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5th South African Tuberculosis Conference, Durban ICC, 12 – 15 June 2018:

The Durban International Convention Centre recently hosted the 5th South African (SA) Tuberculosis (TB) Conference. This national TB conference brings together scientists/researchers, clinicians, civil society and various other stakeholders to discuss TB as a major health burden in SA. This year the slogan for the conference was “Step Up, Let’s Embrace All to End TB”.

The conference saw around 1 500 delegates in attendance where the Honorable Deputy President Mr. David Dabede Mabuza spoke in the opening plenary and Minister for Health of South Africa Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi spoke in the closing plenary session. South Africa was commended for the role that the politicians have played in addressing the TB burden in SA and encouraged them to continue playing an active role, with special focus on the upcoming high level United Nations (UN) special meeting focused solely on TB later in 2018.

The Division of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics, including the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence for Biomedical TB Research and the SA Medical Research Council (MRC) Centre for Tuberculosis Research was well represented by both students and staff.

The students were involved in giving both poster and oral presentations, while the staff members gave oral presentations, plenary presentations as well as chairing several sessions throughout the conference. Both the Head of the SA MRC Centre (Prof. Rob Warren) as well as the head of the Centre of Excellence (Prof. Gerhard Walzl) were present at this important national conference.



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Molekulêre Biologie en Mensgenetika • Molecular Biology and Human Genetics

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The final plenary session started with the Discovery Clinical Excellence Awards being announced, this is of special mention as the Division of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics had two members receive awards, one of which was the 1st overall prize for the entire conference – a massive achievement.

There were two postdoctoral research fellows from the Division of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics:

- **Dr Michael Whitfield** was awarded the 1st prize – Discovery Clinical Excellence Award for the Best Clinical Paper presented at the conference by a SA delegate.

This award was given for Dr. Whitfield's presentation entitled: "The Potential of Rifabutin for the Treatment of Rifampicin Resistant Tuberculosis".

- **Dr Charissa Naidoo** was awarded the 5th prize – Discovery Clinical Excellence Award for the Best Research Poster at the conference by a SA delegate.

This award was given for Dr. Naidoo's poster presentation entitled: "Oral, sputum and gut microbiota are disrupted in treatment-naïve patients with active tuberculosis".



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Discovery Clinical Excellence Award - 1st Prize Best Clinical Paper



Dr. Michael Whitfield (Stellenbosch University, TB Genomics Group led by Prof Rob Warren)



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Discovery Clinical Excellence Award - 5th Prize Best Research Poster



Dr. Charissa Naidoo (Stellenbosch University, CLIME group led by Prof Grant Theron)



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