



From the Director's Desk – Dr André Rose

I welcome you to our final newsletter for 2025. As we wrap up the year, we delve into some of the highlights in the population science space.

This year the Annual SAPRIN conference was open to all interested researchers, scientists and stakeholders. The result was a successful conference hosted in Cape Town in July, which saw a wide range of delegates from across the country participate in a robust programme. Curated under the theme, “Advancing Health and Social Wellbeing through Population Science,” it served to strengthen engagement across the research community.



The SAPRIN Strategic Plan for the period 2025 – 2030 was officially launched at the Annual SAPRIN Conference. The plan sets the foundation for SAPRIN's values and strategic objectives over the next five years. It is anchored by the vision of *equitable health and social wellbeing for all* and the mission of building a *dynamic, productive national research infrastructure through longitudinal, population-based nodes in under-resourced communities*.

A very notable milestone was BAMBISHO – the Bafokeng Health and Demographic Surveillance Node commencing with the collection of baseline surveillance data on 02 October 2025. BAMBISHO is SAPRIN's newest, seventh and fourth rural Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS) node. BAMBISHO envisages completing their baseline census in March 2026.

It is the second newsletter in a row that SAPRIN bids farewell to an invaluable member of the team. Our Data Scientist, Dr Linda Maoyi's last day at SAPRIN was 30 November. His numerous contributions to SAPRIN have left an indelible mark. We wish him well as he embarks on the next chapter of his career.

The strength of SAPRIN's data infrastructure is demonstrated in this edition, where we showcase how robust, longitudinal datasets are transforming population science research in South Africa. The first is from Professor Mark Collinson's presentation at the Economic Society of South Africa (ESSA) 2025 Centenary Conference, “*The Study of Household Dynamics Using Health and Demographic Surveillance System Data*.” The second is a look at the recently published paper by PhD student Audrey Moyo in *BMC Public Health* titled, *Prevalence and correlates of common mental disorders among adolescents and young adults in rural South Africa: analysis of household survey data informed by lived experience experts*.



From the pioneering PAMHoYA project, which is harmonizing fragmented mental health data and making it accessible through an open, user-driven platform, to Professor Mark Collinson’s work on household dynamics using HDSS data, SAPRIN’s commitment to open science and collaboration is clear. These initiatives not only enable nuanced analyses of mental health among rural youth and evolving household structures, but also ensure that data is securely shared, ethically governed, and relevant to the communities it serves.

Developing the next generation of scientists remains high on SAPRIN’s agenda. We are reaching out to learners, with the hope of sparking an interest in science and research. For the second year, SAPRIN played a key role in coordinating the SAMRC’s Durban leg of the Generation Science Programme. SAPRIN partnered with the Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) to offer a laboratory experience to the approximately 17 learners.

We wish you a safe and happy festive season.

Dr André Rose

Director (Acting): SAPRIN

