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UCT researcher receives two international awards for work in HIV associated lymphoma

University of Cape Town (UCT) researcher Dr Katherine Antel has been selected by the [American Society of Hematology](#) (ASH) to receive the 2022 ASH Global Research Award to support her work in HIV associated lymphoma (a type of cancer). Antel is one of 13 talented early-career investigators selected for this honour.

Through Award, ASH helps researchers outside the United States and Canada by providing partial salary or other support allowing recipients to pursue research projects that will help them get to the next step in their careers.

In addition to the ASH award, Antel has received a grant from the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH) of USD 510 505 (~R 17 million) to investigate the genomic and transcriptomic profile of HIV-associated Diffuse-Large B cell lymphoma and to support her career journey to becoming an expert in lymphoid genomics.

"I am thrilled and honored to have the importance of my research questions recognised and supported. As a clinical haematologist, my goal is to improve patient outcomes with blood cancers like lymphoma. This work will be important to enhance our understanding of the pathogenesis of lymphoma in HIV, and enable us to work towards early detection methods, such as cell-free DNA and guide the use of targeted therapy," said Antel.

Lymphoma is a type of cancer that affects an individual's lymphatic system; the system responsible for fighting infection. There are two types, non-Hodgkin and Hodgkin lymphoma. The probability of a person with HIV developing non-Hodgkin lymphoma is ten to twenty times higher and eight times higher for Hodgkin lymphoma. It is highly curable when diagnosed early, but unfortunately is frequently diagnosed at a late-stage in South Africa and is commonly misdiagnosed as TB (which can also cause enlarged lymph nodes).

On the implications of her research locally Antel shared: "Cancer genomics is a nascent field in South Africa and our patients are very under-represented ethnic groups in genomic databases. I hope to use the skills I develop during my projects to expand science and translational research in cancer genomics in South Africa. I am very grateful to be intellectually supported by my scientific mentor, Dr Mark Murakami at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard University and scientists at the Broad Institute. I look forward to strengthening UCT's collaborations with these leading international cancer genomic institutions in the coming years."



Dr Katherine Antel

Photo: Supplied

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