



The Discovery Foundation has announced the awarding of research and training grants to 37 recipients.

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Discovery Foundation makes R24.5m investment in training and research of public sector doctors for 2020

The Discovery Foundation, an independent trust with the objective of investing in human resources for South Africa's healthcare sector, has this year again awarded research and training grants to some of South Africa's most talented future healthcare leaders and experts. The R24.5 million in grants – including R16.6 million for 28 individual recipients towards their fellowships and R11.1 million approved to 14 institutions – will be used to boost academic, specialist and rural medicine in areas of critical need, including paediatrics, psychiatry, oncology and many more areas of need.

“The Discovery Foundation believes that our country’s doctors are in a unique position to solve some of the most perplexing health and clinical challenges we face as a country. By giving our healthcare professionals the opportunity to learn and grow, we can facilitate a homegrown response to some of the world’s most challenging health problems,” says Dr Vincent Maphai, Chairperson of the Discovery Foundation.

The Discovery Foundation was established in 2006 to invest in medical specialist training and to help retain specialists within the public health sector, with a special focus on developing black specialists. Investing in black medical specialists benefit not only the individual grant recipients, but also South African society more broadly.

To date, the Foundation has invested over R261 million in grants to support 473 medical specialists and institutions.

The 2020 Discovery Foundation MGH Fellowship Award

The Discovery Foundation MGH Fellowship Award was first introduced in 2013 in partnership with the prestigious Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) – the largest teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School based in Boston in the United States.

The Discovery Foundation MGH Fellowship Award aims to develop the next generation of leaders in academic and clinical medicine in South Africa. The award provides support for mid-career clinical specialists committed to pursuing a career in academic medicine through a fellowship programme that links medical scientists based at South African medical schools with leaders in clinical science at this world-class medical institution.

The **MGH Fellow for 2020 is 33-year-old Dr Sumy Thomas**, who will spend a year-long medical residency at Massachusetts General Hospital once travel restrictions are lifted. Dr Thomas will be in the MGH metabolism unit in the division of endocrinology. Her research will explore how HIV and antiretroviral (ARV) medicine affects the endocrine system.

“This will address a need in the population of SA. We have an estimated 7.7-million people living with HIV – the largest pandemic in the world. While ARVs have helped give longevity to patients in the past decade, we are now

seeing a larger number of patients at risk for cardiometabolic disease, including dysglycaemia and fatty liver disease, which could be a result of the virus itself or from ARV therapy. This area needs to be explored further,” she says.

Announcing the 2020 Discovery Foundation Awards recipients

This year, the Discovery Foundation granted **14 Rural Individual Awards** to support the training and development of specialists working in rural and underserved areas, and for senior doctors practising in these areas. This year's Rural Individual Award recipients specialise in non-communicable diseases, family planning, mental health, HIV, mother and child health, orthopaedic surgery, epilepsy, rheumatology, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics and urology.

The **five Discovery Foundation Rural Institutional Awards** aim to bring more medical expertise to hospitals in under-resourced areas in South Africa. The institutions that received grants this year focus on mother and child health, urology, dental surgery, mental health of young men going through circumcision, better service delivery through technology, and training and retaining specialists in provinces such as Limpopo and the Northern Cape.

Six doctors received **Discovery Foundation Academic Fellowship Awards** this year. These awards will promote research-focused training in academic medicine in South Africa by developing clinician scientists. This year's Discovery Foundation Academic Fellows specialise in trauma surgery, gynaecological oncology, chronic kidney disease, eye care, skin cancer and public health.

Seven doctors received the **Discovery Foundation Sub-Specialist Awards**. These awards aim to improve medical skills by boosting sub-specialist training and academic medicine in South Africa. This year's award recipients will sub-specialise in areas including high-risk pregnancies, nephrology and paediatric nephrology, maternal foetal medicine, reproductive medicine, male infertility and geriatric psychiatry.

Finally, the **Discovery Foundation Distinguished Visitor Awards** aim to build the capacity of institutions and support institutional partnerships in rural parts of South Africa by supporting specialists to mentor and help train young doctors in under-resourced hospitals.

Among them, Dr Nozipho Nyakale received a Distinguished Rural Visitor Award from the Discovery Foundation to establish a network to strengthen the use of nuclear medicine at the Pietersburg Hospital in Limpopo. Other focus areas include strengthening surgical systems in the Northern Cape, improving rheumatological service in Polokwane, and tackling the high maternal mortality rate in Limpopo.

Full list of Discovery Foundation Award recipients

Discovery Foundation Massachusetts General Hospital Fellow for 2020/1

1/ **Dr Sumy Thomas** will explore how HIV and antiretroviral medicine affect the endocrine system.

Discovery Foundation Rural Individual Awards

2/ **Dr Zamanci September** will investigate how much patients with dyslipidaemia know about the condition in effort to help them manage it better.

3/ **Dr Dylan Gibson's** research aims to empower women in rural Eastern Cape with better access to effective family planning and knowledge of contraception.

4/ **Dr Kartik Naidoo** aims to understand unplanned pregnancies in Mossel Bay by researching the experiences of nurses and clients in family planning at local clinics.

5/ **Dr Sarah Boshoff** is investigating how doctors and nurses can help to prevent triggers of post-traumatic stress disorder in patients receiving critical care at Dora Nginza Hospital in the Eastern Cape.

6/ **Dr Illana Links** will research the prevalence and clinical link between mental health and HIV in the acute mental health unit at Dora Nginza Hospital.

7/ **Dr Kwakombe Ndjondo's** research on women's experiences after an abortion at Moses Kotane Hospital in Rustenburg aims to support women and

reduce pressure on public healthcare services.

8/ **Dr Libinu Thomas** is investigating the most effective ways to disinfect doctors' cellphones in a paediatric ICU in East London.

9/ **Dr Kaylem Coetzee's** research will evaluate the orthopaedic training that young doctors receive at health science faculties in Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

10/ **Dr Isabel Michaelis** will study the epidemiology of epilepsies in children at Frere and Cecilia Makiwane Hospitals in East London.

11/ **Dr Emma Gardiner's** research aims to improve rheumatological care for people in the Eastern Cape.

12/ **Dr Adam Asghar** aims to find ways of improving maternal and perinatal care at Bethesda Hospital in rural KwaZulu-Natal.

13/ **Dr Veena John's** research focuses on HIV prevalence in newborn babies with very low birth weight.

14/ **Dr John Jeff** is doing his master's degree on the change in renal function after removing a kidney in a patient who has had cancer. He is also leading a team at the Frere Hospital Department of Urology in writing a book to help doctors in the Eastern Cape treat urological conditions.

Discovery Foundation Rural Institutional Awards

15/ **Dr Mabatho Kekana** aims to improve healthcare services for mothers and babies at Estcourt Hospital in KwaZulu-Natal.

16/ **Dr Mmamolapi Molokwane** is committed to improving and expanding dental surgery for patients in Limpopo.

17/ **Prof Zukiswa Zingela's** team at Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital will train healthcare workers to support the mental health of young men undergoing ritual circumcision in the Eastern Cape.

18/ **Dr Brad Wentzel** launched a project in Upington to help healthcare workers in far-flung regions of the Northern Cape access specialists' advice and support through technology.

19/ **Dr Phetho Mangena's** project at Pietersburg Hospital aims to grow the number of specialists in Limpopo by training young doctors who already work there.

Discovery Foundation Academic Fellowship Awards

20/ **Dr Deidré McPherson** is a trauma surgeon on the front lines of Cape Town, one of the most violent cities in the world, doing her PhD in trauma surgery.

21/ **Prof Mfundo Mabenge**, a gynaecological oncologist, is exploring adverse pregnancy outcomes at Dora Nginza Hospital to assess potential strategies to reduce women's risk.

22/ **Dr Siyabonga Khoza** is completing his PhD in chemical pathology, with a focus on detecting early markers for chronic kidney disease in black people.

23/ **Dr Sandika Baboolal's** PhD research aims to identify gaps in the registrar training programme across all specialities, and to suggest possible solutions.

24/ **Dr Johann de Wet** aims to bring a new microscopic surgery for the treatment of skin cancer to more South Africans.

25/ **Dr Nhlanhla Gumede** is a paediatrician completing a master's degree in public health in KwaZulu-Natal.

Discovery Foundation Sub-Specialist Awards

26/ **Dr Sibusiso Nhlapo's** sub-specialty deals with high-risk pregnancies complicated by medical conditions and foetal anomalies in women living in rural Mpumalanga.

27/ **Dr Nokukhanya Ngubane-Mwandla** is investigating the impact of chronic kidney disease on children at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital.

28/ **Dr Ismail Banderker** is sub-specialising in nephrology to help patients with chronic kidney conditions in Cape Town.

29/ **Dr Faith Ngambu** is sub-specialising in maternal foetal medicine, with a special focus on the impact of herbal medicine on the development of cerebral palsy in infants.

30/ **Dr Khatija Kadwa** is sub-specialising in reproductive medicine with the aim of making infertility treatment more widely available to women across South Africa.

31/ **Dr Ramokone Mogotlane** has chosen reproductive medicine as her sub-specialisation, focusing on the neglected field of male infertility.

32/ **Dr Sihle Nhlabathi's** sub-specialist research in geriatric psychiatry at Stikland Hospital in Cape Town aims to improve the care elderly people receive.

Discovery Foundation Distinguished Visitor Awards

33/ **Prof Kathryn Chu** aims to help strengthen surgical systems at a hospital in Upington in the Northern Cape.

34/ **Prof Asgar Kalla** will teach medical registrars and help improve rheumatology services at the Polokwane Academic Hospital.

35/ **Prof Susan Fawcus** will visit several hospitals in Limpopo to train doctors and nurses in emergency obstetric care to reduce the high maternal mortality rate in the province.

36/ **Prof Hoffie Conradie** will host workshops for healthcare workers in rural Eastern Cape focusing on self-awareness, reflection and developing tools to prevent burn-out.

37/ **Dr Nozipho Nyakale** will guide and mentor doctors in Limpopo on how to use nuclear medicine to improve patient services.

Keep an eye on the Discovery website and social media channels for more

stories about the 2020 Discovery Foundation Award recipients.

For interviews or further enquiries, please email: ShantiA@discovery.co.za

Discovery information

About Discovery

Discovery Limited is a South African-founded financial services organisation that operates in the healthcare, life assurance, short-term insurance, savings and investment and wellness markets. Since inception in 1992, Discovery has been guided by a clear core purpose – to make people healthier and to enhance and protect their lives. This has manifested in its globally recognised Vitality Shared-Value insurance model, active in 24 markets with over 20 million members. The model is exported and scaled through the Global Vitality Network, an alliance of some of the largest insurers across key markets including AIA (Asia), Ping An (China), Generali (Europe), Sumitomo (Japan), John Hancock (US), Manulife (Canada) and Vitality Life & Health (UK, wholly owned). Discovery trades on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange as DSY.

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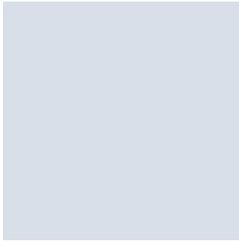
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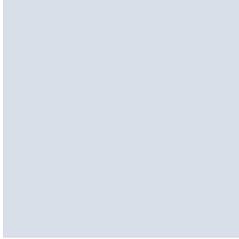
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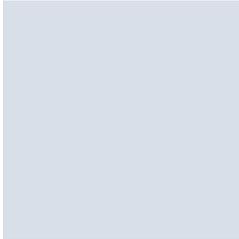
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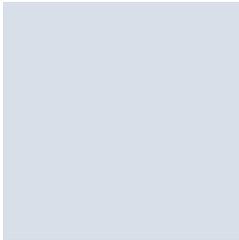
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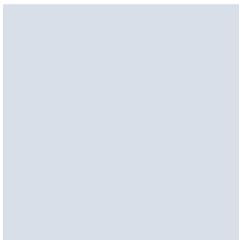
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