



Annual SAPRIN Conference Convened in Cape Town

December 2025



[Delegates at the annual SAPRIN conference](#)

The Annual [South African Population Research Infrastructure Network \(SAPRIN\)](#) conference took place in Gordon's Bay, Cape Town from 21 – 23 July 2025. The overarching conference theme was, “Advancing Health and Social Wellbeing through Population Science.”

It was the first time the conference was open to all interested researchers, scientists and stakeholders. Approximately 120 delegates were in attendance. A diverse and comprehensive programme was delivered.

The conference was officially opened by Dr Keith Cloete, Head of Department at the Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness. The science plenary was opened by Professor Liesl Zühlke, Vice President of Extramural Research & Internal Portfolio at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC).

The SAPRIN Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030 was launched during the conference by SAPRIN's Acting Director, Dr André Rose on 21 July 2025. The plan is underpinned by the vision of *equitable health and social wellbeing for all* and the mission of building a *dynamic, productive national research infrastructure through longitudinal, population-based nodes in under-resourced communities*. The strategic plan is available here [SAPRIN Strat Plan 2025-2030.pdf](#).

During the first night of the conference C-SHARP's novel community engagement initiative, a youth filmmaking project was showcased. Three profound short films were aired during the conference. The films were created by learners from the Bishop Lavis and Nomzamo communities. The filmmaking training workshop was run by non-profit organisation, Eh!woza. Two of the aspiring filmmakers addressed delegates. Read more about the project here



The conference sub-themes were, “Public Health and social wellbeing,” “Implementation Science,” “Research to policy and practice translation,” and “Epidemiology and Surveillance.” A total of 58 abstracts were received and 23 oral presentations and 8 posters were accepted for presentation at the conference. The conference abstract report can be accessed here [SAPRIN 2025 Abstract Report.pdf](#)

The best poster presentation was awarded to Dr Erin von der Heyden for her poster on *Linking Mothers: A descriptive analysis of routine health and household data to characterize pregnant Individuals in the Nomzamo Health Demographic Surveillance Site (HDSS), Cape Town*. The winning oral presentation went to Ms Christine Ochola for her presentation on *Translating Mental Health Research into Policy and Practice through the Mental Health Data Prize Africa Initiative*. Dr Inge Kleinhans was placed second for her abstract titled, *A proof-of-concept study to demonstrate feasibility and utility of surgical indicators for inclusion in the South African National Department of Health’s National Indicator Data Sets (NIDS)*. The winner in the Emerging Scientist Category was Ms Omphile Rashope with the topic, *Assessing Implementation Fidelity of Targeted Universal Tuberculosis at Primary Care Facilities in Johannesburg in 2025*.

Where Service Meets Science: Community Health Workers (CHWs) as Catalysts for Health and Research was a panel discussion curated for day 3 of the conference. This two-part session was a Community Health Worker Panel discussion, and it also delved into the C-SHARP model and linkage of C-SHARP data to routine Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness data.

The *My Science Journey* segment brought together a diverse range of scientists in various stages of their careers. The engaging session discussed various aspects of the trajectories of the scientist’s careers from their qualifications, entry into science, achievements, projects and advice for emerging scientists.

The overall conference was a success and contributed to enhancing population science in South Africa.

SAPRIN will not host a conference in 2026. The date of the next conference will be announced in due course.

