EMBEDDING AFRICAN GENETIC DIVERSITY INTO GLOBAL RESEARCH PIPELINES: ENTER THE HUMBLE CELL

THURS 17TH APRIL

1-2PM TALK BY **DR JANINE SCHOLEFIELD** (NI AUDITORIUM, **IN-PERSON ONLY**)

2:30-4PM SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (ALL WELCOME)

Africa encompasses more genetic variation than the rest of the world yet this rich diversity is critically under-represented in medical research and treatments. Consequently, medicines developed in the Global North often lead to sub-optimal treatment outcome, where nearly 10% of South African hospitalisations are caused by adverse drug reactions. North – South mutually beneficial collaborations can ensure that access to Africa's vast genetic heritage is positively embedded in global R&D pipelines.

In this talk, Dr Scholefield will discuss the progress the CSIR team have made in pursuing an African Cell Initiative (ACI), where they are building cohorts of induced pluripotent stem cells from individuals of African ancestry. This talk will be of particular relevance to those with interests in creating cellular models from clinically validated disease cohorts, as well as choosing physiologically relevant cellular models.

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Janine Scholefield completed her PhD in Human Genetics at UCT and thereafter spent three years as a Nuffield Medical Fellow at the University of Oxford.

She returned to establish induced pluripotent stem cell research in SA specialising in cellular modelling of disease, specifically developing physiologically relevant cellular models of disease using advanced technologies (including stem cells & genome engineering) to suit the unique genetics of sub-Saharan Africa.

She is a Research Group Leader at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and holds honorary lectureship positions in the Human Biology dept at UCT and in the Human Genetics Dept at Wits University. In addition, she is the Editor-in-Chief for the Springer Nature journal Gene Therapy.

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