



From the Director's Desk – Dr Kobus Herbst

Welcome to the second edition of *The SAPRIN Connection*. Since our inaugural edition the Population Science space has been particularly eventful with significant developments and announcements.

In May the formative work of the African Population Cohorts Consortium (APCC) culminated in a Blueprint Conference in Cape Town where the blueprint was accepted by 45 African population cohorts. I was elected to chair the interim steering committee of the APCC. This is a substantial development as the APCC seeks to unite population cohorts across Africa.

In June the first Annual SAPRIN conference was successfully hosted at the Wits RHI in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. Convened under the theme,

“Societies in Motion: Understanding Population Health,” the conference replaced the previous Best Practice workshop. It signified the move from an operational focused gathering to a more science-focused event.

The conference gave rise to the SAPRIN Population Science Seminar Series following a call from delegates for a platform to share the science emanating from nodes. Since July, the series has become a monthly fixture featuring two presentations from within and outside the nodes. The series is open to all interested parties and has gained traction in a short space of time. A wide range of topics have been covered including, mental health, migration and health, adolescent health and National Health Insurance.

The pursuit of a seventh node to join the SAPRIN network continued in earnest. Following the closing date for applications on 2 April, a rigorous adjudication process unfolded, resulting in the top two contenders putting forward presentations to the SAPRIN Steering Committee. Consensus was reached by the Steering Committee and the announcement of our newest node is imminent. We are excited at the further expansion and diversification of our research footprint.

The second SAPRIN nodal PhD Fellowship was awarded to Principal Investigator (PI) Dr Darshini Govender who will supervise student Stanley Carries. The PhD will focus on, “Development of a well-being measure for application in economic evaluations of interventions for adolescents living with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa.” As part of the pre-requisites the PhD study will collaborate with USINGA. SAPRIN remains committed to capacity development.



Congratulations to Dr André Rose, Deputy Director of SAPRIN for being awarded the prestigious Kofi Annan Fellowship in Global Health Leadership. André is one of 25 fellows chosen from a pool of 6000 qualified applicants. The Programme aims to support aspirational health leaders from Africa in acquiring advanced skills and competencies to strategise, manage and lead public health programmes that will transform public health in Africa.

The South African Medical Research Council recently presented their 2023/24 Annual Report to the Portfolio Committee on Health. The report was underpinned by the theme, “30 Years of Democracy and Health Research Transformation in South Africa.” We are proud that the important work of SAPRIN is highlighted in the report.

In April, we advised you that SAPRIN would be embarking on a Strategic Planning process for the period 2025 – 2030. I am pleased to announce that the strategic planning is now at an advanced stage and good headway is being made. The document is being shaped through the various invaluable stakeholder consultations and we look forward to a final product that adequately captures our vision, values, objectives and indicators.

The communities embedded in our nodes are crucial partners and emphasis is placed on community engagement and outreach. In this edition we look at some of the community engagement and outreach initiatives that have occurred. These include baseline results dissemination meetings in USINGA, a seminar on gender-based violence and femicide in DIMAMO, the Community Advisory Board Annual General meeting at AHRI, health screenings in GRT-Inspired, benefit sharing in Agincourt and youth outreach through the Generation Science Programme at SAMRC.

We wish you happy reading and hope you find this edition insightful.

Dr Kobus Herbst

SAPRIN Director

