

# GUEST EDITORIAL



I am delighted that this edition of the *Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine* has been devoted to covering some of the highlights of the 2nd South African AIDS Conference, held at the International Convention Centre in Durban on 7 - 10 June 2005. The Conference attracted close to 4 000 participants from all sectors, including National Government, business, civil society, academia, journalists, activists, health care workers, social workers, clinicians, community workers and people living with HIV.

The theme of the Conference was Unity and Accountability, and this permeated through many of the sessions. The quality of the plenary talks was without exception outstanding, covering many of the current topics and highlighting the most recent advances in HIV research and care. Those by Dr Mark Nelson on new treatments, Dr Francois Venter on the State antiretroviral programme, Dr Nicoli Nattrass on the economic impact of HIV and Fatima Hassan on human rights are included in this issue. Most of the other plenary talks are posted on the Conference website (<http://www.sa-aidsconference.com/>). Dr Mamphela Ramphele gave the inaugural Nkosi Johnson Memorial Lecture at the opening ceremony. We are honoured to be able to print the full text of this most inspiring speech. There were four Tracks at the Conference, covering Basic and Clinical Sciences (Track 1), Epidemiology, Prevention and Public Health (Track 2), Social and Economic Sciences, Human Rights and Ethics (Track 3) and Best Practices and Programmes (Track 4). Again the quality and scope of the work presented was impressive. Many of the highlights from each of the Tracks are included in the Rapporteur reports by Dr Gavin Churchyard (Track 1), Dr Gita Ramjee (Track 2) and Obed Qulo (Track 3). A summary of workplace HIV programmes discussed at the Conference in

Track 4 is provided by Brad Mears. A prize was awarded to the best oral presenter in each of the Tracks, chosen by the Rapporteur Team. There were symposia, round-table discussions, satellite sessions and debates covering a variety of topics. Summaries of the symposia hosted by Dr Clive Gray on HIV Vaccines, Dr Wendy Stevens on Affordable Monitoring and Dr Neil Martinson on HIV and TB are also included in this issue, as is the Satellite Symposium on Paediatric Immunology organised by Dr Clive Gray. The salient points from two of the debates have been summarised here: issues around HIV testing by Dr Quarraisha Abdool Karim and the debate over the optimal time to start treatment by Dr Robin Wood, Dr Gary Maartens and Professor Des Martin.

I would like to thank the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society for affording us this opportunity to publish these articles and enabling this information to be disseminated to a wider audience. The Conference was a great success because of the excellent team that devoted their time and energy to putting together a dynamic and exciting programme. I would like to thank the Programme Committee and the Conference Secretariat most sincerely for this.

The 3rd South African AIDS Conference will be held at the same venue on 5 - 8 June 2007. The Chair is Dr Olive Shisana, head of the Human Sciences Research Council. Dr Shisana gave both a plenary talk and chaired a round-table discussion on the impact of HIV on the higher education system at the 2nd Conference. She is therefore well positioned to host what will be an even bigger and better event.

See you there!

**LYNN MORRIS**

*Guest Editor*

