



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Genomics conference set to highlight African research to improve health on the continent

The Human Heredity and Health in Africa (H3Africa) is holding its 18th bi-annual Consortium meeting from 31 August to 3 September 2021. The meeting will bring together over 200 international delegates, and will highlight some of the seminal research being conducted by African scientists specializing in the field of genomics and how this can inform and ultimately impact disease and health in African populations.

The H3Africa initiative, which is a pan-African network of research projects, works to develop within the continent the study of genomic/genetic and environmental contributors of health and disease, and generates unique data that could be used to improve both African and global health.

For its 18th meeting, H3Africa has partnered with the African Society of Human Genetics (AfSHG) to host a back to back in person / virtual hybrid meeting, with the primary host country being Tanzania. This will be AfSHG's 13th meeting to be held in Dar es Salaam in collaboration with the 1st conference of the Tanzania Society of Human Genetics, and with the overarching theme, "Genomics and translational research to improve health in Africa".

"H3Africa is the frontier of genomic research in Africa. Many of our field researchers, scientists, scholars and leaders have made a huge collaborative investment to achieve the H3Africa vision. We now have the opportunity to expand our efforts through global engagement and investment to ensure further contributions to science and sustainability," says Dr Michelle Skelton, Project Manager and Principal Investigator for the H3Africa Coordinating Centre, based in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Cape Town.

Over the last decade, H3Africa has supported ground-breaking research projects that have paved the way to developing solutions to improve health on the continent and globally. Through its network of 14 Collaborative Research Centres spanning across Southern, East and West Africa, studies are being conducted of the genomics and environmental determinants of diseases such as cardio-vascular diseases, mental health, blindness, hearing impairment, Sickle Cell, and infectious diseases such as HIV, TB and, more recently, COVID-19.

For more information about H3Africa and some of its project highlights, the upcoming 18th Consortium meeting, and potential interviews with H3Africa members contact Shumi.chimombe@uct.ac.za

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About H3Africa

H3Africa facilitates fundamental research into diseases on the African continent while also developing infrastructure, resources, training, and ethical guidelines to support sustainable African research led by African scientists, for the African people.

The initiative consists of 51 African projects that include population-based genomic studies of common, non-communicable disorders such as heart and renal disease, as well as communicable diseases such as tuberculosis. These studies are led by African scientists and use genetic, clinical, and epidemiologic methods to identify hereditary and environmental contributions to health and disease. To establish a foundation for African scientists to continue this essential work into the future work, the consortium also supports many crucial capacity building elements, such as: ethical, legal, and social implications research; training and capacity building for bioinformatics; capacity for biobanking; and coordination and networking.

Support for the Consortium is provided by the United States National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Strategic Coordination, the Common Fund, in the Office of the Director through the U54HG003273 and U24HG006941 awards.

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