

CANSA Research

Strategic Objective

Extend our current leadership role within the cancer research environment to ensure global recognition by providing evidence-based support for all CANSA services as well as the greater needs of the South African public

As a leading role-player in cancer research, CANSA as an organisation and in partnership with the Medical Research Council (MRC) through the Cancer Research Initiative in South Africa (CARISA) has funded approximately R5 million on cancer research in South Africa.

CANSA ensures that the scientific findings and knowledge gained from our research realign our advocacy focus (our watchdog role) and strengthen our health programmes to the greater benefit of the public.

**Being proactive against cancer
Women's Health Conference,
Johannesburg
8 - 10 September 2010**



The First Lady of South Africa, Her Excellency Madam Tobeka Zuma, Chairperson of the African First Ladies Cervical and Breast Cancer Forum, officially opened the second day of CANSA's three-day Women's Health Conference as part of International Gynaecological Health Day in September 2010 at the Southern Sun Hotel, OR Tambo International Airport.

The conference was entitled 'Awareness, Coping and Beyond - a Cancer Conference for Our Time' and set out to inform and educate on cancer in the home, cancer in the body and surviving cancer. Day one covered topics like pesticides and smoke in homes, clean and contaminated drinking water, lindane, edible fats as well as the role food labelling plays in promoting health. The session ended with a 'town hall' meeting with the theme 'How do Oncologists Assist Cancer Survivors?'

Day two dealt with discussions on various cancer topics and the launch of an award-winning international book on the role of cosmetics in cancer - 'Not Just a Pretty Face' by Stacy Malkan. She is a co-founder of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, a coalition of non-profit health and environmental groups in the United States that is leading the movement to shift policies to eliminate harmful chemicals from consumer products. In her book Stacy describes the research on hazardous chemicals in cosmetics and chronicles as an eight-year effort by environmental health groups to hold the beauty industry accountable for making safe products.

Day three celebrated the surviving of cancer with talks on the importance of diet for survivors, exercise as therapy and empowering the child who has cancer.

A similar instrument has been initiated for paediatric patients, to be completed in 2011 and will be known as the Paediatric Coping Tool.

Skills Development

Contributing

CANSA partnered with the University of Johannesburg and contributed 50% towards bursaries for the following students:

Ms NB Skerman - Master's Degree in Biochemistry

Ms C Orsmond - Master's Degree in Biochemistry

Mr G Müller - Master's Degree in Zoology

Ms E van Der Merwe - Doctoral Degree in Biochemistry

Ms E van Zijl - Doctoral Degree in Educational Psychology

Type D

The funding of the Cervical Cancer Consortium (comprised of several institutions) is the largest research project ever undertaken by CANSA. It involves R1 million over three years aimed at testing the vaccine against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) in South African girls. At present the vaccine is not generally accessible due to the high cost. It is hoped that this project will pave the way for eventual vaccination of all South African women against HPV.

CARISA - Professor Vikash Sewram who is a Unit Director for Oncology in the Medical Research Council (MRC) was accepted and appointed as part-time Director of the Cancer Research Initiative of South Africa (CARISA) by its Steering Committee. Our CANSA CEO and Head of Research are both members of the four-member steering committee.

New Mining and Health Research Initiative - R1 million has been allocated to a consortium of researchers over a two-year period to study the effects of radiation and heavy metals, especially uranium, on the health of 500 000 humans living in the Wonderfonteinspruit catchment area and beyond to Potchefstroom. Although it's generally accepted that this 400 km² area is a health hazard for humans, no peer-reviewed publications exist, specifically on health effects. The aim of the project is to fill this information gap with relevant health orientated information so that it can be determined whether or not there is a real cancer risk and health hazard.

Cancer Reality Check

- 12 million people, worldwide every year, hear the words 'You have cancer'
- Worldwide cancer kills more people than AIDS, Malaria, and TB combined and the death toll is expected to rise dramatically in the coming decades
- In South Africa, approximately 100 000 people are diagnosed with cancer each year
- Over 60 000 South Africans lose the battle against the disease every year
- Worldwide there is a 37% cancer survival rate with an approximate 40% survival rate in SA
- One in four South Africans is affected by cancer in their lifetime
- More than 90% of cancers are caused by environmental factors
- Top male cancers in South Africa are prostate, lung, colorectal and oesophageal cancers
- Top female cancers in South Africa are breast, cervix, uterine and colorectal cancers

Statistics are based on the South African 2003 National Cancer Registry (NCR) as well as the World Health Organization (WHO) reports

Connecting Globally

- **2010 World Cancer Congress, China August 2010**
Our CEO went to China on invitation to represent CANSA as one of the three organisations short-listed to host the Union International Cancer Control (UICC) 2014 World Cancer Congress. Although Melbourne was announced as the venue for 2014 the UICC requested CANSA to host the UICC World Leadership Summit in 2013 which will be the first time ever for Africa.
- **World Health Organization (WHO) International Conference on Environmental and Occupational Determinants of Cancer, Spain March 2011**
By invitation, the CEO represented Africa and took part in round table discussions with a specific focus on implementation in resource-limited countries. CANSA was commended for its comprehensive preventative care model. Also highlighted was our 'watchdog' role with emphasis on environmental carcinogens.
- **Cancer Survivorship, Washington, USA 17 - 19 June 2010**
Our CEO and Head of Research attended this conference which highlighted the effective management of survivorship emphasising long-term treatment complications. Research over the past 10 years has shown that by following an active lifestyle and exercising regularly, the risk of a second cancer can be reduced by 50%.



AG Oettlé Memorial Award 2010

AG Oettlé Award

The AG Oettlé Memorial is the highest prize awarded to South Africans who have made valuable contributions regarding cancer research or rendered cancer service of outstanding value to the public and CANSA.

Awarded to:

Professor Basil Bloch

Professor Bloch obtained his MBChB and MMed degrees from the University of Cape Town and FRCOG (Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists) from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in London 1973. He headed the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at the University of Cape Town for 10 years before he retired as Emeritus Professor in 1995. He was the founder and chairman of the South African Gynaecological Oncology Society. He was a Council member and Vice President of CANSA for 18 years and the President for three years.

Professor Anna Lise Williamson

Professor Williamson completed her university studies at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1985 and was promoted to Professor at the University of Cape Town (UCT). In 2008 she was awarded Chair in Vaccinology (South African Research Chairs Initiative). She currently holds the position of Project Director, Division of Medical Virology at UCT. Professor Williamson is an internationally recognised expert on the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) - a leading cause of cervical cancer. In 2006 her laboratory became a World Health Organization regional HPV reference laboratory and is the only one in the Africa region.

- **Inaugural Conference of the World Council on Genetics, Nutrition and Fitness for Health on 'Healthy Agriculture, Healthy Nutrition and Healthy People', Ancient Olympia, Greece, October 5-8, 2010**
Dr Carl Albrecht, Head of Research, was invited to present a poster on 'Evaluating Margarines - the role of Omega-6/Omega-3 balance'.
- **Cancer and Obesity Conference, Valencia, Spain, 28-30 October 2010**
Upon invitation Dr Carl Albrecht presented on 'Epigenetic, Abdominal Obesity and Early Life Events - the Relationship between Cancer and Obesity'.

The Road Ahead

The following developments are anticipated for the near future:

- **More than ever before, excellent publications, possible innovations and results of value to CANSA focus and programmes**
- **More detailed Cancer Maps using National Cancer Registry data that should be updated within the next 12 to 18 months**
- **Development of a uranium filter especially for use by children and pregnant women where the foetus is most vulnerable**
- **Development of strategies to deal with the fatty acid imbalance, i.e. less omega-6 and more long chain omega-3 in South African diet**
- **Influencing of potato chip manufacturers regarding decreasing concentration of acrylamide and possible use of potatoes that is low in reducing sugars**
- **Quality control data of sunscreens with CANSA logo to influence policy makers regarding ISO standards and address non-adherence to the CANSA Seal of Recognition (CSOR)**