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Newsletter

The Centre for Medical Ethics and Law, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University highlights its activities from January 2022 to June 2022

During the first half of 2022, the Centre for Medical Ethics and Law implemented a hybrid format of teaching to adhere to COVID venue restrictions during this period. Undergraduate teaching and learning began with implementation of the new curriculum for 292 first-year medical students and was followed by a 3 week fifth-year Ethics module to 284 students. The Centre also graduated one of its ARESA PhD candidates and hosted the Inaugural Seminar on Research for Ethical Data Science in Southern Africa (REDSSA).

The prescribed ethics textbook for medical students, edited by Professor Keymanthri Moodley "Medical Ethics, Law and Human Rights: A South African Perspective" 2nd edition is being updated to a third edition. All doctoral candidates have been intensely engaged in their research in Uganda, Malawi, Botswana, Zambia, and South Africa. The Centre has participated in seminars, conferences, and discussions, some of which are highlighted below:

Prof Nikola Biller-Andorno's visit from the Institute of Biomedical Ethics and History of Medicine (IBME), University of Zurich, Switzerland
28 February 2022

Prof Biller-Andorno is a Professor and Director of the Institute of Biomedical Ethics and History of Medicine at the University of Zurich (UZH), Switzerland, a WHO Collaborating Centre for Bioethics. She leads the UZH Centre for Medical Humanities and the PhD program "Biomedical Ethics and Law". Biller-Andorno is a member of both the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences and the Swiss National Research Council and serves as Vice-President of the Clinical Ethics Committee of the University Hospital Zurich. During her visit to the Centre, she gave a presentation entitled 'Social listening for public health? An ethical exploration' Nikola began her talk with what she refers to as a "Pandemic of Rage" in European countries, which started with a protest by the anti-lockdown groups in the United Kingdom, becoming increasingly entangled with far-right groups on social media. Anti-vax groups also used the same fringe social media platforms. She discussed citizen science which is the active and voluntary participation of the public in research to decrease the spread of vaccine misinformation online and to identify potential communication strategies to be used by healthcare organisations. 'In crisis communication, we aim for something that works well and fast; however, to be **effective**, crisis communication needs to be built on **trust** resulting from **transparency and fairness**. We need to invest in our societies' health literacy continuously **and discourse skills**', said Prof Biller-Andorno.



Data Science Conference | 24 – 25 February 2022



Ms Nezerith Cengiz and Dr Aneeka Domingo attended a seminar hosted by the School for Data Science and Computational Thinking on the 24th and 25th of February 2022. It was titled "Development, Data Visualization and Research Communication" and focused on a project called RESEP (Research on Socio-Economic Policy). Talks included various speakers who demonstrated the advantages of the graphic representation of data. One talk titled "Data Visualization for SARS COV-2 Genomic Epidemiology" explored how to convey the scientific findings of genomic surveillance in "an efficient and acceptable manner".

Another talk titled "Big Data in History" detailed how the use of "microdata" or seemingly insignificant historical documents could be invaluable to historical research when there are no formal archives (usually only restricted to the powerful and privileged) available. The highlight of the conference was the presentations by the world-renowned international economist and researcher Max Roser, who founded "Our World in Data". The organization is a leading scientific online publication that focuses on large-scale global problems such as poverty, disease, hunger, climate change, war... etc. Of note, they publish a worldwide COVID-19 Vaccination Database and other significant COVID-19 data currently utilized by the World Health Organization and other popular publications such as the Financial Times and New York Times. The seminar was an informative and exciting venture into the application of Data Science and much enjoyed by the attendees.



ARESA PhD graduation | 5 April 2022



Prof Shenuka Singh graduated with her second doctorate in Clinical and Health Research Ethics on 5 April 2022. She is a full professor at the University of KwaZulu Natal and one of 7 PhD candidates in the ARESA Bioethics leadership program sponsored by the D43 NIH Fogarty training grant.

Her work focused on the ethical, legal and social issues (ELSI) of biobanking. Shenuka explored stakeholder perspectives on the ELSI of biobanking practice in South Africa and on educational needs via participatory action research. She then developed a short online course on the ELSI of biobanking. The candidate has published 4 of her research chapters in peer-reviewed international journals. The remaining 3 chapters are prepared for publication.

MBChB 1 new curriculum | 28 February – 11 March 2022

In March 2022, the Centre successfully presented the ethics module in a hybrid format, in person and via Microsoft Teams to first-year medical students under the renewed MBChB curriculum. The module was held over 2 weeks and comprised teaching by internal and invited lecturers. Assessment was via an electronic quiz on SUNLearn. At the end of the module, a successful feedback session with the students was facilitated by Dr Nair and Dr Obasa.

MBChB | 5 – 14 March – 1 April 2022



In March 2022, the Centre successfully presented the ethics module in a hybrid format via in person attendance and Microsoft Teams to 288 fifth-year medical students. The module was held over 3-weeks and comprised small group discussions, teaching by external and internal lecturers, student group work and presentations. Students completed their group assignment projects and gave an in-person presentation of their research findings to the examiners and the online audience. Both in-person and online audiences had an opportunity to pose questions to the presenting group. Examiners agreed that meaningful and relevant ethical dilemmas in healthcare were presented, and the students were able to apply their theoretical knowledge to practical ethical dilemmas in clinical care.

Medical Protection Society (MPS) student debate | 24 March 2022



The Centre for Medical Ethics and Law, in collaboration with the MPS and the Tygerberg Debating Union, hosted a robust Ethics Debate with the motion: 'This House Believes That Artificial Intelligence-Driven Health Care poses gender and ethics biases.'

Wade du Plessis and Clara-Marie Macheke (Tygerberg Debating Union Chairperson) adjudicated the debate. Connor Montague, Radiyah Mohammed, Naazim Nagdee, Sibulele Solilo, and Kayla Ritchie were the opposition team members. The proposition team members were Thimna Sotyato, RebaOne Methola, Katinka Sik, Shannen Samson, and Ntokozo Myexa. Both teams gave thought-provoking rhetoric regarding the retrospective and futuristic potential of health care being artificial intelligence driven.

Arguments around inherent biases in health care, AI's ability to perpetuate or eradicate biases, big data, access to AI-driven health care by minority groups were presented during the debate. The debate was awarded to the Opposition team for presenting a better analysis of the policies and mechanisms AI-driven health care offers to protect the most vulnerable minority groups who would best benefit from inherently unbiased AI health care.

Professor Moodley and Dr Behrman presented trophies and vouchers to the opposition team members. The debate was a hybrid event with regulated in-person attendance and was streamed LIVE on MS Teams. The virtual attendees comprised undergraduate and postgraduate students, academic staff, and health care practitioners.

Research for Ethical Data Science in Southern Africa (REDSSA)
Inaugural Seminar | 11-12 April 2022
and INFORM Africa Executive Steering Committee Meeting | 24 June 2022

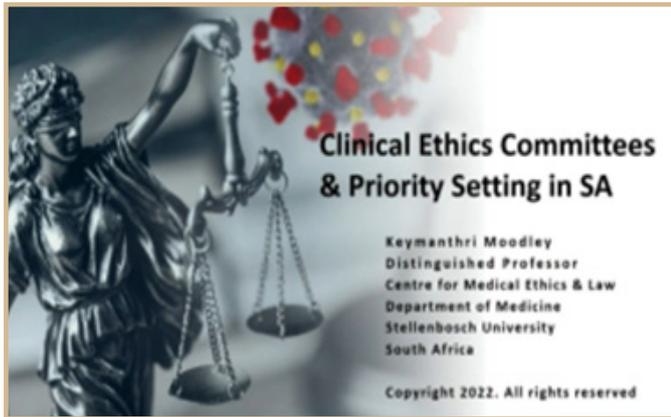


The Centre for Medical Ethics and Law is proud to host the **“Research for Ethical Data Science in sub-Saharan Southern Africa” (REDSSA)** project. This is an NIH funded ELSI project that works collaboratively with the DSI Africa Research Hub - INFORM Africa- to collectively promote data science innovation in Africa. Both projects have support from the South African and Nigerian governments.

The Executive Steering Committee meeting held on Zoom on 24 June 2022 chaired by Prof Alash'le Abimiko (PI of INFORM Africa) reflects the commitment of the SA Department of Health - Dr Nicholas Crisp, National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) – Prof Adrian Puren, National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) - Dr Gambo Aliyu and the Institute of Human Virology in Nigeria - Patrick Dakum. All PIs of INFORM Africa (Prof Vivek Naranbhai, Prof Tulio de Oliveira, Prof Manhattan Charurat and Prof Chengfen Xiong), PIs of REDSSA (Prof Keymanthri Moodley and Prof Stuart Rennie), Prof Salim Abdool-Karim (CAPRISA), NIH Scientific and Program Officers and industry partner AKROS (Anna Winters) met to achieve a shared understanding of these collaborative projects.

The inaugural seminar to launch the NIH-funded REDSSA (Research for Ethical Data Science in Southern Africa) project was held earlier this year in Stellenbosch, Cape Town. The seminar explored the ethical, legal and social implications (ELSI) of data science in healthcare in sub-Saharan Africa. For more information about the project, please visit the REDSSA website: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/healthsciences/cmel/redssa/Pages/default.aspx>

The 13th International Society for Priorities in Health Conference 2022



Professor Moodley was invited to be part of the panel discussion on the role of clinical ethics committees and ethics consultation in clinical priority settings – before, during (and after) COVID-19 at the priorities conference hosted by the University of Leuven, Belgium.



Strengthening Research Ethics Regional Conference | 24th – 26th May 2022



Prof Moodley gave a virtual keynote address at the Strengthening Research Ethics regional conference held at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya. The main purpose of this conference was to share experiences and lessons learnt with other Institutional Research Ethics Committees (IRECs) in East African countries. Also, to encourage best practices in research ethics oversight and enhance networking among Research Ethics Committees (RECs) in the region. The STReK project is funded by European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) and Prof Walter Jaoko, a graduate of CMEL is the PI.

The 7th World Conference on Research Integrity | 24th – 26th May 2022



Staff members and the doctoral candidates from the Centre for Medical Ethics and Law attended virtually or in person, the 7th World Conference on Research Integrity, which was held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 29 May – 1 June 2022. The conference's theme was **'Fostering Research Integrity in an Unequal World'**.

Publications: January – June 2022

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stassen W, Rambharose S, Wallis L, Moodley K. The acceptability of delayed consent for prehospital emergency care research in the Western Cape province of South Africa. PLOS ONE 2022 https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0262020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keymanthri Moodley. Vaccine inequity is unethical. Nature Human Behaviour 2022 https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-022-01295-w
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nair, G., Kabanda, S. M., Jacobs-Alfred, M. M., Obasa, A. E., McCaul, M. G., & Moodley, K. (2022). Electronic consent in a COVID-19 vaccine implementation trial in South Africa: Participant perspectives. South African Journal of Science, 118(5/6). https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2022/13048	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moodley, K. (2022). The ethics behind mandatory COVID-19 vaccination post-Omicron: The South African context. South African Journal of Science, 118(5/6). https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2022/13239

Upcoming Bioethics Conferences

- 16th World Congress of Bioethics International Association of Bioethics (IAB) Basel, Switzerland: 20 – 22 July 2022

A SMORGASBORD OF RESEARCH ETHICS EVENTS – 26 to 28 OCTOBER 2022!!!

- Research Ethics Committee Association of Southern Africa (REASA) bootcamp – 26 October 2022
- Advancing Research Ethics Training in Southern Africa (ARESA) seminar – 27 October 2022
- Research for Ethical Data Science in Southern Africa (REDSSA) seminar – 28 October 2022

Save the date

10th Annual ARESA Seminar (Cape Town, South Africa)

Conference Theme:
**Big Data and Artificial Intelligence
Challenges for RECs**

Date: 27 October 2022



ARESA
ADVANCING RESEARCH ETHICS
TRAINING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA