



UKZN HOSTS WORLD TB DAY PROGRAMME



Medical students rallying against TB stigma.

The South African Medical Students Association (SAMSA) at UKZN hosted a World TB Day programme titled: "United to END TB".

The aim of the event, held at the Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine, was to help build a level of consciousness about TB and to defeat the stigma around it.

'According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about one third of the world's population is infected with mycobacterium tuberculosis (Mtb) and in 2015 alone there was an estimated 10.4 million new cases of TB worldwide,' said the Head of Medical Microbiology at UKZN and at the National Health Laboratory Services, Professor Koleka Mlisana.

'1.8 million people died from TB in 2015 and of those, 400 000 were HIV co-infected.'

UKZN's Professor Prakash Jeena delivered a presentation looking at TB globally and specifically its significance to Medical students given the risk they face of contracting the disease.

Jeena highlighted environmental factors which promote the risk of transmission such as poor ventilation, overcrowded spaces, lack of sunlight, passive and active smoking, prolonged exposure, lack of cough rooms and the occupational risk healthcare workers face of contracting TB.

He said there was an urgent need to address TB care therapy.

The event began with a period of silence during which candles were lit. This was followed by the distribution of masks and stickers and flash drives containing the latest health guidelines.

Mr Siyabonga Sibusiso Shongwe spoke on the theme: "Choose to Live", while Mr Masilo Sekhula presented on: "the Wishes of a TB Patient".

Doctors and professors held a mini-symposium during the event with three researchers from the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA) delivering presentations. Head of the Treatment of Research Programme at the Centre, Dr Kogieleum Naidoo, discussed teachings on TB diagnosis, treatment, management and prevention, while the Head of HIV Pathogenesis and Vaccine Research, Mlisana spoke on the evolution of tuberculosis, its diagnosis and transmission and Dr Rochelle Adams presented on TB transmission.

The event concluded with the cutting of a “commemorative cake” and a vote of thanks by Ms Darsha Kistan.

[Ziphezinhle Silindile Biyela](#)