



AHRI HDSS Marks 25 Years: Highlights from AHRI week 2025

December 2025



[AHRI Week 2025](#)

The Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS) node celebrated a major milestone this year, 25 years of continuous population surveillance and impactful science. The AHRI HDSS is a founding SAPRIN node, one of seven SAPRIN nodes and one of SAPRIN's four rural nodes.

AHRI Week 2025 was dedicated to honouring this legacy, the communities it serves, and the visionary founders and funders who shaped the platform. The week also served as a special reunion of the HDSS co-founding members, many of whom returned to reflect on its early years and evolution.

AHRI week took place from 14 – 17 October. Below are some of the events that took place.

Research day symposium

The week opened with a research symposium that celebrated AHRI's scientific achievements enabled by the HDSS. A major highlight was a panel with some of the original HDSS founding members. The panel included Professor



Frank Tanser, Dr Justus Benzler, Dudu Biyela, Dr Dumile Gumede, Dr Nompumelelo Nzimande-Mbele and Professor Geoff Solarsh. It was moderated by Dr Kobus Herbst. The panel is pictured in the top left photo. They shared stories from the system's early days, key lessons, and how their involvement shaped their careers. The session set a reflective and inspiring tone for the week.

Research feedback day with the Department of Health

AHRI continued its tradition of engaging with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health (DoH) through its annual research feedback day. The platform allowed AHRI and DoH partners to share updates, discuss research findings, and explore opportunities for policy impact and implementation. Presentations covered a range of studies, including Mobile Men, HPV research, Impact BP and TUTT Plus – highlighting the value of HDSS-linked science.

Open day: media visit, poster session & public lecture

Media visit:

Seven journalists joined AHRI for an in-depth media tour, which included engagements with science leaders, a visit to the clinical trials unit, and field visits to the Mobile Men clinic and a local royal household. These interactions offered media partners a firsthand look at AHRI's research and community partnerships.

Poster session:

Early career researchers showcased 28 posters at a vibrant session hosted at AHRI-Somkhele. The work highlighted the scientific breadth across AHRI, with many studies drawing on HDSS data.

Public lecture:

The open day concluded with an insightful public lecture by one of the AHRI-HDSS founders Prof Geoff Solarsh, with Dr Natsayi Chimbindi providing an engaging response. The lecture reflected on the growth and impact of the HDSS over the past 25 years.

In case you missed it, catch up with the recording: <https://youtu.be/cTJ8D1rGl3M>