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Gastro Foundation Women's Health Conference Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting

Saturday 22nd November 2025 Radisson Gautrain Hotel, Sandton, Gauteng 10:30 - 15:00

Gastroenterology Foundation of Sub Saharan Africa www.gastrofoundation.co.za

PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

The African Viral Hepatitis Convention hosted by the Gastroenterology and Hepatology Association of sub-Saharan Africa (GHASSA) under the auspices of the Gastroenterology Foundation of SSA was held in April 2024 in Cape Town and was the first African viral hepatitis meeting to be held following the release of the WHO Global Hepatitis Report on 9 April 2024.

The meeting highlighted that almost two thirds of the global hepatitis burden of chronic hepatitis viral infection is found in Africa despite affordable hepatitis treatment regimens. Liver cancer rates continue to rise and now is the 3rd leading cancer in men and fewer than 20% of babies born in Africa receive Hepatitis B Birth dose vaccination despite the availability of an effective hepatitis B vaccine over the last 40 years.

Transmission of the Hepatitis B virus from mother to child plays an important part in the high carrier rate of the hepatitis B virus in SSA.

Integration of programmes such as triple elimination of HIV, HBV and syphilis in pregnant women provides an opportunity for improvement of both preventative and treatment modalities. Triple elimination further allows us to harness skills, experience and infrastructure acquired in the fight against HIV/AIDS to be brought to bear on viral hepatitis and syphilis.

We have a lot to learn from our colleagues who have succeeded in the fight against HIV.

As a prelude to the Womans Health Conference planned for early 2026 in order to address the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of the hepatitis B virus we have invited a number of participants from various specialties to an advisory board in Gauteng on Saturday 22nd November 2025.

We thank you for attending and we look forward to a valuable and successful meeting.

My thanks to Anna Kramvis and Bilal Bobat for their contributions and to Ian Sanne for his invaluable advice.



Chris Kassianides

Chairman

The Gastroenterology Foundation of Sub-Saharan Africa Mission Statement

The Gastroenterology Foundation of South Africa was established in 2006. The aim of the Foundation is to contribute towards the continuing medical education of Gastroenterologists and Hepatologists in South Africa.

It is autonomous, directed by a group of trustees chosen from a broad spectrum of academic experience.

In addition, the Foundation has successfully contributed to the postgraduate education of Gastroenterologists by assisting in the financing of fellowships abroad. Recently a major focus has been the post graduate education of GI trainees locally by hosting workshops in South Africa.

Our aim is to fund a number of conferences annually updating all those interested in Gastroenterology and Hepatology in South Africa on recent advances in these specialties.

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PROGRAMME

Saturday 22nd November 2025

PREVENTING MOTHER TO CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HBV WITH MATERNAL BIRTH DOSE VACCINE AS PART OF TRIPLE ELIMINATION

10:30 - 11:00	Registrat	tion	
11:00 - 11:15	Welcome	e and Introduction	Prof Chris Kassianides
11:15 - 11:35	, ,	e elimination? us in SADAC	Prof Anna Kramvis
11:35 - 11:55	•	B Epidemiological update - since Viread	Dr Nishi Prabdial - Singh
11:55 - 12:20		I birth dose vaccination ed vaccination	Prof Wendy Spearman
12:20 - 12:4) Triple Eli	mination testing and outcomes	Mr Musa Marange
12:40 - 13:0) HBV/HIV	co-infection	Dr Bilal Bobat
13:00 - 13:4) Lunch br	eak	
13:40 - 14:0) HIV - The	e progress we have made	Dr Dvora Joseph-Davey
14:00 - 14:20		Reacts to none mmodates all!	Dr Tendesayi Chakeza-Kufa
14:20 - 14:4		e : IV Vaccines in children	Prof Glenda Gray
14:40 - 15:0) Challeng	es and Opportunities - WHC26	Prof Chris Kassianides
15:00 Clos	е		Prof Ian Sanne

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Dr Bilal Bobat, Trustee

Currently serves as one of the Hepatologists at WDGMC. He completed his gastroenterology training at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic hospital in 2014 and then worked with Prof Ernie Song for a further 18 months in the Hepatology clinic at WDGMC. His current interests include Autoimmune Hepatitis and Portal hypertension and its complications in the sub-Saharan setting and transplant hepatology.



Prof Glenda Elisabeth Gray

An NRF A1-rated scientist and Distinguished Professor, former CEO and President of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), and Director of Infectious Diseases and Oncology Research Institute (IDORI) Research Entity in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand. Professor Glenda Gray is a qualified pediatrician and co-founder of the internationally recognized Perinatal HIV Research Unit in Soweto, South Africa. Prior to her appointment at the SAMRC, she was the Executive

Director of the Perinatal HIV Research Unit, an affiliate of Wits University. Glenda Elisabeth Gray's global profile includes a role as Co-PI of the NIH funded HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN), a transnational collaboration for the development of HIV/AIDS prevention vaccines. She is the Chairperson of the Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership, a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, USA, the World Academy of Sciences, the African Academy of Science and the South African Academy of Science. She received South Africa's highest honour—the Order of Mapungubwe— for her pioneering research in PMTCT. Other prestigious accolades include the Nelson Mandela Health and Human Rights Award for significant contributions in the field of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Selected as one of Time's 100 Most Influential People in the World, and recently the Forbes Africa Champion of Change Award, Glenda is a recognized leader in her field. Her qualifications include an MBBCH, FCPaeds (SA), DSc (honoris causa SFU), DSc (honoris causa SUN), LL.D (Rhodes).

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Prof Wendy Spearman, MBChB, MMed, PhD, FCP(SA), FRCP (London)

Wendy Spearman is Emeritus Professor of Medicine and a Consultant Hepatologist in the Division of Hepatology, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Cape Town. She was appointed as a University of Cape Town Senior Research Scholar in July 2024. She was Head of the Division of Hepatology, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town and

Head of Liver Transplantation, Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town, South Africa from 1/01/1998 - 30/06/2024. She is actively involved in outreach Liver Education Programmes and is the Co-Lead of the 'Viral Hepatitis in sub-Saharan Africa' Project ECHO Clinic programme. She was appointed as the lead consultant to develop the National Guidelines on the management and prevention of viral hepatitis in South Africa and as co-chair of the WHO 2024 Hepatitis B Guidelines Development Group. She is the lead Clinical Consultant on the updated National Guidelines on the management and prevention of Hepatitis B. She is co-chair of the Africa CDC working group to develop an operational toolkit for the implementation of the WHO 2024 Hepatitis B Guidelines. She is Vice-president of the Society on Liver Disease in Africa (SOLDA) and is a member of Global NASH/MASH Council. Her research interests include viral hepatitis, MASLD, hepatocellular carcinoma, drug-induced liver injuries and liver transplantation.

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Dr Nishi Prabdial-Singh

Nishi Prabdial-Sing is employed as a Principal Medical Scientist and head of Centre for Vaccines and Immunology (CVI), National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD). She has obtained a PhD degree in medical virology from the School of Pathology, University of Witwatersrand (WITS) in 2011. Thus far, she has successfully supervised and mentored several postgraduate students. She was awarded a C2 NRF-rating in 2020 and currently, has 30 peer-reviewed journal publications. She is focused on integrating testing and surveillance platforms for viral hepatitis.

Since 2008, she is a member of the technical working group (TWG) on the compilation of the National Guidelines for the management of Viral Hepatitis with the South African National Department of Health (NDoH). Currently, she is a member of Federation of the Infectious Diseases societies of Southern Africa (FIDSSA), World Hepatitis Alliance, Royal Society of Medicine, UK and International Network on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users (INHSU).



Prof Ian Sanne, MBBCH, FCP(SA), DTM&H

lan Sanne is a global health leader with over 30 years of experience advancing infectious disease prevention and treatment across Africa. As Founder and former CEO of Right to Care, lan managed \$1.3B in programs spanning HIV, TB, malaria, and emerging epidemics. His work includes health system recovery in Sierra Leone and strategic leadership for COVID-19 treatment capacity in South Africa. Prof. Sanne has a faculty appointment at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa - has directed NIH-funded research exceeding \$220M, publishing more than 280 peer-reviewed papers

on HIV/AIDS, multidrug-resistant TB, Hepatitis C, and SARS-CoV-2. He champions digital health innovations and surveillance epidemiology to strengthen health systems and improve outbreak response. Currently Global Chief Medical Officer at Palladium, Ian drives initiatives in the health practice in particular African nations to integrate health and data systems, evidence-based medicine for priority diseases (HIV, TB, Malaria, MCHN), and One Health approaches for pandemic preparedness and equitable care.

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Dr Dvora Joseph-Davey

Dvora Joseph-Davey is an infectious disease epidemiologist with over 20 years of experience in maternal and newborn health research and programme evaluation. She is an Honorary Associate Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Cape Town and an Associate Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases in the Geffen School and Department of Epidemiology at University of California, Los Angeles. She is the PI of several large NIH funded studies that evaluate interventions to improve HIV prevention (including PrEP)

and sexually transmitted infection diagnostics and treatment in pregnant and lactating women. She has been involved in research in Southern Africa since 2003 where she has developed and evaluated donor-funded epidemiological studies to inform effective, culturally relevant interventions aimed at reducing the burden of HIV and related diseases on women, children, and families. She is closely involved in HIV and STI policymaking in South Africa, with roles in the National PrEP, Prevention of Vertical Transmission of HIV Working Groups and WHO/AFRO Regional Group on Elimination of Vertical Transmission to advance the impact of the study findings on public health policy and practice. She is an active mentor of public health and medical students in South Africa and the US.

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Prof Chris Kassianides - Founder & Chairman

Founder and Chairman of the Gastroenterology Foundation of SA and a member of SAGES council. Following his graduation from the University of the Witwatersrand medical school in Johannesburg South Africa in 1979 he completed his fellowship with the College of Physicians and joined the Liver Unit of the National Institutes of Health in Washington DC where he spent a number of years researching the antiviral therapy of Hepatitis B and C viruses. This was followed by GI Fellowships at Georgetown in Washington DC and Cornell Hospital in

New York City and a visiting lecturership at the Prince of Wales hospital in Hong Kong. He returned to SA in 1991 and is presently a Gastroenterologist in Private practice in Johannesburg. He is actively involved in the CME of GI/Hepatology fellows, post graduate fellows and gastroenterologists and hepatologists in private practice.

Dr Tendesayi Kufa-Chakezha



Tendesayi is an Epidemiologist based at National Institute of Communicable Diseases' Centre for HIV and STIs. In this role she designs and implements HIV and STI surveillance and research activities and mentors junior staff. She oversees the antenatal HIV sentinel survey which includes maternal syphilis and the enhanced congenital syphilis case surveillance programme implemented in collaboration with the Notifiable Medical Conditions programme at NICD. She also supports STI sentinel surveillance activities which

include surveillance for genital ulcer disease and latent syphilis among STI service attendees. Over the past 20 years, she has held different positions in HIV and STI prevention, care and treatment programmes, academia and research. She is an honorary senior lecturer in the University of the Witwatersrand School of Public Health and has supervised masters and doctoral students. She has serves on the WHO Regional Validation Committee for the triple elimination of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B.

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Prof Anna Kramvis

Professor Anna Kramvis, BSc Hons, PhD, is Professor Emerita and former Director of the Hepatitis Virus Diversity Research Unit (HVDRU), University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. Our primary research interest is the epidemiology and molecular virology of the hepatitis B virus (HBV), especially of uniquely African strains of the virus, which differ from those found in other regions of the world. The focus of our research has been the study of sequence variation of African HBV strains, their functional characterization and their role in

clinical manifestation of disease, including hepatocellular carcinoma. HBV is estimated to infect two billion humans and it is second only to cigarette smoking as an agent causing human cancer. Globally over 250 million individuals are chronically infected with the virus and many will develop liver cancer. Approximately 16% - 20% of the carriers of the world reside in Africa. No infectious diseases research in Africa can neglect the AIDS pandemic scourging our continent, so, in addition to HBV-mono-infection, our team has also researched HBV/HIV co-infection. She is a Fellow of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSaf). She is a member of the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) and sits on various international committees including the Governing Body of the International Committee to Eliminate HBV (ICE-HBV), Member of ICE-HBV Virology, Chronic Hepatitis B Management in Resource-Limited Settings working groups and convener of the Biomarkers Group.. She is a passionate advocate for the elimination of hepatitis in sub-Saharan Africa through increased vaccination coverage, especially of the birth dose; through diagnosis, to find the missing millions; and improved access to treatment for those eliqible.

Mr Musa Marange



Musa Marange is a Senior Specialist for Southeast Africa in the Medical, Clinical, and Scientific Organization at Abbott Rapid Diagnostics, with expertise in clinical studies, product evaluations, and medical and scientific affairs initiatives across the region. He leads regional engagements with KOLs, HCP's and government stakeholders to generate insights that inform strategy and support the adoption of innovative diagnostics solutions. His current role spans designing and monitoring studies, presenting scientific evidence, and ensuring alignment between research, business objectives, and public health needs.