



**SACEMA**  
DST/NRF Centre of Excellence in Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis

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## **SACEMA NEWSLETTER**

### **December 2007**

The SACEMA staff would like to wish our friends and colleagues all of the best over the holiday season. We hope you have a restful and peaceful time. We will be closing the wine cellar from 18 December until 7 January 2008, when we will be ready to tackle the New Year!

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

##### **Making Decisions on Male circumcision for HIV Risk Reduction**

SACEMA, with UNAIDS and the WHO, hosted a meeting in Stellenbosch "Making Decisions on Male Circumcision for HIV Risk Reduction: Modelling the Impact and Costs" from 15-16 November 2007.

Researchers working in the area of male circumcision, including modellers from around the world, gathered at SACEMA to discuss and review the work done in this area, particularly regarding the predicted impact of male circumcision and the costs of rolling out this preventative measure on a larger scale.

A follow-up meeting is planned for early 2008 in order for the modellers to reach consensus on the impact and costs of male circumcision, for the purpose of delivering a statement to this effect at the next World AIDS Conference in Mexico.



*Participants at the  
UNAIDS/WHO/SACEMA meeting,  
enjoying the sun in the STIAS  
courtyard*

## SACEMA CONVENES MEETING TO DISCUSS TB AND HIV INTERVENTION IN THE WESTERN CAPE



*TB Bacterium*  
([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk))



HIV Virus  
([www.rkm.com.au](http://www.rkm.com.au))

In early November, SACEMA convened a group of TB and HIV experts to consider the unprecedented levels of both HIV and TB in various communities in the Western Cape. It is proposed to put together an intervention that will address these issues in at least two communities with differing prevalence of both diseases.

Experts from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the World Health Organisation, KNCV in the Netherlands and the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre met with SACEMA staff to analyse the situation and to start thinking about a multi-disciplinary way to tackle it. The meeting was of an exploratory nature and designed to look at the prospects and problems associated with various possible interventions, rather than any firm commitment to any particular avenue of action. Future meetings are planned with the Desmond Tutu TB Clinic and the Department of Health to take this forward.

## PROF JOHN HARGROVE DELIVERS INAUGURAL LECTURE



Prof John Hargrove, Director of SACEMA, delivered his inaugural lecture at the University of Stellenbosch on 13 November 2007. The title of his lecture was "Migration, Mines and Mores: the HIV Epidemic in Southern Africa".

The lecture showed that peak HIV prevalence in sub-Saharan countries declines both with increases both in the proportion of men who are circumcised and in the proportion of the population who are Muslim. In the past there has been a tendency to suggest that the high HIV prevalence rates in southern Africa were in some way linked to low rates of male circumcision, as well as a small proportion of Muslims. However, even when one adjusts for these factors, the HIV prevalence is still very much higher in southern African than in east Africa, and is higher in both of these regions than in western and central Africa. Nobody has yet been able to show convincingly why this should be so. In the lecture it was suggested that the problem had much to do with structural issues – and was probably related to oscillatory migration linked to employment patterns on mines and large agricultural estates, leading to a breakdown of family structure.

The full text version of the lecture will shortly be available on the SACEMA website ([www.sacema.ac.za](http://www.sacema.ac.za)).

## SACEMA-FUNDED STUDENT JOINT WINNER OF BEST STUDENT PRESENTATION AT RECENT CONFERENCE

SACEMA was a prominent participant at the annual meeting of the Southern African Mathematical Sciences Association in Windhoek, 27-30 November. Invited plenary talks on contrasting aspects of epidemiological modelling were given by Professors Ekkehard Kopp (SACEMA Trustee) and Edward Lungu (Botswana, and SACEMA Senior Research Fellow). In addition, Dr Farai Nyabadza (Post-doctoral Fellow) and Mr Gesham Magombedze (SACEMA-funded PhD student at the National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe) contributed talks on their current research. Mr Magombedze was joint winner of the newly created prize for Best Student Presentation at the meeting. For more information on SAMSA see: <http://www.samsajournal.org/samsa/index.html>