



The Centre for Medical Ethics and Law, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University highlights activities from July 2022 to December 2022

The second half of 2022 has been a rewarding and eventful period for CMEL, with a return to almost all activities being in person or in a hybrid format. It began with ARESA Bioethics Leadership Doctoral candidates and staff attending the 16th World Congress of Bioethics (WCB) held in Basel, Switzerland and culminating with attendance of staff at the Global Forum on Bioethics in Research in Cape Town. The 10th Annual Advancing Research Ethics training in Southern Africa (ARESA) seminar delivered in hybrid format was a huge success with complimentary feedback received from attendees. Post graduate teaching occurred in person at the Tygerberg campus and was attended by all current PhD candidates. Community engagement has been ongoing with staff making meaningful contributions to the health research ethics committee (REC) and clinical ethics committee (CEC) in addition to responding to queries received from health care professionals. More detail is provided in the following paragraphs.

## New appointment



Ms Qunita Brown completed her undergraduate studies (BA Degree) and postgraduate studies (Honours Psychology) and (Masters Research Psychology) (Cum Laude) at the University of the Western Cape. Ms Brown has a background working in research in the fields of crime and violence prevention, post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse. She currently serves as a research assistant on the Research for Ethical Data Science in Sub-Saharan Africa (REDSSA) project.

**Ms Qunita Brown**  
*Research Assistant:*

## 16th World Congress of Bioethics (WCB) Basel, Switzerland - 20-22 July 2022



### From the left:

Dr Emmanuel Obasa;  
Prof Stuart Rennie;  
Prof Shenuka Singh,  
Assoc Prof Victor Chalwe,  
Ms Nezerith Cengiz,  
Prof Keymanthri Moodley,  
Dr Lulu Nair and  
Dr Emmanuel Obasa

Staff and ARESA Bioethics Leadership Doctoral candidates represented CMEL at the conference by hosting a mini symposium entitled: **'The ethics of COVID-19 Vaccine distribution and roll-out: Africa playing catch-up?'** Topics presented sparked lively debate among both online and in person attendees. Topics included the following: **'Ethics of vaccine documentation for cross-border travel: implications for Africa'** – Assoc Prof Stuart Rennie; **'Vaccine Hesitancy in Uganda: A case for stronger community engagement'** – Assoc Prof Joseph Ochieng; **'Did science play a role in vaccine prioritization in South Africa?'** – Prof Shenuka Singh; **'Technology transfer to increase vaccine production in Botswana: A pipe dream?'** – Ms Boitumelo Mokgatla and **'Mandatory Vaccination'** – Prof Keymanthri Moodley. The session was chaired by Drs Nair and Obasa.

CMEL attendees provided meaningful contributions to a workshop hosted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) entitled: **'The ethics of artificial intelligence in image-based medicine.'** The presentations were very interesting and relevant to the work that is currently being undertaken by CMEL in the REDSSA project.

The conference presented an opportunity for networking, the topics covered were of relevance and presentations were delivered by experts in their respective fields. Several keynote addresses were presented.



## WHO Collaborating Centres in Bioethics Network Meetings in Zürich – 23 July 2022



*Delegates attending the World Health Organization (WHO) network meeting)*



**From the left:** Drs Emmanuel Obasa, Lulu Nair and Prof Keymanthri Moodley.

Other topics discussed included ethical and social issues related to mPox, Artificial Intelligence and Health Equity, Informed Consent, Bioethics in times of War, and Health Communication and Migrants. In addition, the centres also emphasised the need to have the guidelines translated into languages other than English.

Prof Moodley mentioned that WHO guidelines are sometimes too lengthy and should be shortened to make them user friendly. She suggested that the next meeting for the collaborating centres could be held after the 17th Annual International Conference on Clinical Ethics and Consultation (ICCEC 2023) in Rome, Italy.

Prof Moodley, Drs Nair and Obasa attended a hybrid WHO meeting held at the Center for Medical Humanities, WHO Collaborating Centre (CC) at the Universität Zürich in Switzerland. During this meeting, **Prof Nikola Biller-Andorno** (CC Institute of Biomedical Ethics (IBME), University of Zürich) was elected as chair for the next two years.

The collaborating centres' representatives explained their involvement in health governance in their countries/regions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The WHO outlined its work plan for 2022-2023 and invited collaboration from the various centres on critical priorities related to COVID-19, Public Health Ethics, Clinical Ethics, and Research Ethics.

## Stellenbosch Forum lecture (Online) – 18 August 2022



Prof Moodley gave a thought-provoking talk on the introduction of technology to healthcare at the Stellenbosch Forum lecture in August 2022. The meeting was themed "Digitisation of healthcare: adapting to change". Prof Moodley made reference to the pulse oximeter, used widely during the pandemic to monitor oxygen saturation levels in COVID patients in the clinical and home settings. However, due to racial and ethnic biases in data used to develop normal ranges and resultant measurement bias, larger numbers of darker skinned patients with hypoxia, requiring advanced care may have been missed in comparison to lighter-skinned patients. She concluded that there is a need for data protection policies to guard against the misuse of data, particularly in healthcare settings. Staff and students at Stellenbosch University attended the forum. For full report, please visit:

<https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=9467>



## Inaugural talk of Prof Shenuka Singh (Hybrid) – 15 September 2022



*A picture of Prof Shenuka Singh during her inaugural talk*

Prof Shenuka Singh gave her Inaugural lecture as a Full Professor in the Discipline of Dentistry at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban. Shenuka is one of 7 PhD candidates in the ARESA Bioethics leadership program sponsored by the D43 National Institutes of Health (NIH) Fogarty training grant. In April 2022, Prof Singh graduated with her second doctorate – this time in Clinical and Health Research Ethics. Her presentation titled, "Turning the moral compass towards transformative research ethics: an inflexion point for humanised pedagogy in higher education", highlighted the need for a paradigm shift in the understanding and thinking of research ethics and the need to contextualize research practices within an African context, while at the same time, looking at learning approaches in research ethics that recognize the role of interactive learning where diversity in student needs and experiences are explored within the learning context.

## PhD writing retreat (Hybrid)- Tygerberg Campus, Stellenbosch University – 25 October 2022



*PhD candidates deliberating with Prof Stuart Rennie and Prof Shenuka Singh*



PhD candidates of the ARESA Bioethics leadership program attended a writing retreat anchored by Prof Shenuka Singh. The candidates had the opportunity to ask questions and engage with Prof Singh.

In addition, she gave the candidates hands-on information on the structure of their theses, to ensure that the content flows logically and tips on how to prepare for their thesis defence.

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## Data Science for Health Discovery and Innovation in Africa (DS-I Africa) Consortium – 29 October – 2 November 2022, Cape Town

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**From the left:**

Prof Keymanthri Moodley delivering her keynote address and Director of Fogarty Centre–Dr Roger Glass shows interest in REDSSA poster

The DS-I Africa Initiative aims to leverage data science technologies to transform biomedical and behavioural research and develop solutions to improve health for individuals and populations. The second annual meeting was held at the Breakwater Lodge, Protea Hotel, in Cape Town. Research assistant, Ms Nezerith Cengiz and Assoc Prof Stuart Rennie (co-PI of REDSSA) presented their work and discussed the main findings of the REDSSA empirical research project and the importance of engaging critical stakeholders for informing African data sharing.

This study has drawn out perspectives on data governance from two stakeholder groups, namely, research ethics committee (REC) members and data scientists/researchers.

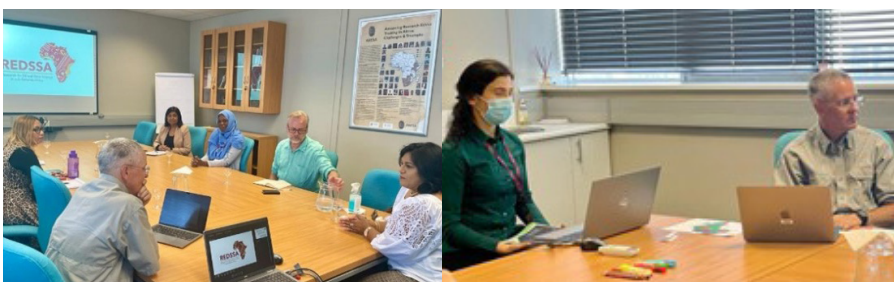
The findings also raised awareness of the importance of data governance in research. In addition, the findings indicate variability in data governance and regulation in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and perceptions of the adequacy of national laws and institutional policies. Training, frameworks, and policies are lacking and are needed to guide and promote data sharing in SSA. The expressed need for guidelines and training will inform current and future outputs of the REDSSA project. The presenters concluded by indicating that Ethical, Legal and Social Implications (ELSI) projects and Research Hubs can contribute to the capacity development of REC members and researchers.

Prof Moodley gave a keynote address entitled: 'Balancing harms and benefits of AI: ethical considerations' where she reflected on the gains made during the pandemic with AI robotics in health care and triage algorithms to admit patients into the intensive care unit (ICU). AI should promote human well-being and safety and should be in the public interest. There should be transparency, and doctors should be able to explain the use of AI to patients. We should promote AI that is responsible, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. Prof Moodley concluded by stating that if harms were to be minimised, there is a need for a shift from trust to reliability in the AI debate.

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## Meeting with REDSSA NIH Programme Officer, CMEL Offices, Tygerberg Campus – 4 November 2022

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Dr James Churchill, who is the NIH program officer for the REDSSA project, visited the Centre. During his visit, he met with the REDSSA core team and staff at the Centre. Each team lead provided a detailed presentation about the progress made on the project. He was very pleased with the overall progress of the project and translational benefit of the project outcomes.

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## Conflict of Interest (CoI) Stakeholder Validating Meeting – 21 November 2022

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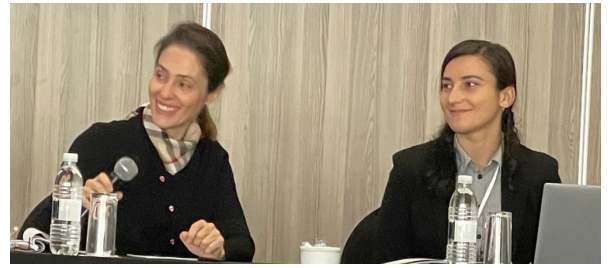
Prof Keymanthri Moodley gave an overview of the e-course designed for Research Ethics Committees (RECs) and Science Granting Councils (SGCs) to various stakeholders at the in-person full-day Stakeholder Validation Meeting in Cape Town. The e-learning course comprises four modules: introduction to conflict of interest, the importance of CoI for RECs and SGCs, identification of CoI and managing conflicts of interest.

The e-course modules also comprise case studies to help prevent, identify, manage and mitigate conflicts of interest in health. The project is sponsored by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC).



## Global Forum on Bioethics in Research (GFBR) – 29-30 December 2022

The Global Forum on Bioethics in Research (GFBR): Ethics of AI in Global Health Research was held in Cape Town, South Africa. The forum had five themes namely, **Emerging issues in research methodology, Importance of local context and engagement when developing AI tools, Collaborative initiatives, and data resources to support AI health research, Regulation of data for health research involving AI and Issues associated with research ethics frameworks and ethics review.** Ms Nezerith Cengiz presented on the Governance of cross-border transfer of data in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). She explained that large research networks and collaborative projects in SSA require the transfer or sharing of data among African and international countries. However, the most research-intensive countries in the region are characterised by diverse data management and privacy governance frameworks. The presentation provided an assessment of data-sharing regulation in selected sub-Saharan countries and identified key limitations and gaps that impede effective data collation, sharing, and analysis.



## ARESA and REDSSA Seminar series

The Centre for Medical Ethics and Law hosted the 10th Annual ARESA Research Ethics seminar held at the Radisson Blu Hotel at the Waterfront on 27 October 2022. In keeping with emerging challenges in Research Ethics, the ARESA seminar was themed: Data Ethics for Research Ethics Committees (RECs) and Researchers. This event heralded a new era in research ethics for delegates from various countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

*Watch out for our accompanying newsletters for more details on the ethics seminar series!*



**The Centre for  
Medical Ethics  
and Law wishes  
you a wonderful  
festive season**

## Publications: July – December 2022

- Ochieng J; Kwagala B; Barugahre J; Möller M; Moodley K. Feedback of Individual Genetic and Genomics Research Results: A Qualitative Study Involving Grassroots Communities in Uganda PLOS ONE 2022. – [Click here for full text](#)
- S Singh, RJ Cadigan, K Moodley. Challenges to biobanking in LMICs during COVID-19: time to reconceptualise research ethics guidance for pandemics and public health emergencies? Journal of Medical Ethics 2022 - [Click here for full text](#)
- Mtande TK, Nair G, Rennie, S. Ethics and regulatory complexities posed by a pragmatic clinical trial: a case study from Lilongwe, Malawi. Malawi Medical Journal 2022 - [Click here for full text](#)
- Moodley K, Cengiz N, Domingo A, Nair G, Obasa AE, Lessells RJ, de Oliveira T. Ethics and governance challenges related to genomic data sharing in southern Africa: the case of SARS-CoV-2. The Lancet Global Health 2022 - [Click here for full text](#)
- Brand D, Singh JA, Nienaber McKay AG, Cengiz N, Moodley K. Data sharing governance in sub-Saharan Africa during public health emergencies: Gaps and guidance. South African Journal of Science 2022 - [Click here for full text](#)