

AHRI celebrates 25 years of HDSS contribution

June 2025



[Official launch of 25th anniversary celebrations](#)

This year marks a major milestone for the Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) as they celebrate 25 years of their Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS).

The official launch of the 25th anniversary celebrations took place in March 2025 during an AHRI townhall meeting. This soft launch set the stage for a year-long series of activities that will highlight the AHRI HDSS's contribution to research, honour its founders and acknowledge contributions and participation from the surveillance communities, staff, partners and stakeholders.

The launch included a special presentation by AHRI's director for population science, Dr Kobus Herbst, outlining some of the changes in health and wellbeing in the surveillance population that the HDSS has measured over the past 25 years, and the research shift from observation to intervention: there has been an exponential growth in intervention studies in the surveillance population at AHRI, both in terms of large population-based interventions and clinical trials.

During the launch video messages were featured from long-time researchers and contributors, including Professor Vicky Hosegood, Professor Frank Tanser and Phumzile Dlamini, reflecting on the journey and milestones.

The AHRI HDSS is also one of seven HDSS nodes that comprise the South African Population Research Infrastructure Network (SAPRIN). AHRI is one of three founding nodes and one of four rural nodes.

Established in 2000, the Demographic Surveillance Area (DSA) is located in the Mtubatuba local municipality in the uMkhanyakude district of KwaZulu-Natal. By 31 December 2024 the HDSS had a population of 156,464.