

Biography: Prof Felicity Burt

Prof Felicity Burt is from the Division of Virology in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State (UFS), and the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS). She currently holds an NRF-DST South African Research Chair in vector-borne and zoonotic pathogens research.

She worked on viral haemorrhagic fevers and arboviruses at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) for 17 years before relocating to Bloemfontein, where she established a research group that primarily focuses on host immune responses to arboviral and zoonotic infections.

Prof Burt's research includes characterisation of humoral and cellular immune responses in patients with infections such as the Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) virus and the Sindbis virus; epitope discovery for the development of diagnostic tools; development of molecular and serological assays for surveillance purposes; virus discovery; and development of vaccines.

Raising awareness of these viruses, defining associated diseases, and developing tools for surveillance programmes contribute to understanding these pathogens and the public health implications.