

Partners in Progress: Advancing Cancer Research in Africa

PROGRAM (University of Cape Town)

January 25-26, 2027

DAY 1: Monday, January 25, 2027

07:30 – 08:30 **Registration and Coffee Reception**

OPENING

08:30 – 08:40 **Welcome address**

- **Associate Professor Shaheen Mowla & Dr Saif Khan** - UCT on Campus Organising committee).

08:40 – 09:00 **Institutional overview by UCT representative:**

- TBC

Segment 1: **Cancer Genomics and Precision Oncology**
Chair: Dr Saif Khan

09:00 – 09:30 ***Advancing Precision Oncology in Africa Through Host Genomics, HIV-HPV Interaction Profiles, and Tailored Pharmacogenetics***

- **Professor Collet Dandara**, PhD, Head, Division of Human Genetics, & Director of the UCT/SAMRC Platform for Pharmacogenomics Research and Translation Unit (PREMED), University of Cape Town.

09:30 –10:00 ***Genomic cancer risk (monogenic and polygenic; PRS) and the tumour germline interface***

- **Professor Jeffrey N. Weitzel**, MD, FACMG, the Kansas University Comprehensive Cancer Center, Kansas City, Kansas, USA.

10:00 –10:10 ***A miRNA-based Therapeutic Strategy for Pancreatic Cancer***

- **Dr Karabo Serala**, PhD. Department of Human Biology, Division of Cell Biology, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

10:10 – 10:20 ***Elevated PD-L1 Expression in a subset of DLBCL Patients is Associated with HIV***

- **Dr Zahra Latib**, PhD. Department of Pathology, Division of Haematology, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

10:20 – 10:40 **Q&A**

10:40 - 11:00 **Coffee Break and Poster Exhibition**

Segment 2: **Tumour microenvironment and Biomarker discovery**
Chair: Dr Aaliyah Saferdien

11:00 – 11:30 ***Discovery and Validation of Early Diagnostic Markers of Pancreatic Cancer through Autoantibody Reactomics***

- **Professor Jonathan Blackburn**, DPhil, Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine; Head of Division of Chemical & Systems Biology; Research Chair in Applied Proteomics and Chemical Biology, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

11:30 - 12:00 ***Diet and microbiome control of the anti-tumour immunity***

- **Assistant Professor Abigail E. Overacre-Delgoffe**, PhD, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Hillman Cancer Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA.

12:00 – 12:10 **[Title TBC]**

- **Dr Brendon Price**, MD, PhD, Department of Pathology, Division of Anatomical Pathology, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

12:10 – 12: 20 ***Haematology and Oncology Biobank: From Liquid Biopsy to a Platform Advancing Precision Oncology***

- **Dr David Richardson**, MD, Division of Clinical Haematology, Department of Medicine, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

12:20 -12:45 **Q&A**

12:45 -13:45 **Networking Lunch - "Meet the Experts"**

Segment 3: **Cancer Immunology and Therapeutics**
Chair: Dr Leonardo Alves De Souza Rios

13:45–14:15 ***New Targets, Old Drugs, Novel Therapies for Cancer***

- **Professor Sharon Prince,** PhD, Division of Cell Biology, Department of Human Biology, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

14:15 –14:45 **[Title TBC]**

- **Professor Jedd D. Wolchok**, MD, PhD, the Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center at Weill Cornell Medicine, New York, New York, USA.

14:45 - 14:55 **[Title TBC]**

- **Professor Virna Leaner**, PhD. Division of Medical Biochemistry and Structural Biology, Department of Integrative Biomedical Sciences, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

14:55 - 15:10 ***Management of Melanoma Patients on Immune Therapy***

- **Dr. Sameera Dalvie**, MD, Division of Radiation Oncology, Department of Radiation Medicine, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

15:10 – 15:30 **Q&A**

15:30 – 15:50 **Coffee Break and Poster Exhibition**

Segment 4:
Chair: TBC

Infection-associated Cancers: Biology, Prevention and Population Health

15:50 –16:20 ***Who Are We Leaving Behind? Lessons from Cervical Cancer Prevention for an Integrated Public Health Response in Africa***

- **Dr. Edina Amponsah-Dacosta,** PhD, MPH. Vaccines for African Initiative and NITAG Support Hub, School of Public Health, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

16:20 –16:50 ***Challenges and opportunities in population health approaches to prevention of infection-associated cancers: lessons learned from the study of Burkitt lymphoma***

- **Professor Rosemary Rochford,** PhD, Professor of Immunology & Microbiology, University of Colorado Anschutz School of Medicine, Aurora, Colorado, USA.

16:50 - 17:00 ***Multizonal HPV Disease: A Case for More Research and Policy Planning***

- **Associate Professor Tracey Adams**, MD, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Groote Schuur Hospital/ UCT, UCT Global Surgery, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

17:00 - 17:10 ***Translating Oncogenic Gamma herpesvirus Infection Dynamics into Novel Diagnostics for Clinical Care in South Africa***

- **Professor Georgia Schäfer**, PhD, International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

16:45-17:05 **Q&A**

17:05–17:10	**Closing Remarks for Day 1** • **Associate Professor Shaheen Mowla**, PhD, Division of Haematology, Department of Pathology, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

DAY 2: Tuesday, January 26, 2027

08:30–09:00	**Check-in and Coffee Reception**
09:00–09:45	**Publishing with Impact: Navigating scientific publishing** • **Dr Karen Honey**, PhD, Executive Editor, Cancer Immunology Research, AACR
09:45-10:00	**Q&A**
10:00-10:45	**Panel Discussion 1: Leading with Purpose: People, Priorities and Personal Wellbeing** • **Panelists: TBC** • **Moderator: TBC**
10:45-11:00	**Coffee Break and Poster Exhibition**
11:00-11:45	**Successful Grantsmanship and Grants Administration** • **Dr Garima Singh**, PhD, *Assistant Director, Research and Grants Administration, AACR*
11:45-12:00	**Q&A**
12:00–12:45	**Panel Discussion 2: Beyond the Bench: Career Pathways in Cancer Research** • **Panelists: TBC** • **Moderator: TBC**
12:45–13:30	**Networking Lunch - "Meet the Experts"**
13:30–14:30	**Poster Finalists Presentations** *Chair: A/Prof Shaheen Mowla*
14:30–15:00	**Concluding Session and Award Ceremony** • Dr Saif Khan & Dr Aaliyah Saferdien