



PRESS RELEASE

SAMRC's scientific excellence recognized by the NRF

22 October 2018 | Cape Town | Scientists at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) have received top honours from the National Research Foundation (NRF) for their leadership and excellence in science and research.

The SAMRC continues to support leading international and influential scientists in the area of health research and encourages its scientists engage in the NRF's competitive science rating system. The organisation has escalated from receiving nine NRF ratings in 2014 to 30 NRF ratings in 2017 showing its commitment to benchmarking the quality of SAMRC scientists against the finest in the world.

This year, SAMRC extramural Unit Director Professor Heather Zar received an A-rating for the second time for her internationally recognised research in Child & Adolescent Lung Health while eminent researcher Professor Robert Millar received his fifth A-rating. An A rating is awarded to a researcher who is unequivocally recognised by their peers as a leading international scholar in their field. "I am privileged to lead a team of such talented scientists, who continue to flourish in highly competitive research standards and fields and are internationally recognised," says President and CEO of the SAMRC Professor Glenda Gray who received, for the second time running, an A-rating for her leadership in conducting international game changing science in the area of HIV vaccine research.

Two scientists leading the SAMRC's UCT-based extramural research units received their first A ratings. Professor Keertan Dheda, Unit Director at the SAMRC/ UCT Centre for the Study of Antimicrobial Resistance received an A rating after a recent review of his excellent contributions to the field of pulmonology, while Unit Director at the SAMRC's Drug Discovery & Development Research Unit, Professor Kelly Chibale received, an A rating for his invaluable research contribution to the ongoing battle against malaria.



The NRF Awards celebrate leading researchers in their respective fields based on peer evaluation and according to international best practice. The work of these researchers is assessed for, among other things, their contribution to the field of study focusing on quality and impact.

SAMRC also supports leading researchers such as Professor Bavesh Bhana (B-rated) for his contribution to research on child and adolescent mental health and well-being, he has considerable international recognition by his peers for the high quality and impact of his research outputs.

Other scientists who received NRF C ratings for showing a sustained recent record of productivity in their respective fields include Deputy Director at the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Research Unit (ATODRU) Professor Neo Morojele; who already enjoys considerable international recognition for her high-quality recent research outputs in the field of substance use and related disorders. Biostatistics Research Unit Director Professor Samuel Manda; Specialist Scientist at the SAMRC's Health Systems' Research Unit Dr Natalie Leon and Senior Specialist Scientist at the SAMRC's Gender & Health Research Unit Dr Andrew Gibbs, also received C ratings for producing engaging bodies of quality work in their respective fields. Young and upcoming scientist at the Violence, Injury & Peace Research Unit Dr Naiema Taliep was also awarded a C rating.

According to the NRF, the ratings are aimed at inspiring and encouraging the continued culture of advancing South Africa's knowledge economy and technological innovation by rewarding those who make use of research for the advancement of humanity.

NOTE TO THE EDITOR:

For more information about SAMRC scientists in receipt of NRF- Ratings follow the SAMRC on Twitter: @MRCza OR <http://www.samrc.ac.za/sites/default/files/attachments/2018-10-22/MailGuardianNRF.pdf>

About the NRF Ratings: <http://www.nrf.ac.za/rating>

Queries: Keletso Ratsela | **Communications & Media Officer** | Email: kratsela@mrc.ac.za