentation. Metro Maternal, Women, Child, Adolescent and Neonatal (MWCAN) Forum. Cape Town, South Africa. 15 August 2024.

Iron Deficiency Affecting All of Us [Sessions 1-4]. Louw VJ. South African National Blood Service training. Virtual meeting. August and September 2024.

Iron Symphony and Forging Minds: Harmonizing Maternal Wellness and Foetal Intelligence. Louw VJ. Iron Masterclass Series. Virtual meeting. 20 August 2024.

The Silent Strength: Iron's Impact on Cardiovascular Fortitude. Louw VJ. Iron Masterclass Series. Virtual meeting. 3 September 2024.

Anaemia in pregnancy – effects on mother and baby. Louw VJ. Khayelitsha Hospital Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Virtual meeting. 4 September 2024.

Iron Deficiency and Iron Deficiency Anaemia. Louw VJ. Oral presentation. All Africa Anaesthesiology Congress 2024. 19th September, Sandton, Johannesburg.

New Diagnostic Criteria for Iron Deficiency Based on the Bone Marrow as Gold Standard. Louw VJ. Surgery and Iron Meeting. Copenhagen, Denmark. 5 October 2024.

Iron Deficiency Anaemia – Diagnostic Criteria and Treatment Principles. Louw VJ. Anaemia Day 2024. Copenhagen, Denmark. 6 October 2024 [Invited plenary and opening presentation].

Patient Blood Management – where we are globally and in South Africa in 2024. Louw VJ. Acino Anaemia Symposium [Virtual]. 19 October 2024.

Maternal Anaemia and the Neurocognitive Effects on the Foetus and Child. Louw VJ. Acino Anaemia Symposium [Virtual]. 19 October 2024.

Iron Metabolism - the Foundation for Accurate Diagnosis and Treatment of Iron Deficiency and Iron Deficiency Anaemia. Louw VJ. United Kingdom National Blood Transfusion Virtual Educational Event. 15 November 2024.

Setting Up a Multidisciplinary HHT Clinic in Cape Town: Essential Role of the ENT Specialist. A/Prof. Estelle Verburgh. Oral presentation. 60th South African Annual ENT conference, 7-10 November 2024, Pretoria.

Dr. Nicol  Smith, Medical Officer and National Outreach Officer of BLOODSA, was afforded the privilege of attending the recent 15th Annual CURE HHT Scientific Conference in Mandelieu-La Napoule, France, thanks to the generous sponsorship of Aspen Pharmaceuticals.

Characterisation of the diagnostic pathway and healthcare utilisation before diagnosis of multiple myeloma and referral to clinical haematology services at Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town. Aylward R, McMillan B, Brown K, Oosthuizen J, Tadzimirwa G, Louw VJ and Verburgh E. Poster presentation. Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation Global Cancer Disparities Africa Learning and Sharing Meeting, Cape Town, 4-7 November 2024.

The African Haematology Oncology Registry. McMillan B, Oosthuizen J, Brown K, Prince C, Kritzing G, Andera LF, Smith N, Rosslee M, Cruickshank A, du Toit C, Watts J, Tadzimirwa G, Aylward R, Louw VJ, Verburgh E. Poster presentation. Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation Global Cancer Disparities Africa Learning and Sharing Meeting, Cape Town, 4-7 November 2024.



Photograph above: Drs. Ryan Aylward and Brigid McMillan with A/Prof. Estelle Verburgh at the BMSF Meeting.

‘Working Together Towards Better Care of Multiple Myeloma Patients in Southern Africa’ Project. Verburgh E. Oral presentation. Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation Global Cancer Disparities Africa Learning and Sharing Meeting, Cape Town, 4-7 November 2024.

Consortium to Develop, Maintain and Promote Best Practices in Haematology Patient Care in Sub-Saharan Africa. Verburgh E. Oral presentation. Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation Global Cancer Disparities Africa Learning and Sharing Meeting, Cape Town, 4-7 November 2024.

An Update by a South African Clinical Haematology Society (SACHaS) Fellow. Oxley J. Oral presentation. Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation Global Cancer Disparities Africa Learning and Sharing Meeting, Cape Town, 4-7 November 2024.

A/Prof. Estelle Verburgh and Dr Justin du Toit were invited to present at MD Anderson Cancer Center’s (MDACC) Stem Cell transplantation and Cellular Therapy Special lecture on 18 November in Houston, USA. A/Prof. Estelle Verburgh’s lecture was entitled “50 Years of BMT in Cape Town – state of the quinquagenarian”. Dr du Toit’s lecture was entitled “The South African transplant milieu”.



The photograph above was taken at a dinner event with the stem cell transplantation faculty at MDACC, A/Prof. Estelle Verburgh and Dr. Justin du Toit (UCT alumni).

## Grants, partnerships, awards/honours and promotions

Sister Anne-Louise Cruickshank was the recipient of the Leader in Haematology Award at the 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium held in Cape Town on the 13-15th of September 2024.

Dr. Gamuchirai Tadzimirwa won the Mibashan Award for Best Clinical Haematology Fellow.

Lincoln Makofane, M.Sc. candidate under the supervision of A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla, received a research mini-Grant for his Masters research, from the NIH Fogarty program Blood Research and EnHanced Training against HIV in South Africa (BREATH-SA).

Thando Kubheka, M.Sc. candidate under the supervision of A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla, was elected Vice President of Strategy and Innovation of the African Research Society for 2024/2025. Thando was also the recipient of a Faculty Postgraduate Research Training Grant.

Zahra Latib, PhD candidate under the supervision of A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla, was the recipient of a Faculty Postgraduate Publication Incentive grant.

PhD candidate, Zahra Latib (photograph, left), and M.Sc. candidate, Lincoln Makofane (photograph, right), received the best oral presenter and best poster awards, respectively, at the 16th Annual Haematology Oncology Symposium, held 13-15 September 2024 in Cape Town.



## Graduation and exam news

The Haematology team would like to congratulate the following students who have passed their college exams with the CMSA or obtained a research degree at UCT:

Sub-specialty Certificate in Clinical Haematology  
Dr. Siphwe Baloyi (photograph, left)  
Dr. Jonathan Oxley (photograph, right)



M.Sc.

Nabeelah Peerbhai graduated and received her M.Sc. degree in Genetic Counselling - Title of her dissertation: “Patient Perspectives of Sickle Cell Disease Care in Emergency Centres of South African Hospitals”. This project was supervised by Ms. Kalinka Popel, Dr. Careni Spencer and Prof. Vernon Louw.

Marion Stone (photograph below) graduated and received her M.Sc. (Haematology) degree at the Faculty of Health Sciences graduation ceremony. Her project titled “Defining the Functional Role of MAGE-C1 in Multiple Myeloma” was supervised by A/Prof. Karen Shires.



### M.Sc.

Babalwa Yekelo (photograph, right) graduated and received her M.Sc. degree on September, 3rd – Title of her dissertation: “Aqueous extracts of *Dodonaea* var. *angustifolia* induce potent and selective cytotoxicity against diffuse large B cell lymphoma”. This project was supervised by A/Prof. Shaheen Mowla (photograph, left).

### PhD

A cotutelle PhD award was conferred to Dr. Ryan Aylward by the Universities of Cape Town and Bristol (United Kingdom) for his thesis entitled: "Investigating kidney disease clinical epidemiology using routinely collected administrative data and proteomics". This project was supervised by Prof. Brian Rayner, Prof. Fergus Caskey, Dr. Kate Birnie, Prof. Nicki Tiffin and Prof. Yoav Ben-Shlomo.

Karin van den Berg graduated and received her PhD on September, 2nd. The title of her dissertation: “The intersection of the HIV epidemic and blood donation in South Africa”. This project was supervised by Prof. Vernon Louw.





## Publication list 2024

- Simmonds W, Awuku Y, Barrett C, Brand M, Davidson K, Epstein D, et al. [Louw VJ 12th author]. Guidance for the gastrointestinal evaluation and management of iron deficiency in Sub-Saharan Africa. *S Afr Med J*. 2024 Feb. <https://samajournals.co.za/index.php/samj/article/view/711>
- Takalani A, Robinson M, Jonas P, Bodenstein A, Sambo V, et al. [Louw V 7th author and Opie J 8th author]. Safety of a second homologous Ad26.COVS vaccine among healthcare workers in the phase 3b implementation Sisonke study in South Africa, *Vaccine*, Volume 42, Issue 6, 2024, Pages 1195-1199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2024.01.066>
- Opie J, Verburgh E, Bailly J, Mayne E, Louw V. Hematological Complications of HIV Infection: An Update from an HIV-endemic setting, *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ofid/ofae162>
- Davison G, Opie J, Davids S, Mohamed R, Novitsky N. Early Recovery of Natural Killer Cells Post T-Cell Depleted Allogeneic Stem Cell Transplantation Using Alemtuzumab 'In the Bag'. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4300095>
- Rusch J, van der Westhuizen D, Gill R, Louw V. Diagnosing iron deficiency: Controversies and novel metrics, *Best Practice & Research Clinical Anaesthesiology*, Volume 37, Issue 4, 2023, Pages 451-467, ISSN 1521-6896, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpa.2023.11.001>.
- van den Berg K, Murphy E, Maartens G, Louw V, Grebe E. The impact of non-disclosure of HIV status and antiretroviral therapy on HIV recency testing and incidence algorithms. *Vox Sang*. 2024 Apr 15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/vox.13627>
- Louw V, Isbister J. Nonanemic Iron Deficiency: The Elusive Metrics of Iron in the Human Body. *Anesthesia & Analgesia* 139(1):p 44-46, July 2024. DOI:10.1213/ANE.0000000000006936
- Hussey H, Vreede H, Davies M-A, Heekes A, Kalk E, Hardie D, et al. [Opie J, 14th author]. (2024) SARS-CoV-2 seroepidemiology in Cape Town, South Africa, and implications for future outbreaks in low-income communities. *PLOS Glob Public Health* 4(8): e0003554. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0003554>
- Richardson D, Brown K, Rusch J, Verburgh E, Louw V, Opie J. From the marrow to the blood: optimising the diagnosis of iron deficiency in the setting of inflammation, *Pathology*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pathol.2024.06.015>.

- Swanevelder R, Wessels P, Louw VJ, Swarts A, Lennards M, van den Berg K. The COVID-19 pandemic and blood utilisation in South Africa. *S Afr Med J* 2024;114(11):2001. <https://doi.org/10.7196/SAMJ.2024.v114i11.2001>
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