



SAPRIN's First Nodal PhD Fellowship

April 2024



Kagiso Peace Seakamela is the PhD candidate recipient of SAPRIN's first nodal PhD Fellowship. Professor Eric Maimela, the Principal Investigator (PI) for the [DIMAMO HDSS](#) is the main applicant.

Awarded in 2023, Seakamela's PhD dissertation is titled, "The development of an evidenced-based model for the management and prevention of multimorbidity in the DIMAMO Health and Demographic Surveillance Systems."

The aim of the SAPRIN Fellowship is to advance a theme of knowledge at a node under the guidance of a PI whose work is embedded in the node. It will also provide a first-rate learning experience for the research student, who will obtain the doctorate based on this work.

He is being supervised by DIMAMO's PI, Professor Eric Maimela through the University of Limpopo (UL), Professor Tholene Sodi from UL and Doctor CW Kabudula of the University of Witwatersrand.

In the first phase he will estimate the prevalence, sociodemographic factors, prevalent illness combinations, and health effects of multimorbidity among young people and adults in rural areas.

The topic was chosen as a gap was identified. Kagiso explains, "Previous studies in the study area have highlighted the high prevalence of noncommunicable diseases among adults. The approach and the interventions are structured to manage these chronic conditions individually. The published interventions tend to address issues that affect caregivers and patients without understanding the issues they face in administering and receiving health services. Again, there's a rise in chronic conditions which results in people developing the second condition, hence the need to investigate multimorbidity."

Kagiso holds a Master of Science in Medical Sciences and a Bachelor of Science in Medical Sciences (Honours) from UL. Prior to obtaining the fellowship, Kagiso was employed at DIMAMO as a researcher.

On being selected as part of the first SAPRIN Fellowship, Seakamela says that it means a lot to him and initially he could not comprehend being chosen. He believes that the resources are sufficient to allow for innovative work and he is cognizant that many PhDs and post graduate students are not as fortunate to obtain this type of funding.

Kagiso recalls doing his first gram staining with his brother, a veterinary scientist when he was in grade 7. He was still not convinced that science was the career for him, but it did ignite a passion in him. However, as time went by, the notion that science was helpful, could improve and save lives steered him to study Medical Sciences.



Kagiso is from Ga-Seleka, Lephalale in Limpopo. He lived and studied in Limpopo but went on to do his internship at the Groote Schuur Hospital and Red Cross in Cape Town. Seakamela says that the internship was a great learning experience. It sharpened his skills as a scientist, instilled discipline and helped him develop a good work ethic. The internship taught him about the workings of a laboratory, exposed him to other disciplines and honed his problem solving techniques.

Kagiso draws inspiration from his family. His journey has not been easy but the support from his family has helped him reach this point. Having lost his mum when he was in grade 10, Kagiso helped raise his two younger sisters. Despite having the added responsibilities of caring for his sisters, he remained focused on school and excelled.

After obtaining good results in school, he proceeded to university where he recalls, the pace was a massive change from school. However, he endeavoured to adapt to the tertiary lifestyle and reminded himself of the end goal.

Kagiso’s family prioritized education and his father paid for his undergraduate university fees. But during his second year of study, his father lost his job. Kagiso’s brothers helped him pay for the second year, together with the church. In his third year he was successful in obtaining funding from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). His Masters was funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF).

Kagiso’s motto in life is to be good, do good and show gratitude. His advice to students is to show up, give it your all and not to lose hope. While his drive and focus have gotten him to where he is today, he is extremely grateful to all that have played a role in his life. He is indebted to his family and community for their never-ending support. Kagiso also expressed his gratitude to DIMAMO HDSS, his funders and SAPRIN for the opportunities they have extended to him.

In his spare time Kagiso enjoys hiking, camping and rock climbing. He is an ardent videographer and creates content that is shared via his YouTube channel.

We look forward to following Kagiso’s PhD journey and wish him well with the rest of his studies.