

## Staff & Student Achievements

### MICROBIOLOGY DIVISION

#### ENTERIC DISEASES REFERENCE UNIT

Dr Rugola Mthandu, a post graduate student in EDRU, completed an MSC in Epidemiology through the Division of community health, University of the Witwatersrand, graduated 10 December 2008.

#### MYCOLOGY REFERENCE UNIT

Ms Thokozile Gloria Zulu successfully completed the Professional Board for Medical Technology Examination in the Category Microbiology.

#### PARASITOLOGY REFERENCE UNIT

B Poonsamy completed the required training period and registered as a medical scientist with the Health Professions Council of South Africa.

K Kistiah was awarded a Local Master's Scholarship by the Medical Research Council.

J Freaan was awarded sabbatical leave by the School of Pathology, University of the Witwatersrand and NHLS, December 2008 - May 2009.

#### RESPIRATORY & MENINGEAL PATHOGENS REFERENCE UNIT

Ms Ruth Mpenbe was awarded the Baccalaureus Technologiae in Biomedical Technology from Tshwane University of Technology, Tshwane, Gauteng.

Ms Olga Hattingh was a travel grant recipient for ISPPD-6 (6th International Symposium on Pneumococci and Pneumococcal Diseases), June 8-12 2008, Reykjavik, Iceland.

The MRC review of the past 5 years' work done by the research unit was very favourable, and the funding from the MRC has been renewed for the unit under the co-directorship of Profs Keith Klugman and Shabir Madhi.

#### SPECIAL BACTERIAL PATHOGENS REFERENCE UNIT

Mrs LArntzen has been recognized by the World Health Organization as a regional expert on plague.

Miss A. Ruis graduated BSc (Hons), University of Witwatersrand.

Miss N Bakana passed Board exams and registered as a biomedical technologist.

#### SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS REFERENCE CENTRE

Mr. Sakhile Mhlongo won first prize for the best academic poster at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Prakash Vallabh Primary Health Care Research Conference in November 2008.

Dr. Etienne Müller won second prize for the best academic poster at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Prakash Vallabh Primary Health Care Research Conference in November 2008.

Dr. Etienne Muller received an NHLS Research Award to develop molecular typing of *Treponema pallidum*.

#### VECTOR CONTROL REFERENCE UNIT

M Kaiser won the award for the best Honours Student in Entomology for 2007 from the Entomological Society of Southern Africa and was awarded a prize for the best first time presenter at the PARSA (Parasitology Society of South Africa) Conference.

Vezenegho, S attained MSc with distinction.

### VIROLOGY DIVISION

#### AIDS VIRUS RESEARCH UNIT

The following students graduated in 2008:

Janet Mans, Witwatersrand University, PhD

Samantha Donniger, Witwatersrand University, MSc (with distinction)

Fiona Anthony, Witwatersrand University, MSc

Melinda Suchard, Witwatersrand University, MMed (co-supervised by Prof. C. Gray, Prof. A. Duse and Prof. C.T. Tiemessen)

Leonard Damelin (recently employed on a WHC contract as a post-doc) has been awarded a highly prestigious Gates Foundation Explorations grant of \$100,000 for a year (104 were awarded out of approximately 4000 proposals received; two were awarded to South Africans). These grants are awarded for "out-of-the-box" ideas for preventing or curing HIV/AIDS (and other various other topics).

Late breaker oral presentation at AIDS vaccine 2008 Conference: Tiemessen CT, Shalekoff S, Meddows-Taylor S, Schramm DB, Paximadis M, Papathanasopoulos M, Minevich G, Winchester R, Gray GE, Sherman GG, Coovadia AH, Kuhn L. Natural killer cells respond to HIV-1 peptides and are associated with control of infection and protective immunity. AIDS vaccine 2008 Conference, Cape Town, South Africa, October 13-16, 2008.

Wellcome Trust International Senior Fellows meeting, October 8-9 October 2008, London: Prof Tiemessen was invited to give an oral presentation entitled: "Natural killer cells respond to HIV-1 peptides and are associated with control of infection and protective immunity" at the meeting.

### **VIRAL DIAGNOSTICS UNIT**

Miriam Mashele and Beverley Singh attended the SANAS ISO 17025 and Internal Auditing Course in April 2008.

Beverley Singh and Miriam Mashele attended a 4 day EPI Info Course at NIOH in Braamfontein in February 2008.

Miriam Mashele and Beverley Singh attended a 3 day training course conducted by the WHO on the WHO database management for Measles and Rubella in July 2008.

Sarah Hloma attended the First Aid course in May 2008  
Elias Kekana attended the Fire Warden training in May 2008.

Mahlatse Maleka and Miriam Mashele attended Excel levels 1, 2 and 3 courses in August 2008.

Beverley Singh attended Excel Levels 1 and 2 courses in August 2008.

Robert Moalosi attended a 5 day SAFELTP short course in July and October 2008.

Miriam Mashele, Wayne Howard, Elias Kekana and Beverley Singh attended a 2 day training on the BED 2000 automated ELISA processor.

## **EPIDEMIOLOGY DIVISION**

### **EPIDEMIOLOGY & SURVEILLANCE UNIT**

Dr Ziyanda Vundle was awarded an International Development Grant for Young Women to fund her attendance at the International Congress on Infectious Diseases, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, June 19-22, 2008 and presented a poster entitled "Measles Surveillance: Challenges in the diagnosis of measles in South Africa" for her project completed during her rotation in the Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit.

### **OUTBREAK RESPONSE UNIT**

Dr Ayanda Cengimbo was awarded the Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene after successfully completing the course.

### **THE SOUTH AFRICAN FIELD EPIDEMIOLOGY & LABORATORY PROGRAMME**

Mr Brett Archer was one of 2 participants awarded the prestigious John Snow Award for Outbreak Investigation at the TEPHINET Malaysia conference.

Mr Tebogo Mamahlodi was awarded one of 3 best poster presentation at the TEPHINET Malaysia conference.

Dr Elizabeth Prentice is a member of the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee.

Dr Harris is a member of the National EPI Task Group and the Africa Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET) Board of Directors.

Dr Faustine Ndugulile is a member of the working group for the Centre for Integrated Laboratory training.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMMES**

### **NATIONAL TUBERCULOSIS REFERENCE LABORATORY**

E Tsheola obtained her certificate in Fundamentals of Project Management (Damelin),