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Six exceptional UCT scientists recognised by SA Medical Research Council



Professor Linda-Gail Bekker

Professor Mpiko Ntsekhe

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The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) has recognised six researchers and scientists from the University of Cape Town (UCT) at the 7th SAMRC Scientific Merit Awards ceremony.

The awards took place at a time when science is at the forefront of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The hybrid event – held with a small gathering at the organisation’s Cape Town head office and a virtual audience – celebrated the scientific excellence and contributions by outstanding medical scientists whose work has significantly impacted the lives of South Africans.

Platinum Medal awardees

Trailblazing professors Linda-Gail Bekker of the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre and Department of Medicine and Heather Zar of the UCT Lung Institute and Department of Paediatrics, were each recognised with the 2021 Platinum Medal, the category for scientists who have achieved a lifetime of exemplary and outstanding endeavours in the field of health.

Gold Medal awardees

Gold Medals are awarded to researchers who have made substantial and influential contributions that have impacted on health especially in the developing world. Among this year's four recipients were Professor Graeme Meintjes of the Wellcome Centre for Infectious Diseases Research in Africa and the Department of Medicine, and Professor Karen Sliwa of the Hatter Institute for Cardiovascular Research in Africa and Department of Medicine.

Silver Medal awardees

Silver Medals, conferred to emerging and upcoming scientists and those committed to capacity development, were awarded to Claire Hoving of the AFGrica Unit and the Department of Pathology, and Professor Mpiko Ntsekhe of the Department of Medicine.

Noting that the pandemic has underlined the importance of science and public health research in tackling current and emerging infectious disease threats, SAMRC president and chief executive officer Professor Glenda Gray said: "The SAMRC is honoured to celebrate these exceptional South Africans who always go to great lengths to produce world-class science aimed at the betterment of the lives of the country's citizens."

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