

## **Winners of the 2021 Faculty of Health Sciences Research Forum**

### ***Story by Reuben Maeko***

The Faculty of Health Sciences (FoHS) at the University of the Free State (UFS) celebrated the winners from its annual Faculty Research Forum held earlier in October 2021 by handing out medals, trophies and certificates to winners in the different categories.

The 52nd Faculty Research Forum took place virtually in August this year and winners of articles from 2020 were also announced at the event. Prof Edelweiss Wentzel-Viljoen, currently a freelance nutrition consultant and extraordinary professor of nutrition at the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition (CEN), Faculty of Health Sciences, North West University (NWU), delivered the FP Retief Lecture.

Prof Gert van Zyl, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, congratulated all the winners and participants, saying the forum was, as always, characterised by high-quality submissions for presentations, showcasing the significant recent progress in research development. Prof Van Zyl said: "We provide research leadership by promoting and supporting research activities to ensure that the faculty achieves excellence in research, scholarship, and innovation."

### **A researcher because of insatiable curiosity**

One of the medal winners, Prof Louise van Den Berg, Associate Professor in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, said she became a researcher because of her insatiable curiosity about how everything works and fits together in creation, and her love and respect for the research process that is both structured and methodical but also creative and expressive. "It was a bit challenging during COVID-19 but we had to work hard because of dedication and the support from our team," said Prof Van den Berg.

### **The 2020 research articles winners were as follows:**

#### **John van der Riet Medal Winners**

Prof Van den Berg, Mohlakotsana Mokhehle and Dr Jacques Raubenheimer from the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, for their research article *Nutritional status, glycaemic control and barriers to treatment compliance among patients with type 2 diabetes attending public primary health clinics in Maseru, Lesotho*, published in *Endocrinology, Metabolism and Diabetes of South Africa* 24(3) (2019).

#### **Muller Potgieter Medal Winners**

Dr Anne-Cecilia van Marle, Dr Jaco Joubert and Prof Muriel Meiring from Department of Haematology and Cell Biology for their research article, *Comparison of ADAMTS13 and Von Willebrand factor levels and activities, and plasminogen levels, in plasma products currently available for the treatment of thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura in South Africa*. *Transfusion and Apheresis Science* 58 (2019)

#### **Kerneels Nel Medal Winners**

The Kerneels Nel Medal Winners were Dr Champion N Nyoni and Prof Yvonne Botma from the School of Nursing with their entry, *Implementing a competency-based midwifery programme in Lesotho: A gap analysis*. *Nurse Education in Practice* 34 (2019)

### **The 2021 research articles winners were as follows:**

#### **John van der Riet Medal Winners**

Mrs Emrie Spies, Prof Van den Berg and M Nel from the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences with an article titled, *Knowledge, attitude and practices of patients*

receiving maintenance haemodialysis in Bloemfontein, South Africa. South African Journal of Clinical Nutrition (2020)

### **Muller Potgieter Medal Winners**

Peter N Mwangi, Milton T Mogotsi, Mapaseka L Seheri, M Jeffrey Mphahlele, Ina Peenze, Mathew D. Esona, Benjamin Kumwenda, A Duncan Steele, Carl D Kirkwood, Valantine N Ndze, Francis E Dennis, Khuzwayo C Jere and Martin M Nyaga from the Next Generation Sequencing Unit and the Division of Virology, School of Pathology for the article, *Whole Genome In-Silico Analysis of South African G1P[8] Rotavirus Strains before and after vaccine Introduction over a period of 14 years*. Vaccines 8 (2020)

### **Kerneels Nel Medal Winners**

Cynthia Spies and Prof Yvonne Botma, School of Nursing, for the article *Optimising simulation learning experiences for mature, postgraduate nursing students*. Nurse Education in Practice 47 (2020).

## **Photo captions**

Prof Gert van Zyl is the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State (UFS).

Prof Louise van den Berg, Associate Professor in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, together with Mhlakotsana Mokhehle and Dr Jacques Raubenheimer were John van der Riet Medal winners for their 2020 research article.

Cynthia Spies from the School of Nursing was the winner of the Kerneels Nel Medal for 2021.

Dr Peter N Mwangi, who is part of the Next Generation Sequencing Unit and the Division of Virology, School of Pathology, was a Muller Potgieter Medal Winner for the year 2021.

Mrs Emrie Spies is a John van der Riet Medal Winner for 2021 as well as a runner-up in the Junior Clinical Paper category.

Dr Elna de Waal: Best Clinical Paper in the Junior category.

Prof Prof Corinna Walsh from the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics was runner-up in the Senior Clinical paper category.

Dr Liska Robb, the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, won the Best Clinical Paper in the Senior category.

Dr Lynette van der Merwe, undergraduate medical programme director in the School of Clinical Medicine at the UFS, and Prof Hanneke Brits, Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine won awards for the best educational poster and runner up for best educational poster respectively.

Miss Chené Bester from the School of Biomedical Sciences was the winner for the best Junior Laboratory paper.

Miss Marizanne de Bruin, Junior Lecturer in the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences won the Best Junior Clinical Poster.

Prof Felicity Burt from the University of the Free State (UFS) and the National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS), who holds an NRF-DST South African Research Chair in Vector-borne and Zoonotic Pathogens Research, was the best in the Senior Laboratory Category. Dr P Mwangi was runner up in Senior Laboratory Category.