



# CHSR&D

Centre for Health Systems  
Research & Development

## NEWS REPORT 2021 – 2022

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VISION **130**  
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UNIVERSITY OF THE  
FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE  
VRYSTAAT  
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FREISTATA



UFS

THE HUMANITIES  
CENTRE FOR HEALTH SYSTEMS  
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

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The health systems effects of the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been unprecedented. Decisions for pandemic control measures were made under challenging circumstances driven by urgency and panic, with uncertainties and complexities for public good over individual rights. Research conducted by the Centre for Health Systems Research & Development (CHSR&D) in the Faculty of the Humanities at the University of the Free State (UFS) in 2021 and 2022 found, for example, that 44% of nurses in the Free State across the public and private sectors experienced post-traumatic stress disorder. This was comparatively higher than their counterparts in other countries. The Centre's research also highlighted the importance of vaccine literacy. South African citizens must receive accurate information on vaccine safety, and trust-building should be a key component in vaccine promotion efforts. Recommended target groups for vaccine promotion include women, younger people, less educated people, the unemployed, part-time employees and students. In collaboration with the Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa (DiMTEC), UFS and the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS), we explored the plight of population groups especially vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. These included people living in three different mountain regions of the world to draw intercontinental comparisons. Locally, the research focused on the plight of people living in the Maluti-Drakensberg area on the border between South Africa and Lesotho.

A reverberating lesson from the global COVID-19 experience was that health systems require strengthening to enable improved pandemic responses. This is especially true in South Africa where, amidst continuing efforts to manage the existing human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and tuberculosis (TB) epidemics, as well as rising burdens of non-communicable disease and the need to address maternal, child and men's health issues, health systems challenges are deeply rooted in socio-historical inequalities and inequities. Despite evidence of the importance of male engagement in maternal and child health care, health programmes tend to exclude men from the reproductive health equation, thus widening health disparities between men and women. A gender-transformative approach to health care recognises the different health risks, needs, attitudes and behaviours of men and women. In this regard, cultural beliefs and practices play an important part in maternal and child health. Therefore, our ongoing research project to promote male engagement in maternal and neonatal health set out to adapt an evidence-based intervention for Sesotho-speaking couples specifically. Another ongoing research project addresses the historical neglect of TB patients in respect of mental healthcare services of which they are disproportionately in need. In terms of scholarly engagement, the Centre contributed to local health systems strengthening through close collaboration with the public health sector, namely the Free State Department of Health (FSDoH), in respect of the Provincial Health Research Committee (PHRC), the annual Health Research Day, health research priority setting, and citizen-centred assessment of the state of public healthcare service delivery. We are also represented and actively participating in the National Health Research Committee (NHRC) and the National Health Policy and Systems Research (HPSR) collective.

The Centre contributes to postgraduate teaching and learning through the Masters of Health Systems Studies (MHSysStud) programme, which is steadily growing in student numbers. During 2021 and 2022, the Centre's researchers also provided study guidance to increasing numbers of Honours, Masters and PhD students in other UFS departments, including Psychology, Development Studies, Community Health, Health Professions Education, Nursing, and Disaster Management.

# BACKGROUND, MISSION, AIMS, FOCUS AREAS AND PRIORITY HEALTH PROGRAMMES

## BACKGROUND

The CHSR&D was established at the UFS in 1993 and stems from a rich tradition of research and training in medical sociology and the sociology of health and health care. The Centre was founded specifically to address the need for bio-social scientific enquiry, operational research, and the development of research skills in the field of health systems studies. It has also accumulated commendable experience and expertise in key methodological approaches (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods).

## MISSION

To generate and disseminate scientific knowledge on health and health systems at the local, provincial, and national levels and to use this knowledge to improve and inform new and existing policies, strategies, and practices. The Centre is also committed to developing health systems capacity via implementation science and postgraduate research training.

## AIMS

- To meet the need for multidisciplinary research and development in the domain of health, health systems and health care.
- To generate and disseminate research findings and information on health and health systems and promote the translation of research findings into policy and practice.
- To inform the strengthening of health systems with a view to greater equity, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- To provide postgraduate training and capacity building that contributes to expanding expertise in health, health systems, and healthcare research and development.

## FOCUS AREAS

- Health systems.
- Public health in South Africa (includes engagement with health policy and strategy, operational functioning, and specialist areas such as occupational health).

## PRIORITY HEALTH PROGRAMMES

While the Centre maintains an overall focus on health systems strengthening, it pays particular attention to the following healthcare programmes:

- Tuberculosis (TB) prevention and control
- HIV & AIDS
- TB-HIV co-epidemic
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Mental health
- COVID-19



# STAFF

- Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht (Director)
- Prof. Christo Heunis (Senior Researcher)
- Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male (Senior Researcher)
- Mrs Belinda Jacobs (Senior Administrative Officer)
- Ms Bridget Smit (Administrative Officer)
- Dr Ngwi Mulu (Postdoctoral Fellow)



*From left to right: Ms Bridget Smit; Prof. Christo Heunis; Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male; Mrs Belinda Jacobs; Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht and Dr Ngwi Mulu*

## STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

- Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male was promoted to Associate Professor.
- Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male was the only candidate selected from the UFS for the national-level Future Professors Programme.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Profs. Michelle Engelbrecht and Gladys Kigozi-Male completed Python training.
- Dr Ngwi Mulu attended training courses for the Research Supervision Programme 2022, facilitated by the Centre for Graduate Support (CGS) at UFS.

## RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

- Dr Niresh Bhagwandin (South African Medical Research Council)
- Dr Asta Rau (CHSR&D, UFS)
- Prof. Francois Steyn (Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria)
- Dr Kerry Uebel (School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, Australia)
- Prof. Dr Edwin Wouters (Research Centre for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies [CELLO], Department of Sociology, University of Antwerp, Belgium)

# ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board members include:

- Prof. Corli Witthuhn (Vice-Rector: Research, UFS, and Chairperson of the Advisory Board)
- Prof. Heidi Hudson (Dean: Faculty of the Humanities, UFS)
- CHSR&D researchers (UFS)
- Dr Ellen Blekie (retired, formerly Young Women Christian Association and South African National Tuberculosis Association)
- Dr Niresh Bhagwandin (Executive Manager: Strategic Research Initiatives, South African Medical Research Council)
- Dr Perpetual Chikobvu (Director: Information Management and Research, FSDoH and Department of Community Health, UFS)
- Prof. René English (Head of the Division of Health Systems and Public Health, Stellenbosch University)

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### TUBERCULOSIS AND HIV

Two research projects investigated mental health-related issues in TB and/or TB-HIV co-infected patients.

#### ***Experiences of Drug-Susceptible Tuberculosis Patients with Symptoms of Depression, Anxiety and/or Alcohol Misuse: A Cohort Study of New Patients in the Free State***

**Principal investigator:** Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D, UFS)

**Co-investigators:** Profs. Michelle Engelbrecht and Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS)

**Collaborators:** Dr André Janse van Rensburg (Centre for Rural Health, University of KwaZulu-Natal) and Dr Perpetual Chikobvu (Information Management and Research Directorate, Free State Department of Health and Department of Community Health, UFS)

Tuberculosis (TB) is increasingly interlinked with several mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, and alcohol misuse. This project explored depression, anxiety and alcohol misuse among new patients on susceptible TB treatment in Mangaung Metropolitan District in the Free State. More specifically, the research explored 1) the prevalence of symptoms of depression, anxiety and/or alcohol misuse among new susceptible TB patients; 2) the factors associated with depression/anxiety/alcohol misuse; 3) the experiences of TB patients with co-morbid symptoms of depression/anxiety/alcohol misuse — narratives from the ground; and 4) providers' views of and experiences in managing TB patients with co-morbid common mental health



problems. Fieldworker-administered interviews were conducted with newly diagnosed TB patients using structured questionnaires. Data analysis and dissemination occurred in tandem. A paper has been published on the construct validity of the Generalised Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7). The modified two-factor structure and high internal consistency, respectively, provided evidence for the construct validity and reliability of the GAD-7 scale for assessing GAD amongst patients with TB. However, studies are needed to assess the performance of this brief scale under routine TB programme conditions in the Free State.

**Funder:** National Research Foundation and Department of Science

**Publication:** Kigozi G. 2021. Assessing the construct validity of the Generalised Anxiety Disorder-7 in a sample of tuberculosis patients in South Africa. *Southern African Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 36(1), a298. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajid.v36i1.298>.



### ***A Collaborative Study on Depression and Anxiety among New TB Patients within HIV Programmes in South Africa and Uganda (CoDATE study)***

**Principal investigator:** Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D, UFS)

**Co-Principal investigator:** Dr Raymond Tweheyo (School of Public Health, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda)

This project was undertaken to explicate the gaps regarding access to mental health services by TB-HIV patients receiving primary health care services in South Africa and Uganda. The results will be valuable in promoting integrated service delivery in these countries. The research uses socio-ecological and health systems thinking frameworks to uncover patient, provider, institutional and policy barriers and enablers applying to TB-HIV patients with co-morbid depression and anxiety.

The research will highlight how patients might navigate the support system and services. It will also make recommendations for coordination across relevant health and community organisations, including health providers' and policy-makers' perspectives on the TB-HIV programme efforts and the reasons for the integration or failure of integration at the implementation level. Currently, data is being analysed.

**Funder:** Department of Science and Innovation in conjunction with the South African Medical Research Council







## COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic affected all aspects of life. It caused economic disruptions and posed immense challenges to both public and private healthcare, food systems, education, and employment. The CHSR&D undertook several research projects that investigated 1) the effects of the pandemic on post-traumatic stress and the coping strategies of nurses, 2) the vaccine literacy and uptake of adult South Africans, 3) the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable families, 4) the impact of the pandemic on essential health services, 5) the impact of COVID-19 and sustainability governance in three mountain regions of the world; and 6) the need for changes to the social work curriculum in South Africa (and further afield in sub-Saharan Africa) to include disaster mental health training in order to achieve minimum competencies and value standards for social work services during communicable disease disasters.

### ***Psychological Well-being of Nurses in the Free State during COVID-19***

**Principal investigator:** Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS)

**Co-investigators:** Profs. Gladys Kigozi-Male and Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS)

Nurses are at the frontline of responses to epidemics as they care for infected patients. They also face exhaustion, difficult triage decisions, separation from families, stigma, and the pain of losing patients and colleagues, in addition to their own risk of infection. This study aimed to determine nurses' psychosocial well-being and coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses were invited to complete an online survey made available via a data-free link on 5 December 2020. Adverts were placed on multiple platforms, including mainstream media (radio) and social media platforms (Facebook) as well as on the official communication channels of the FSDoH. The study found that 44% of nurses experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which was comparatively higher than their counterparts in other countries. A lack of preparedness to manage COVID-19 patients, poorer health and avoidance coping mechanisms were associated with increased PTSD in nurses. Some intervention strategies recommended by nurses included the following: emotional, psychological and debriefing sessions; positive and open communication between managers and their subordinates; psychological support through the Employee Assistance Programme and occupational health units; and an uninterrupted supply of quality personal protective equipment. The findings of this project were shared with the FSDoH.



**Funder:** CHSR&D

**Publication:** Engelbrecht MC, Heunis JC & Kigozi, NG. 2021. Post-traumatic stress and coping strategies of South African nurses during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18, 7919. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18157919>

## COVID-19 Vaccine Literacy and Acceptability in South Africa

### Principal investigator:

Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS)

### Co-investigators:

Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male and Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS)

Vaccine literacy emanates from health literacy, defined as the “degree to which people have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health decisions.” This study aimed to determine people’s abilities to collect and understand information about vaccinations to make an informed decision when choosing whether to have the COVID-19 vaccine. An online survey advertised on social media, including Facebook and the Moya Application, was conducted among the adult population in South Africa in September 2021 and included 10 466 respondents. Approximately 60% of respondents were not vaccinated. An overall profile of unvaccinated persons indicated the following groups: more women than men; younger people (18–34 years); less educated people; unemployed, part-time employed and students; and vaccine illiterate persons. Approximately 30% of unvaccinated persons were unsure if they would vaccinate in the future, and 16% indicated they would definitely not. The main reasons for not vaccinating or being unsure included: concerns about the side effects; the belief that vaccines had been developed too rapidly; the desire to obtain natural immunity; fear of needles; questioning whether vaccines are effective; and being against vaccines in general. Most people had heard about COVID-19 vaccines via social media, television or radio. These findings highlighted the importance of vaccine literacy and suggested that when advertising COVID-19 vaccines, there should be a concerted focus on women, younger people, less educated people, the unemployed, part-time employees and students. People need access to accurate information from reputable sources that address concerns about the side effects of COVID-19 vaccines. They need to know how the vaccines were developed and why it was possible to develop vaccines so quickly. Also, they need to be made aware of the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines.



**Funder:** CHSR&D

### Publications:

- **Engelbrecht M, Heunis C & Kigozi G. 2022.** COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in South Africa: Lessons for future pandemics. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19, 6694. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19116694>
- **Engelbrecht MC, Kigozi NG & Heunis JC. 2022.** Factors associated with limited vaccine literacy: Lessons Learnt from COVID-19. *Vaccines*, 10, 865. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines10060865>



## **Health and Well-being of Vulnerable Families during COVID-19: A Socio-Ecological Perspective**

**Principal investigator:** Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS)

**Co-investigators:** Profs. Gladys Kigozi-Male and Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS); Dr Merlene Esau (Department of Social Work, UFS); Prof. Marianne Reid (School of Nursing, UFS); Dr Alice Ncube (Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa [DiMTEC], UFS); and Mrs Alfi Moolman (Directorate Community Engagement, UFS)



Research on family health and well-being during COVID-19 is limited. Families have been confronted with several challenges due to lockdown measures and the consequences thereof, including loss of income and/or jobs, loss of community and freedom of movement, and disruptions in education and difficulties associated with online learning. Past pandemics have taught us that the needs of families cannot be ignored. Therefore, this study aimed to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health and well-being of vulnerable families in Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. A cross-sectional survey was undertaken from October 2021 to February 2022. Respondents were recruited in collaboration with three civil society organisations providing welfare services in the study area. Above-average scores were reported by approximately half of the respondents for stress from children/partner and stress related to financial issues. Fear of COVID-19, feeling depressed, COVID-19's impact on daily life, lower education levels, being in a relationship and living together, and perceiving an increase in domestic violence were statistically significantly associated with above-average stress from children/partner. Age, the impact of COVID-19 on daily life, being in a relationship and living with a husband/partner, and running out of food during the past 30 days were statistically significantly associated with above-average stress from finances.

**Funder:** UFS Interdisciplinary Grant



## ***Impact of COVID-19 on Essential Health Services and Treatment Outcomes in the Free State: A Retrospective Record Review***

**Principal investigators:** Dr Michel Muteba (World Health Organization [WHO]); Prof. JC Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS) and Dr Perpetual Chikobvu (Information Management and Research Directorate, FSDoH and Department of Community Health, UFS)

**Sub-investigators:** Mr Bandile Ntombela (Information and Communication Technology, FSDoH); Profs. Gladys Kigozi-Male and Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS); Drs Busisiwe Msimang and Patrick Ramadan (WHO); and Mr XiaoLei Song (Institute of Health Programs and Systems and DATCOV Team).



Commissioned by the FSDoH, the retrospective record review had three objectives: to analyse, report and advise on COVID-19's impact on essential health services, mortality in hospital-admitted patients, and outcomes in patients with a history of TB from January 2019 to April 2022.

Preliminary findings indicated, on the negative side, significant declines in PHC utilisation and the number of antiretroviral treatment-naïve patients starting treatment.

COVID-19 patients of older age and ICU admissions had prolonged hospitalisations and required intensive care and additional resources to stabilise.

On the positive side, BCG coverage significantly increased, and unreferral outpatient department (OPD) visits significantly declined. These findings contrarily indicated both fragility and resilience in essential health service delivery by the public health providers in the Free State.





## ***The Impact of COVID-19 and Sustainability Governance in Three Mountains Regions of the World – An Intercontinental Comparison***

**Principal investigator (South Africa):** Prof. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS)

**Collaborating authors:** Ms Sofia Panchi Robles (United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security [UNU-EHS], Bonn, Germany); Dr Fernando Barragán-Ochoa (Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales [IAEN], Quito, Ecuador); Prof. Abdullah Omar (Yassen Erbil Technical Administration College, Erbil Polytechnic University, Kurdistan Region of Iraq); Prof. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS); Dr Alice Ncube (Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa [DiMTEC], UFS), Prof. Andrea Membretti (Eurac Research, Bolzano, Italy); and Prof. Jörg Szarzynski (UNU-EHS, Bonn, Germany)

Prof. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS) and Dr Alice Ncube (DiMTEC, UFS) participated in the writing of a collaborative paper titled “The Impact of COVID-19 and Sustainability Governance in Three Different Mountains Regions of the World – An Intercontinental Comparison”.

Rural mountain communities generally have high indicators of structural vulnerability, such as high poverty rates, lack of basic services, high rates of informal and unpaid employment, weak access to education and health systems, lack of proper settlement planning, ageing demographic structures, and low connectivity. Also, people who migrated to urban centres before COVID-19 often settled in areas that were/are more susceptible to the effects of the crisis, forcing them (or they chose to) return to their rural homelands. In this context, the COVID-19 pandemic has reconfigured the dynamics of these spaces by deepening specific structural weaknesses and generating various opportunities based on collective governance structures, food production systems, and livelihoods, solidarity, local and local and indigenous knowledge. From a comparative perspective, this document gathers voices from around the world on the impact of COVID-19 in various mountain regions. Ecuadorian Andes, South Africa, and Kurdistan case studies are analysed. Research conducted in the South African leg of the study focused on the Maluti-Drakensburg and Phuthaditjhaba, where a wide range of social and healthcare inequalities and inequities arose from the bantustan or homeland (social engineering) system in the country.



The paper will be published in the book *Safeguarding Mountain Social-Ecological Systems. A Global Challenge: Facing Emerging Risks, Adapting to Changing Environments and Building Transformative Resilience in Mountain Regions Worldwide*, 1st Edition – March 1, 2023. The editors are Dr Stefan Schneiderbauer (Global Mountain Safeguard Research (GLOMOS) Programme, UNU-EHS), Paola Fontanella Pisa (GLOMOS, UNU-EHS), Prof. John Shroder (Geography and Geology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in the United States of America), and Prof. Jörg Szarzynski (UNU-EHS).

**For more information, visit** <https://www.elsevier.com/books/safeguarding-mountain-social-ecological-systems/schneiderbauer/978-0-12-822095-5>.



## ***Routledge Handbook Chapter-in-writing – Social Worker Role-taking during Communicable Disease Outbreaks in South Africa: The Need for Disaster Management Training***

**First author:** Prof. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS)

**Collaborating authors:** Dr Alice Ncube (DiMTEC, UFS) and Ms Mariëtte Joubert (Department of Social Work, UFS)

From being a voluntary job caring for the poor in late 19th century Europe and North America, social work has evolved into an occupation and, of late, a profession. Professional social work demands operating within a multi-stakeholder system, rendering psychosocial services to vulnerable populations in a coordinated manner.

The South African Council for Social Service Professions indicates that social workers are ethically obliged to assist during public emergencies. However, these professionals mostly lack knowledge on how to render adequate mental health services to vulnerable groups and frontline responders during communicable disease disasters. Declared a disaster globally and nationally, the COVID-19 pandemic is a poignant case in point. Although the undergraduate social work curriculum in South Africa includes training on primary social work methods, no local university offers training in disaster management or communicable disease disaster management specifically. This chapter-in-writing for the ***Routledge Handbook African Social Work Education*** to be published in 2023 attempts to integrate knowledge from the disaster management and social work disciplines to highlight the gaps between legislation, policies, guidelines, training, and practice. The chapter advocates for changes to the social work curriculum to include disaster mental health training. It also provides a checklist for minimum competencies and value standards for social work services during communicable disease disasters.

## **MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH**

Maternal and neonatal health is important for both healthy development and social and economic development. In 2015, approximately 830 women worldwide died daily due to complications of pregnancy and childbirth. The majority of these deaths occurred in low-resource settings, most of which could have been prevented. The risk of a woman in a developing country dying from maternal-related causes during her lifetime is 33 times higher than in a developed country.

### ***Adapting an Evidence-based Intervention for Sesotho-speaking Couples to Promote Male Engagement in Maternal and Neonatal Health***

**Principal Investigator:** Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS)

**Co-investigators:** Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male, Dr Ngwi Mulu and Prof. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS), Prof. Kobus Marais (Department of Linguistics and Language Practice, UFS), Prof. Jessica Sales (Rollins

School of Public Health, Emory University) and Dr Wessel van den Berg (Equimundo, Sonke Gender Justice)

Potential benefits of involving men in maternal and neonatal health care include the following: improvements in maternal health outcomes when a male partner supports and encourages women to attend pre- and post-natal visits; increased use of family planning services; benefits for newborn health and child development; and increased male exposure to the health care system. Given the absence of a gender and culturally-sensitive intervention specifically designed to encourage Sesotho-speaking men to become constructively engaged in maternal and neonatal health, the project seeks to adapt an existing evidence-based intervention (Program P) to encourage constructive male engagement in maternal and neonatal health. Program P is an intervention that provides concrete strategies for engaging men in active caregiving from their partner's pregnancy through their child's early years.

This three-year, multi-phase project commenced in 2022 with a situational analysis to assess the maternal and neonatal health practices and needs of Sesotho-speaking families residing in previous 'township' areas in the Free State Province and their preferences for intervention content and delivery. Activities undertaken in this regard included:

- A survey among 450 fathers and 450 mothers with children younger than six.
- A survey among 100 PHC workers providing maternal and child health care.
- Eight focus group discussions with men (15-59 years) and eight with women (15-49 years) of reproductive age.
- Eight community discussions with male leaders in the community (e.g., traditional leaders, traditional healers, ward counsellors, and religious leaders).
- Interviews with Sonke Gender Justice facilitators and public healthcare managers.

Data analysis is currently underway and will inform the first round of modifications to Program P.

**Funder:** National Research Foundation





## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

Two ongoing health systems strengthening projects in collaboration with the Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA) and FSDoH commenced in late- 2022.

### *State of Public Service Delivery: A Citizen-Centred Assessment*

**Principal Investigator:** Mr Ismael Davids (Productivity and Capability Measurement Directorate, Department of Public Service and Administration [DPSA])

**Collaborating researchers:** Dr Perpetual Chikobvu (Information Management and Research Directorate, FSDoH and Department of Community Health, UFS); Prof. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS); Mr M Tshiguvho (Productivity and Capability Measurement Directorate, DPSA); Dr R Nathan (Universitas Hospital, FSDoH); Dr Claire Armour (School of Clinical Medicine, UFS); Dr B Malakoane (Department of Community Health, UFS); Ms Moroesi Litheko, Mr Tumelo Sebeela and Mr Loyiso Gwantshu (Research Unit, FSDoH); Mr Bakang Oliphant, Ms Lerato Madliki and Mrs Mafumane Malahleha (Strategic Planning & Policy Directorate, FSDoH); Ms Corne Schoeman (Limpopo Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs [COGTA])

This research study aims to assess the state of public service delivery in terms of five dimensions: citizen-centredness; organisational capability and productivity; accessibility management; service delivery improvement performance; and operations management. Five research objectives guide the research: 1) to define and analyse the macro service delivery environment; 2) to define and analyse the regulated service delivery improvement mechanisms (norms) introduced since democratisation and the protocols (agreements) for service delivery improvement; 3) to assess whether regulated service delivery improvement mechanisms have meaningfully contributed to service delivery improvement in targeted sectors based on: (a) an analysis of data from selected national and provincial departments; and (b) citizen feedback via citizen forums/civil society organisations; 4) to establish a baseline for the measurement of public service delivery; and 5) to make recommendations regarding (a) the efficacy (appropriateness and value-add) of service delivery improvement mechanisms; and (b) measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in targeted sectors. The study design is a mixed-method cross-sectional study consisting of an electronic survey, unstructured interviews, and a document review.

**Funder:** Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)



## **Health Research Priorities for the Free State Department of Health and Research Community: An Exploratory Study**

### **Principal Investigator:**

Dr Deidre Van Jaarsveldt  
(School of Nursing, UFS)

### **Collaborating researchers:**

Prof. Christo Heunis and Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D, UFS); Dr Perpetual Chikobvu (Information Management and Research Directorate, FSDoH and Department of Community Health, UFS); Moroosi Litheko (Research Unit, FSDoH); Loyiso Gwantshu (Research Unit, FSDoH); and Tumelo Sebeela (Research Unit, FSDoH)



According to the White Paper on Health Transformation of the Department of Health (DoH) (1997), a research agenda should be developed to address the country's major health problems. This process must involve scientists, decision-makers, and population representatives as equal, inclusive partners. Section 5 of the Essential National Health Research Strategy states that "the process of setting priorities should be all-inclusive and allow all role-players jointly to determine the agenda. The major role-players are community researchers and health service providers."

Flowing from the constructivist paradigm, a qualitative research approach was adopted. Following this approach, researchers seek to understand the research phenomenon from various perspectives and experiences. Considering the three pillars of 'process', 'tool' and 'context' identified by the NDoH in the National Health Research Strategy (2021-2024), an exploratory, descriptive, contextual research design was applied. The research phenomenon was explored and described by including the voices of a wide range of stakeholders in health research in the Free State Province. Data were collected using the Nominal Group Technique, which was deemed suitable to identify and prioritise health research areas for the FSDoH and the research community. In order of importance, the identified research priority areas were as follows: 1) Strengthening surveillance; 2) Disease management; 3) eHealth/Digital health; 4) Healthcare service delivery; 5) Governance and leadership; 6) Burden of violence and injury; 7) Human resources for health; 8) Effects of COVID-19; 9) Resources; 10) Burden of disease; 11) National Health Insurance (NHI); 12) Collaboration; 13) Defaulting; 14) Patient experience; 15) Pandemic preparedness and response; 16) Health and wellness of staff; 17) Trauma, rehabilitative and palliative care systems; 16) Community education and engagement; 17) Other; and 18) Child health. These research priorities have been communicated to the MEC and the NHRC.

# STUDENTS

The Centre contributes to postgraduate teaching and learning through the Masters of Health Systems Studies (MHSysStud) programme. In addition to the MHSysStud programme, the CHSR&D staff also provide postgraduate supervision for Honours students in Psychology and Masters and PhD students in Psychology, Development Studies, Community Health, Health Professions Education, Nursing and Disaster Management.

## MASTERS OF HEALTH SYSTEMS STUDIES

This specialist degree integrates theory with in-depth knowledge of health systems. Students identify a health/health systems issue and address it via research. Where feasible, students can base their Master's research on CHSR&D's ongoing research projects. Studying side-by-side with experienced health systems researchers on a 'real-life' research project is a very valuable form of mentorship. It positively impacts students' dissertations/articles, as well as their practical research skills and experience. This specialist degree integrates theory with in-depth knowledge of health systems. There is no coursework option, but throughout their study, students attend non-credit-bearing Master's classes in health systems and research methodology.

Visit our website (<https://www.ufs.ac.za/humanities/departments-and-divisions/centre-for-healthsystems-research-development-home>) for more information about us, our projects, and the MHSysStud Programme.

### Current MHSysStud Students

- **Chauke N. 2021. *Addressing challenges and impediments to accessing HIV testing services in Orange Farm, Johannesburg: Patient and provider perspectives*.** MHSysStud. Faculty of The Humanities. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Profs. Gladys Kigozi-Male and Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS).
- **Harkers D. 2022. *Accessibility of mental healthcare services to members of the LGBTQI+ Community in rural South Africa*.** MHSysStud. Faculty of The Humanities. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht and Dr Ngwi Mulu (CHSR&D, UFS).
- **Leinaeng-Tsatsi F. 2022. *The psychosocial care of children diagnosed with disorders of sexual development: Experiences of clinical personnel, parental care and stakeholders*.** MHSysStud. Faculty of The Humanities. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Dr André Janse van Rensburg (Centre for Rural Health, University of KwaZulu-Natal and Prof. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS).
- **Mahlatse MN. 2021. *Exploring the experiences of unsafe sexual behaviours among students at higher institutions in South Africa*.** MHSysStud. Faculty of The Humanities. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Profs. Christo Heunis and Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D, UFS).
- **Phahladira K. 2021. *COVID-19 infection prevention and control practices of nurses at district hospitals in Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, Free State Province*.** MHSysStud. Faculty of The Humanities. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Profs. Michelle Engelbrecht and Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D, UFS).

## POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION IN OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND FACULTIES

### Supervision

- **Cloete M. 2022. *Depression and personal quality of life of nurses in a rural district of the Northern Cape, South***

**Africa.** Master of Social Science in Nursing. School of Nursing. Faculty of Health Sciences. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS) and Dr Lebuile Mogakwe (School of Nursing, UFS).

- **Johnston HM. 2022. Predictors of external TB and HIV/AIDS stigma among healthcare workers in the Free State Province, South Africa.** Master of Social Science in Clinical Psychology. Department of Psychology. Faculty of The Humanities. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisor: Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS).
- **Jansen van Vuuren JJ. 2021. Internship for South African post-qualification emergency care practitioners. PhD in Health Professions Education.** Division of Health Sciences Education, Faculty of Health Sciences. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Dr René Botha (Office of the Dean: Health Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, UFS) and Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS).
- **Nako E. 2020. The capabilities of male migrant miners in preventing and managing HIV: A Lesotho case study.** PhD in Development Studies. Centre for Development Support, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Profs. Lochner Marais (Centre for Development Support, UFS) and Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS).
- **Tapera L. 2022. A framework for healthcare workers to engage men in maternal and neonatal health care.** PhD in Development Studies. Centre for Development Support, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Profs. Michelle Engelbrecht and Gladys Kigozi-Male and Dr Ngwi Mulu (CHSR&D, UFS).
- **Joubert MM. 2020. Development of a guiding framework to mitigate mental health and psychosocial ramifications during disasters based on a case study of the social work response to COVID-19 in a metropolitan area of South Africa.** PhD in Disaster Management. Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa (DiMTEC). Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Dr Alice Ncube (DiMTEC, UFS), Prof. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS) and Prof. Jörg Szarzynski (UNU-EHS, Germany).
- **Maposa A. 2021. Understanding risk and protective factors: A primer to the development of empowerment programmes for sexually abused children in Gweru District, Zimbabwe.** PhD in Psychology. Department of Psychology, Faculty of The Humanities, UFS. Supervisors: Profs. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS) and Stephen Walker (Department of Psychology, UFS).

## Graduated

- **Malakoane B. 2022. The Health Systems Governance and Accountability model for health service integration and performance improvement in the Free State. Faculty of Health Sciences.** Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Prof. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS), Dr Perpetual Chikobvu (Information Management and Research Directorate, FSDoH and Department of Community Health, UFS), Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D, UFS) and Prof. Willem Kruger (Department of Community Health, UFS).
- **Palmer E. 2022. Early infant male circumcision in South Africa.** PhD in Development Studies. Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Profs.



**Dr Benny Malakoane, PhD in  
Community Health graduation,  
13 December 2022.**



**Dr Ernest Peresu, PhD in  
Development Studies graduation,  
13 December 2021**

Lochner Marais (Centre for Development Support, UFS) and Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS).

- **Peresu E. 2021. *Community-based MDR-TB management in the Shiselweni region of Swaziland: Assessment of task-shifting to community treatment supporters*.** PhD in Development Studies. Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Profs. Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS), Diana De Graeve (Economics Department, University of Antwerp, Belgium) and Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D, UFS).
- **Potgieter B. 2021. *Stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue of undergraduate nursing students at a public university during the COVID-19 pandemic*.** Master of Social Science in Nursing. Faculty of Health Sciences. Bloemfontein: UFS. Supervisors: Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS) and Dr Marisa Wilke (School of Nursing, UFS).

## INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

CHSR&D staff served on different UFS faculty committees and boards:

- Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht served as Chairperson of the **Scientific Committee for the Social Sciences**, was a member of the **Humanities Research Committee** and was a reviewer for the **General Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC)**.
- Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male represented the Faculty of the Humanities on the **Faculty Board of the Faculty of Health Sciences**.
- Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male was part of the planning team for **Towards UFS Vision 130**.
- Ms Bridget Smit served on the **Employment Equity Committee**.

## ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

### Editorship

Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht is an associate editor for the **African Journal of AIDS Research (AJAR)**. AJAR is a peer-reviewed research journal publishing papers that contribute to understanding the social dimensions of HIV/AIDS in African contexts. AJAR includes articles from disciplines such as sociology, demography, epidemiology,



social geography, economics, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, health communication, media, cultural studies, public health, education, nursing science and social work. Papers relating to impact, care, prevention and social planning, as well as articles covering social theory and the history and politics of HIV/AIDS, are considered for publication.

Visit <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajar> for more information.

## Inter-institutional collaboration

Profs. Christo Heunis and Michelle Engelbrecht participated in the **National Health Policy and Systems Research (HPSR) collective** led by Prof. Lucy Gilson, University of Cape Town, with a national membership. The HPSR collective seeks to offer data, evidence and ideas to support health system renewal. The HPSR collective brings multiple perspectives to bear on health system questions. It is an activist research field founded on a commitment to support societal and health system change for social justice. It offers a critical appraisal of the health system's strengths and weaknesses, seeks to hold powerful actors to account, and contributes to supporting necessary system change. It recognises the power of ideas to shed new light on old problems, frame and support change, and engage with the practice of change. The HPSR collective's work of analysis and evaluation encompasses research that 1) describes and understands system-level functioning and performance to highlight areas for health system strengthening; 2) analyses what drives health system challenges and generates ideas about how to address them; 3) investigates why policy implementation processes break down and how these processes can be strengthened; 4) assesses how system-level interventions work towards impacts (or not); and, 5) supports interventions to strengthen health systems. The HPSR collective recognises that the health system is nested in the wider community and social systems and works across the community, district, provincial and national levels.

## WEBINARS

The CHSR&D presented four webinars involving eminent academic speakers in 2021.

### *Investing in the Health Workforce for Universal Health Coverage: South Africa's 2030 Human Resources for Health Strategy*

**Prof. Laetitia Rispel, Public Health, Wits University,  
31 March 2021**

**CENTRE FOR HEALTH SYSTEMS  
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT**  
Investing in the health workforce for Universal Health  
Coverage: South Africa's 2030 Human Resources for  
Health Strategy

**WEBINAR SERIES**  
Speaker: Prof Laetitia Rispel  
Date: 31 March 2021  
Time: 13:00 – 14:00  
RSVP: [bjacobs@ufs.ac.za](mailto:bjacobs@ufs.ac.za)  
[Click here to join the meeting](#)



Professor Laetitia Rispel holds a South African Research Chair, entitled Research on the Health Workforce for Equity and Quality and is Professor of Public Health at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. She formerly served as Head of the Wits School of Public Health (2012–2017) and Head of the Gauteng Department of Health (2001–2006). Her research spans human resources for health, quality of care, performance of the health care system; and the intersection of these with the social determinants of health. She chaired the recent Ministerial Task Team responsible for the development of the 2030 National Human Resources for Health Strategy.

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RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT



## CENTRE FOR HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Society exposed by a pandemic

### WEBINAR SERIES

Speaker: Dr Cloete Jansen van Vuuren

Date: 13 April 2021

Time: 13:00 – 14:00

RSVP: [bjacobs@ufs.ac.za](mailto:bjacobs@ufs.ac.za)

[Click here to join the meeting](#)



Dr Cloete Jansen van Vuuren, is head of the Department of Internal Medicine at 3 Military Hospital and an associated lecturer in Infectious Diseases at the Department of Internal Medicine, UFS. He was involved with the inception of the roll-out of the HIV treatment programme in the Free State. He is one of the infectious disease specialists in the Free State battling at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## Dilemmas regarding Maternal MDR/RR-TB and Breastfeeding: Protecting the Mother and Baby

*Dr Marian Loveday, South African Medical Research Council, 11 May 2021*

## Society Exposed by a Pandemic

*Dr Cloete Jansen van Vuuren, Department of Internal Medicine at 3 Military Hospital, 13 April 2021*



## CENTRE FOR HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Dilemmas regarding maternal MDR/RR-TB and breastfeeding: protecting the mother and baby

### WEBINAR SERIES

Speaker: Marian Loveday

Date: 11 May 2021

Time: 13:00 – 14:00 RSVP:

[bjacobs@ufs.ac.za](mailto:bjacobs@ufs.ac.za)

[Click here to join the meeting](#)



Marian Loveday is a specialist scientist in the Health Systems Research Unit at South African Medical Research Council. Her work focuses on TB, drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) and health systems research. Her research over the last eight years has focussed on evaluating different models of care for DR-TB patients across South Africa and how health systems performance impacts on programme performance. This work has included documenting the experiences of patients with DR-TB, the caregivers of children with DR-TB and health care worker experiences.

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## Using Systems Thinking Tools to analyse Complex Health Systems: A case study of Maternal Health Service Provision in OR Tambo District, Eastern Cape

*Dr Martina Lembani, University of the Western Cape, 13 October 2021*



## CENTRE FOR HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Using systems thinking tools to analyse complex health systems: A case study of maternal health service provision in OR Tambo District, Eastern Cape

### WEBINAR SERIES

Speaker: Martina Lembani

Date: 13 October 2021

Time: 13:00 – 14:00

RSVP: [bjacobs@ufs.ac.za](mailto:bjacobs@ufs.ac.za)

[Click here to join the meeting](#)



Dr Martina Lembani is a senior lecturer at the School of Public Health, University of the Western Cape. She has over 20 years of work experience in the areas of community development, research, monitoring and evaluation, HIV/AIDS, and rural livelihoods. Her current research interests include Health Systems Analysis using systems thinking tools and methodologies such as the group model building approach and causal loop diagrams to improve health systems performance, quality of health care, leadership development and Migration and Health.

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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Department of Health

CHSR&D staff served on the following committees:

- Prof. Christo Heunis served as a member of the **National Health Research Committee (NHRC)**. Established in terms of Section 69(1) of the National Health Act No. 61 of 2003, the NHRC is responsible for identifying health research priorities concerning the following: the burden of disease; the cost-effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing the burden of disease; the availability of human and institutional resources for the implementation of an intervention at the level closest to the affected communities; the health needs of vulnerable groups such as woman, older persons, children and persons with disabilities; and the health needs of communities. Prof Heunis also served on the NHRC's subcommittee on Research Translation.
- Prof. Christo Heunis served as vice-chairperson of the **Free State Provincial Health Research Committee (PHRC)**. The PHRC is responsible for the following: determining the areas of health research to be carried out in the province; ensuring that health research agendas and research resources focus on priority health problems; developing and advising the Member of the Executive Council on the application and implementation of an integrated provincial strategy for health research; and coordinating the research activities of public health authorities.
- Prof. Christo Heunis served as a delegate representing the Free State PHRC and the NHRC and as rapporteur for the Health Policy and Systems Session at the **National Research for Health Summit**, 22–23 November.
- Prof. Christo Heunis served as organising team member, abstract reviewer, presenter and track/session chair at the **10th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'COVID-19 and Beyond'** on 17 November 2022 and as organising team member, abstract reviewer, presenter, track/session chair and judge at the **9th Annual Free State Health Research Day on 'Health, Disease Management and Health Systems in COVID-19 Times'** on 4 November 2021.
- Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht served as a paper author and participant at the **10th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'COVID-19 and Beyond'** on 17 November 2022 and as an abstract reviewer and track/session chair at the **9th Annual Free State Health Research Day on 'Health, Disease Management and Health Systems in COVID-19 Times'** on 4 November 2021.
- Prof. Gladys Kigozi-Male served as an abstract reviewer, session chair and participant at the **10th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'COVID-19 and Beyond'** on 17 November 2022 and as an abstract reviewer, session chair, presenter and participant at the **9th Annual Free State Health Research Day on 'Health, Disease Management and Health Systems in COVID-19 Times'** on 4 November 2021.
- Dr Ngwi Mulu served as a presenter at the **10th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'COVID-19 and Beyond'** on 17 November 2022.

## Non-Governmental Organisation

Prof. Christo Heunis served as a board member of **Mosamaria Aids Ministry** in 2021 and as chairperson since 2022. Based in the Free State, Mosamaria is a non-profit organisation that seeks to: 1) eliminate stigma, empower through knowledge, and decrease the spread of HIV and TB through information, education and compassionate communication; 2) provide a network of care and support to as many people living with HIV and TB as possible; 3) provide a highly professional mobile and home-based HIV confidential counselling and testing service and



HIV self-screening; 4) promote homestead trench vegetable gardens to improve nutrition; 5) provide support to orphans and vulnerable children and their families; 6) work together with other organisations and churches with the same vision as Mosamaria; and, 7) advocate for better services for people living with HIV and TB.

## School

The CHSR&D donated 500 masks, made by BloemShelter, to Rekopane Primary School in Botshabelo (20 October 2021). This donation relates to the vaccine study, as the CHSR&D pledged to donate 100 masks for every 1 000 completed questionnaires, to a maximum of 500 masks. This took place at an official ceremony at the primary school, where we also encouraged children to wear masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

*From left to right: Mrs Alfi Moolman (Directorate for Community Engagement, UFS); Ms Sonja-Venter Botes (Bloemshelter); Ms Tina Moleko (Rekopane Primary School) and Prof. Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS), 20 October 2021*



## Media

- Engelbrecht M, Kigozi G & Heunis C. UFS donates masks to school. **Bloemfontein Courant**. 25 October 2021. <https://www.bloemfonteincourant.co.za/ufs-donates-masks-to-school/>
- Engelbrecht M, Kigozi G & Heunis C. Analysis. Complexities of vaccine hesitancy. **News24**. 15 December 2021. URL: <https://www.news24.com/news24/analysis/analysis-michelle-engelbrecht-gladys-kigozi-christo-heunis-complexities-of-vaccine-hesitancy-20211215>
- Engelbrecht M, Kigozi G & Heunis C. Vaccine literacy vital. **Netwerk24**. 10 February 2022. URL: <https://www.netwerk24.com/netwerk24/za/bloemnuus/nuus/vaccine-literacy-vital-20220209-3>
- Engelbrecht M, Kigozi G & Heunis C. The COVID-19 Vaccine Literacy project's findings were also shared on the radio stations **Islam International** (19 December 2021) and **Channel Africa** (15 December 2021), as well as on the ENCA morning show (15 December 2021).



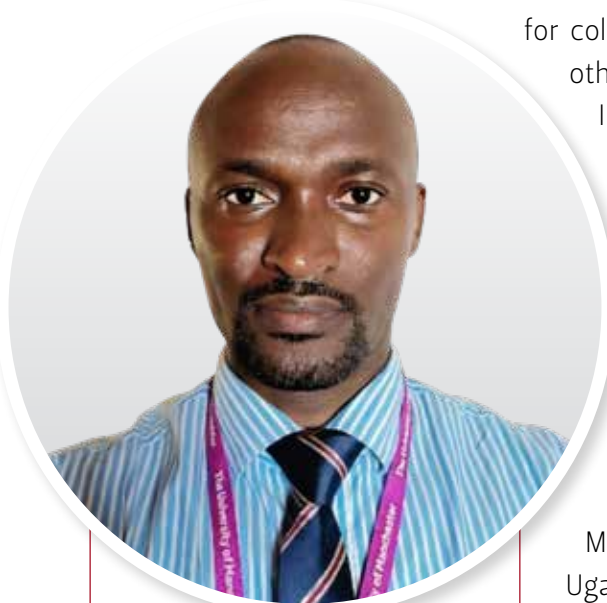
## VISITORS

Prof. Jörg Szarzynski (UNU-EHS) visited DiMTEC and the CHSR&D from 28 February to 8 March 2022 for collaboration on, among others, the project, The Impact of COVID-19 and Sustainability Governance in Three Mountains Regions of the World – An Intercontinental Comparison.



**Dr Jörg Szarzynski (UNU-EHS, Bonn, Germany)**

Dr Raymond Tweheyo (School of Public Health, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda) visited the CHSR&D in October 2022 as an institutional scholarly exchange for the collaborative project on mental health. On 12 October, he presented a webinar, Evaluating the 18-month pilot of the National Community Health Extension Worker Strategy in Uganda: The Nexus of Implementation Science and Health Systems Research.



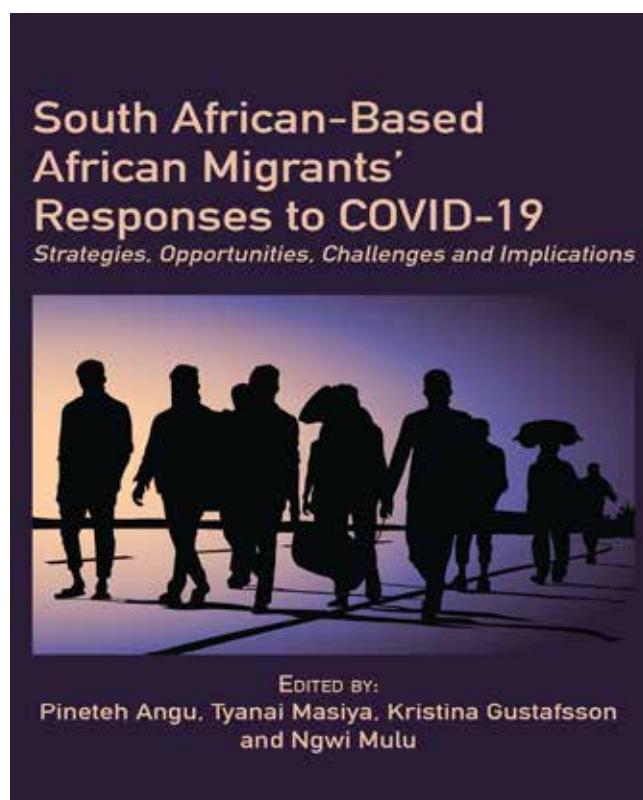
**Dr Raymond Tweheyo (School of Public Health, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda)**

## PUBLICATIONS

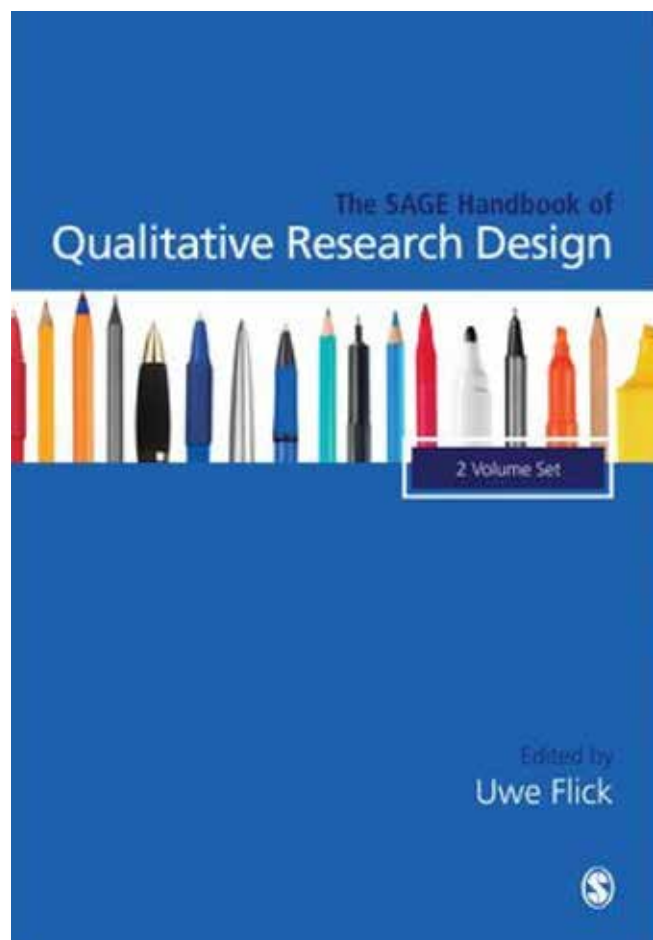
### Book

Angu P, Masiya T, Gustafsson K & Mulu N. 2022. **South African Based African Migrants' Responses to COVID-19: Strategies, Opportunities, Challenges and Implications**. Bamenda: Langaa Research & Publishing. ISBN-10:9956-552-44-5

This edited volume interrogates the intersection between viral pandemics, transnational migration and the politics of belonging in South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapters draw on theoretical conceptions such as biopolitics, necropolitics, xenophobia/afrophobia and autochthonous citizenship to understand how South Africa responded to the devastating effects of COVID-19 and the implications for the lives and livelihoods of



African migrants. The book is written against the backdrop of deepening socioeconomic and political problems in South Africa, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic, exclusionary response strategies employed by the government and populist discourses about the dangers of hosting an increasing population of African migrants. Drawing on the experiences of migrants from Cameroon, DRC, Nigeria, Somalia and Zimbabwe, this book explores the challenges of these diaspora communities during lockdowns, their survival strategies and



the effects on their social existence during and post the pandemic. These case studies remind us about the paradoxes of belonging and how COVID-19 continues to reveal different forms of global inequalities. We are also reminded about the burdens of displacement and emplacement and how they are repeatedly politicised in South Africa as the government grapples with endemic socioeconomic and political problems. The book's conclusion examines the implications of COVID-19 for migration across the African continent, particularly for South Africa, as we witness new waves of xenophobic/afrophobic vigilantism driven by Operation Dudula.

Available at <https://www.africanbookscollective.com/books/south-african-based-african-migrants-responses-to-covid-19>

## Chapter

Rau A & Coetzee JK. 2022. Designing for Narratives and Stories. In Flick U (ed.). **The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research Design**. London: SAGE Publications Ltd; pp 700–715. ISBN 9781526484321

## Accredited Journal Articles

- Engelbrecht MC. 2022. Construct validity and reliability of the perceived stress scale for nursing students in South Africa. **Curationis**, 45(1), a2276. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4102/curationis.v45i1.2276>
- Engelbrecht M, Heunis C & Kigozi G. 2022. COVID-19 Vaccine hesitancy in South Africa: Lessons for Future Pandemics. **International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health**, 19, 6694. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19116694>
- Engelbrecht MC, Kigozi NG & Heunis JC. 2022. Factors associated with limited vaccine literacy: Lessons learnt from COVID-19. **Vaccines**, 10, 865. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines10060865>
- Malakoane B, Heunis JC, Chikobvu P, Kigozi NG & Kruger WH. 2022. Improving public health sector service delivery in the Free State, South Africa: Development of a provincial intervention model. **BMC Health Services Research**, 22(1), 486. DOI: 10.1186/s12913-022-07777-x
- Palmer E, Marais L & Engelbrecht M. 2022. Parental decision-making in infant and child male circumcision: a case study in two townships in Gauteng, South Africa. **African Journal of AIDS Research**, 21, 1, 32–40, DOI: 10.2989/16085906.2022.2038645
- Peresu E, Heunis JC, Kigozi NG & De Graeve D. 2022. Knowledge, attitudes and practices of community

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- Wouters E, van Rensburg AJ, Engelbrecht M, Buffel V, Campbell L, Sommerland N, Rau A, Kigozi G, van Olmen J & Masquillier C. 2022. How the 'HIV/TB co-epidemic–HIV stigma–TB stigma' syndemic impacts on the use of occupational health services for TB in South African hospitals: a structural equation modelling analysis of the baseline data from the HaTSaH Study (cluster RCT). **BMJ Open**, 12, e045477. DOI: 10.1136/bmjopen-2020-045477
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## National Health Research Guideline

- National Health Research Committee – Ally M, Hawkrigde A, Naidoo P, Abrahamse H, Loots G, Mathee A, Young T, Gey van Pittius N, Tsoka-Gwegweni J, Heunis C, Matjila M, Moses M, Molefe M & Andrews G. 2022. **Health Research Priorities (Revised) for South Africa 2021–2024**. Pretoria: National Department of Health. <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/National-Health-Research-Priorities-2021-2024.pdf>



## National Health Research Strategy: Research Priorities For South Africa 2021–2024

### National Health Research Strategy: Research Priorities for SA 2021–2024

Compiled by the National Health Research Committee (NHRC), comprising: Maureen Coetzee (Chairperson); Mahmood Ally (Deputy Chairperson); Anthony Hawkrigde; Panjarasaam Naidoo; Glaudina Loots; Angela Mathee; Taryn Young; Nico Gey van Pittius; Joyce Tsoka-Gwegweni; Christo Heunis; Mushi Matjila; Heidi Abrahamse; Moses Mbewe; Mapitso Molefe and Gail Andrews. The NHRC was supported by the Secretariat, comprising: Thulile Zondi; Tshilidzi Muthivhi and Lesibana Malinga.

# PRESENTATIONS

- Joubert M, Heunis C & Ncube A. 2022. *Towards bridging policy-practice gaps: Evidence of neglect of vulnerable groups by social workers during COVID-19 in Mangaung.* **10th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'COVID-19 and Beyond.'** Bloemfontein: UFS and FSDoH, 17 November.
- Heunis C, Chikobvu P, Muteba M, Mushori P, Kigozi G, Fanampe B, Engelbrecht M, Modise M, Msimanga-Radebe B & Ntombela B. 2022. *COVID-19's impact on selected primary health care, HIV and TB services in the Free State Province.* **10th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'COVID-19 and Beyond.'** Bloemfontein: UFS and FSDoH, 17 November.
- Engelbrecht M, Heunis C & Kigozi G. 2022. *COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in South Africa: Lessons for future pandemics.* **10th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'COVID-19 and Beyond.'** Bloemfontein: UFS and FSDoH, 17 November.
- Mulu N. 2022 *COVID-19 and its effects on the lives and livelihoods of Congolese female asylum seekers and refugees in the city of Cape Town.* **10th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day Conference on 'COVID-19 and Beyond.'** Bloemfontein: UFS and Free State Department of Health, 17 November.
- Heunis C, Chikobvu P, Muteba M, Mushori P, Kigozi G, Fanampe B, Engelbrecht M, Modise M, Msimanga-Radebe B & Ntombela B. 2022. *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on essential health, tuberculosis and HIV services in the Free State Province, South Africa.* **Union World Conference on Lung Health on 'Combating pandemics – Today & Tomorrow.'** Virtual, 8–11 November.
- Heunis C, Joubert M & Ncube A. 2022. *Essential health and social work services to mitigate vulnerability during COVID-19 in the Free State, South Africa.* **Joint World Conference on 'Social Work Education and Social Development'** (SWESD). Seoul, South Korea, 26–28 October 2022
- Joubert M, Heunis C & Ncube A. 2022. *Towards bridging policy-practice gaps: Evidence of neglect of vulnerable groups by social workers during COVID-19 in Mangaung.* **Social Work Relevance during Times of Climate Change and Disasters: #KZN FLOODS. Colloquium.** Durban: Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI), 28–29 September 2022.
- Engelbrecht M, Heunis C & Kigozi G. 2021. *Post-traumatic stress and coping strategies of South African nurses during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.* **9th Annual Free State Health Research Day on 'Health, Disease Management and Health Systems in COVID-19 Times.'** Virtual, FSDoH and UFS, 4 November.
- Fanampe B, Kigozi G, Morigihlane M, Muteba M, Engelbrecht M, Modise M, Msimanga-Radebe B, Ntombela B, Heunis C, Chikobvu P & Mushori P. 2021. *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tuberculosis programme in the Free State Province, South Africa.* **9th Annual Free State Health Research Day on 'Health, Disease Management and Health Systems in COVID-19 Times.'** Virtual, FSDoH and UFS, 4 November.
- Heunis C, Chikobvu P, Kigozi G, Muteba M, Engelbrecht M, Modise M, Msimanga-Radebe B, Ntombela B & Mushori P. 2021. *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on essential health services in the Free State Province.* **9th Annual Free State Health Research Day on 'Health, Disease Management and Health Systems in COVID-19 Times.'** Virtual, FSDoH and UFS, 4 November.
- Kigozi G, Heunis C, Engelbrecht M, Tweheyo R, Janse van Rensburg A & Chikobvu P. 2021. *Undiagnosed depression among tuberculosis patients in the Matjhabeng Sub-district: A pilot study.* **9th Annual Free State Health Research Day on 'Health, Disease Management and Health Systems in COVID-19 Times.'** Virtual, FSDoH and UFS, 4 November.



- Muteba M, Kigozi G, Heunis C, Engelbrecht M, Modise M, Msimanga-Radebe B, Ramadan O, Ntombela B & Chikobvu P. 2021. *Factors associated with in-hospital mortality in patients admitted for COVID-19 in the Free State Province.* **9th Annual Free State Health Research Day on 'Health, Disease Management and Health Systems in COVID-19 Times.'** Virtual, FSDoH and UFS, 4 November.
- Kigozi G, Engelbrecht M, Janse van Rensburg A, Tweheyo R & Heunis C. 2021. *Nurses' attitudes towards mental health: research to inform the integration of mental health and tuberculosis services in a South African metropolitan.* **52nd World Conference on Lung Health on 'Lung Health For All: Solutions For a New Era.'** Virtual, 19-22 October.
- Kigozi G, Heunis C, Engelbrecht E, Tweheyo R, Janse van Rensburg, A & Chikobvu P. 2021. *Undiagnosed depression among new tuberculosis patients in Free State Province, South Africa.* **6th SA TB and COVID-19 Conference.** Virtual, 5-7 June.
- Heunis JC, Malakoane B, Ncube A & Joubert M. 2022. *Improving public health, social work and disaster management systems to mitigate vulnerabilities: the need for whole-system reform in the Free State, South Africa.* **MSc Programme on Global Health Risk Management & Hygiene Policies.** Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS), United Nations University. Virtual, 19 May.

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- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- University of the Free State (UFS)
- VLIR-UOS (Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad / Flemish Interuniversity Council)

# MASTER OF HEALTH SYSTEMS STUDIES

*The CHSR&D is in the Faculty of The Humanities at the University of the Free State.*

We generate and disseminate scientific knowledge on health and health systems and use this knowledge to promote health systems strengthening.

## Our main focus areas are:

- Studies of health policies, strategies and operational functioning
- Human resources for health and occupational health issues
- Health communication
- Priority programmes:
  - Tuberculosis (TB)
  - HIV & AIDS
  - TB-HIV co-epidemic
  - Sexual and reproductive health

## RESEARCH DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

### Study with us

*We offer a Master of Health Systems Studies (MHSysStud)*

This specialist degree integrates theory with indepth knowledge of health systems. Students will identify a health systems issue and address it via research. Where feasible, students will have the opportunity to base their Master's on our Centre's ongoing research projects. Studying side-by-side with experienced health systems researchers on a 'real-life' research project is a very valuable form of mentor-ship and should impact positively on your dissertations/articles, as well as students' practical research skills and experience.

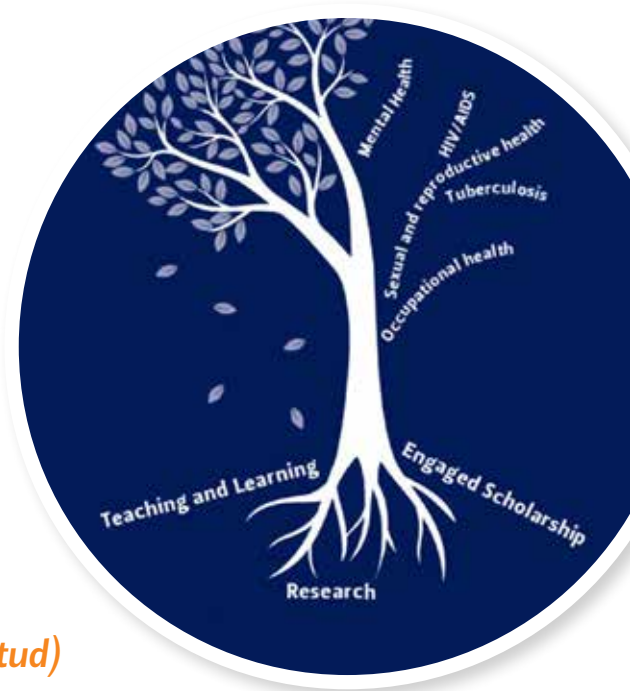
### Curriculum options

This specialist degree integrates theory with indepth knowledge of health systems. Students will identify a health/health systems issue and address it via research.

## There are 2 available options:

- Full dissertation, and
- At least two interrelated manuscripts that are publishable or published in accredited journals.

There is no coursework option but throughout their studies, students attend non-credit bearing Master Classes in health systems and research methodology



## Admission Requirements for the MHSysStud

**In addition to general rules in the Humanities Rule Book the following applies:**

- Students must have Exit Level 8 qualification (Honours, or a 4-year qualification) in any cognate discipline, achieved with a pass mark of at least 65%.
- Admission will be subject to a preliminary assessment by the CHSR&D Director.

**Applicants will also be subjected to a selection process based on the following:**

- 1 500-word concept note outlining a research idea;
- Panel interview; and
- Research methodology knowledge as demonstrated in an undergraduate or honours research report.

Selection will take place in November and December of the year prior to registration. Prospective students must apply before 31 August (international students) or 31 October (South African students) of the year preceding registration.

## Career Opportunities

The MHSysStud by dissertation programme will train health systems researchers for research careers in universities and other research institutions. Their health systems knowledge will also allow them to enter policy-focused organisations including advocacy organisations, the health care industry, government departments, non-governmental organisations and donor agencies. The proposed MHSysStud by dissertation programme will not lead to a general or mainstream social or medical degree, but to a specialised qualification depicting high-level scholarly understanding of the social (e.g. sociological, psychological, economic) and systems aspects of health and health care.

See our website for more info about us, our projects, and the MHSysStud Programme:

**<https://www.ufs.ac.za/humanities/departments-and-divisions/centre-for-healthsystems-research-development-home>**

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