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DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis

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The DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in
Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis
invites you to a seminar by

Laurette Mhlanga
(PhD)

“Prevalence of anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody in South African blood donors in the Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Free State provinces (January 2021)”



Friday
19 February 2021
15h00

[Click here to join the meeting](#)



Abstract:

Given the high and uncertain frequency of asymptomatic COVID 19 infections and time-varying testing capacity/coverage constraint, it is important to conduct surveillance using serological tests to determine the seroprevalence at the populations level. Unlike PCR test that tracks the current/active infections, serological tests (Anti-SARS-CoV-2 assays) determine the presence of anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies, which can be taken as a good proxy for having been previously infected at some point. This can help assess the extent of exposure in a population and inform decision making on application, enforcement or relaxation of containment measures.

The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) and the Western Cape Blood Service (WCBS) used existing blood screening systems to ascertain the prevalence of anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies among donors in Eastern Cape, Free State, Northern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal. The Specimens (collected on predetermined days from all donors presenting on those days) were screened for anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies using Roche anti-SARS-CoV-2 Elecsys E411 system. The seroprevalence was strikingly high, which aligns with previous studies and confirms a very substantial undercount in the officially diagnosed cases.

Short Bio:

Laurette Mhlanga is PhD student at SACEMA, enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (Department of Global Health) at Stellenbosch University. She holds an MSc in Mathematical Sciences from AIMS Tanzania, MSc in Operations Research from NUST – Zimbabwe, a double major in Statistics and Biochemistry plus BSc special honours in Statistics, both from the University of Zimbabwe. Currently, she is working under the supervision of Prof Alex Welte on a project that involves the construction of a comprehensive survey analysis benchmarking platform and developing guidance on the primary challenges of data smoothing faced by surveys intending to estimate HIV incidence.

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