

TUBERCULOSIS PLATFORM

CONTACT DETAILS



Prof Martie Van Der Walt, BSc (Agric); MSc (Agric) (Animal Health); MBA (Technology Management); PhD (Biotech)

Director

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Publications:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/myncbi/martha%20louiza.van%20der%20walt.1/bibliography/public/>

Professor van der Walt has led the SAMRC Pretoria TB Platform since 2007 and is an Extraordinary Professor in the Department of Medical Microbiology, University of Pretoria. She initially concentrated on animal health but since 1989 focussed on tuberculosis research. She has published on TB/HIV, drug-resistant tuberculosis, maternal TB and prevention of TB in health care settings. She is passionate about research translation, health promotion and introduction of new knowledge in policy and practice. She approaches her research from a health systems and patient perspective, aiming to offer comprehensive, patient-centred care and including technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution using Artificial Intelligence to increase universal health coverage.



Ms Emily Gomes,

Administration: Chief Officer

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Ms Gomes provides half day secretarial duties to Prof Martie van der Walt and TB Staff. She started at the SAMRC in 1989 as a Data Capturer.



**Ms. Tebogo Sole, M. Psych (Research)
Psychologist & Project Leader**

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Tebogo Sole-Moloto is a registered Research Psychologist with the HPCSA. Her master's degree was on "Women's fuel choices and fuel stacking practices in urban households: a narrative study" which she obtained in 2016. She has over 4 years' experience in conducting TB research at the SAMRC, she started as a Data Manager and currently CO-PI in two CDC TB research activities - 1) "*Understanding missed opportunities for anti-retroviral initiation and linkage to care of HIV- presumptive tuberculosis patients in South Africa*" and 2) "*Adherence to Tuberculosis Preventive Treatment (TPT) and determining reasons for non-adherence in South Africa*" that are ongoing. Prior to working at SAMRC, she worked in various organizations including academia (guest lecturing & community research), military psychological institute, media research and private consultancy. She is currently in her final year of PhD study at the University of Pretoria, the project is titled "Using a mobile health (mHealth) technology driven tool to support medication adherence schedules in newly diagnosed Tuberculosis (TB) patients". Ms Sole-Moloto's interests are on using mobile health technologies and applying psychological principles to understand medication adherence in the context of TB.



**Sikhethiwe Masuku, BCur (UNISA), MCur (UP), RN.
Project leader**

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Mrs Masuku has a master's degree in health sciences and in her final year of PhD studies. Her research interests are TB infection prevention and control. She has a broad background in health, with specific training and expertise in nursing management, multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and operational research. She has worked for the SAMRC since 2006 in various aspects of TB/HIV integration including the PMTC programme. Her M degree was titled "Protective wear on TB prevention: Knowledge and practices of healthcare personnel in Gauteng and her PhD is on "Creating a living document for tuberculosis infection prevention and control in health care settings in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa".



Dr Awelani Mutshembele, MSc (Microbiology); PhD (Zoology)
Specialist Scientist

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Dr Awelani Mutshembele is a South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)- TB Platform Specialist Scientist. Dr Mutshembele area of expertise lies in molecular biology techniques, epidemiology, genetic diversity and bioinformatics analysis of different organisms such as parasites, fungi, TB, HIV and COVID-19 and collaborating countries within BRICS. Dr Mutshembele also supervises, and mentors PhD, MSc, and undergraduate students registered in several Universities and the University of Technology in South Africa, Cameroon, and Ethiopia. Dr Mutshembele is a member of SAMRC Research Capacity Development (RCD) Committee, the SAMRC Early Investigator Programme Committee (EIPC), Organization for Women in Science in Developing World (OWSD), Exco member of Organization for Women in Science in South Africa National Chapter, an Early Career Researcher for Nature communication peer review mentoring programme, and National Research Foundation Grants Reviewer



Elisha Khoza,
Financial Administrator

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As Financial Administrator, Mr Khoza oversees all areas of budgeting, finance and administration. He oversees the Platform's contracts and grants acquisition and management. He provides strategic analysis for senior management to determine project viability and risk analyses. He is responsible for subcontracting to funders and liaise with funders and subcontractors.



Jeanette Brand, BSc
Chief Research Technologist

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Ms Brand is a BSc graduate from the Northwest University. She started her career at the SAMRC in 1984 as a Medical Technical Officer in the Tuberculosis Laboratory. She has 30 years' experience in TB bacteriology and oversees laboratory aspects of the TB Platform's research. She has co-authored many technical reports and publications and presented research findings at National and International Conferences.



Linda Olivier,
Research Assistant

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Ms Olivier joined the SAMRC in 2006 as a Data Capturer and provides managerial support to the Platform Director. She provides administrative support to projects and assists with field work.
