

NEWS FROM:



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Mizrahi to lead infectious disease research at UCT

Professor Valerie Mizrahi has been appointed as Director of the Institute for Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IIDMM) at the University of Cape Town as of 1 January 2011.

“Professor Mizrahi is one of the leading researchers internationally in the field of tuberculosis,” said UCT Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price. “Her track record – not only of discovery, but also in growing and directing a large research laboratory at Wits, and significant grant raising – makes her the ideal person to lead UCT’s IIDMM.”

Professor Mizrahi is also now leading the UCT Node of the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence for Biomedical TB Research (CBTBR). Research at this centre includes all aspects of tuberculosis diagnosis, testing and treatment, both from a molecular and clinical point of view, and genomic and proteomic studies of the TB Bacillus and its interaction with humans. Professor Mizrahi will also continue to direct the MRC/NHLS/UCT Molecular Mycobacteriology Research Unit. From 2004 to 2010 she was the Co-Director of the CBTBR. Over the last 10 years she has held two consecutive, five-year terms as an International Research Scholar of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in the USA. From 2002 to 2010 she was a research professor in the School of Pathology at the University of the Witwatersrand. Her previous experience includes a number of leadership positions at the SA Institute for Medical Research; research posts at Wits and the CSIR Laboratory for Molecular & Cell Biology; and a position as Associate Senior Investigator in the Department of Macromolecular Sciences at SmithKline & French R&D in the USA.

Professor Mizrahi was born and raised in Harare, Zimbabwe. At UCT she was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry & Mathematics (with Distinctions in both subjects) in 1979; a Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree in Chemistry in 1980; and Doctor of Philosophy degree in Chemistry in 1983. From 1983 to 1986 she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Pennsylvania State University, State College, in the USA.

Professor Mizrahi has earned numerous prizes and awards in her distinguished career, including the Order of the Mapungubwe (Silver), conferred by the State President of South Africa in 2007, and the Gold Medal from the South African Society for Biochemistry & Molecular Biology in 2006. She was awarded an "A" rating by the National Research Foundation of South Africa in 2009 and last year she was the Mycobacteriology Division Lecturer for the American Society for Microbiology. She is currently serving on the Board of Directors and on the Scientific Advisory Board of the KwaZulu Natal Research Institute for TB and HIV at the University of KwaZulu Natal and on the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (based in New York). Over the course of her career she has served in many authoritative capacities in similar organisations. She has published widely and has held various editorial and reviewer positions in health science publications.

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