



Professor Tollman Awarded at SAMRC Scientific Merit Awards

April 2024



Professor Stephen Tollman received a Gold Medal at the South African Medical Research Council's (SAMRC) 10th Scientific Merit Awards on 07 March, in Cape Town. Tollman is a Research Professor and Head of the Division of Health and Population at the [University of Witwatersrand's School of Public Health](#).

He is also the Director of the SAMRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit ([Agincourt](#)). Agincourt is one of six Health and Demographic Surveillance Sites (HDSS) comprising the South African Population Research Infrastructure Network ([SAPRIN](#)).

Through these prestigious awards the SAMRC aims to acknowledge outstanding contributions to health research, recognise individuals who have demonstrated exceptional scientific acumen or made innovative strides in addressing public health challenges, potentially influencing policy and enhancing the well-being of the South African population.

Gold medals are reserved for accomplished senior scientists who have made seminal contributions that have had a profound impact on the health of people, particularly those residing in developing nations.

Professor Tollman is devoted to “bringing the best science” to bear on the persisting – at times intractable – challenges facing rural health and development in South and sub-Saharan Africa.

In 1992/3 he introduced the Agincourt HDSS, today covering a ‘whole population cohort’ of about 120,000 people in 22,000 households and 31 villages in northeast South Africa, adjacent to the Kruger National Park near southern Mozambique.

He played lead roles in establishing SA and African research networks that harness the strengths of longitudinal research platforms for example the South African Population Research Infrastructure Network ([SAPRIN](#)) and [INDEPTH Network](#). These all generate vital insights into health and population transitions covering dramatic socio-political change, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and rise in cardiometabolic conditions, coupled with mental ill-health and COVID-19, which together render multimorbidity a pervasive challenge.

In describing his relationship with the SAMRC Professor Tollman has expressed, “The SAMRC is an outstanding institution, central to South Africa’s research and health development capability. At both personal and Unit level,



we enjoy a rewarding and mutually enriching relationship that adds exceptional value to the efforts and aspirations of our SAMRC/Wits research unit.”

Tollman is the recipient of numerous awards including the Alumni Award of Merit from the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health in 2023.

For more information on Professor Tollman’s award visit [10th Scientific Merit Awards | SAMRC](#) and for a short video visit <https://youtu.be/94F0hhBP6Uw>