



DELEGATE FOCUS: Bakani July Johnson (Social worker and counselor at Baylor Clinic, Botswana)

Bakani is looking forward to sharing ideas about adolescent care at this year's PATA Forum.

Bakani is very excited about the Adolescent Care topic and wants to hear new ideas from other treatment teams.

"Adolescents are the most difficult population to work with," she said of her work at the clinic.

Botswana has the highest rate of adolescents on ARVs in sub-Saharan Africa because children were put on treatment very early in comparison to other African countries.

Bakani's biggest challenge while

working with adolescents is adherence. She explained that adolescents are expected to take on more and more responsibilities, but they are "rebellious and challenge everything". However, they do not necessarily understand the impact their decisions will have on their health.

"We are moving towards a new era of HIV and adolescent care. We can't not deal with the issue of adolescents affected by HIV. Children are now surviving thanks to ARVs and we all need to be prepared for this."

This is the second time Bakani has attended a PATA forum.

CLINIC FOCUS: Robertson, South Africa

The Robertson ARV Clinic is one of ten clinics present this year which are new to a PATA forum. Their team consists of Dr Naas Van Der Westhuizen (seen at right in conversation with Dr Paul Roux), Hendrika Doms (pharmacist), Dorothy Ndindwa (nurse) and Zachariah Siavhe (counsellor).

As a rural clinic, the team works at satellite clinics in four other rural areas surrounding them - Montagu, Ashton, Bonnievale and McGregor.

Dr Van der Westhuizen is also a committed mentor at nearby Swellendam Hospital. The team has a huge task in providing long-term treatment and care for 550 patients (including 23 paediatric patients). With primary clinics treating pre-HAART patients, and working on a referral system, it is expected that this number will steadily increase within the Robertson ARV Clinic.

The team hopes that the conference is going to provide valuable knowledge, insight and discussion around many focus areas such as advanced ARV therapy, Adolescents and the Psychosocial support toolkit.

A major issue identified for the team is being understaffed. Any clinic facing this dilemma will be aware of the levels of stress and strain this has on care giving capacity. Feeling overwhelmed with tasks and duties undoubtedly affects motivation. Dr Van der Westhuizen and his team are looking forward to learn about ways in which other ARV clinics cope with similar conditions and daily experiences.

They also hope that, by attending the forum, new staff will benefit from the information and experience gained here.



"I will bring my own experiences in dealing with HIV. I can also talk about the challenges we face at our clinic and what we have done to solve those. Our catchment area is big – about 120 000 people in the Oshakati area – so we have a lot of experience."

**- Dr Solomon Bikita,
Oshikuku Rural
Catholic Hospital,**



"HIV is never static and we must adapt with it. The energy is what's exciting about the PATA forum. What amazes me is how eager people are – sessions start very early in the mornings and go on until late, but people just go on, they still care. Sometimes we as healthcare workers think we're not making headway, but we are and we can pat ourselves on the back every now and then." - **Dr Dean Solomon, Kheth'Impilo**





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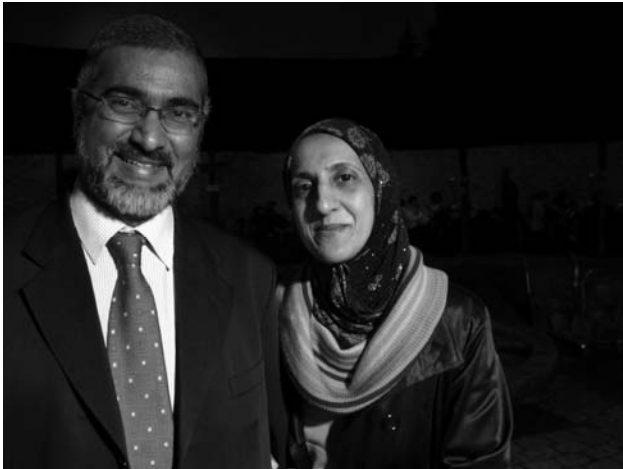
L'Équipe PATA

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It's time to be invigorated again!



The Johannesburg thunderstorm which welcomed most of the attendees to this year's forum cleared as everyone gathered in the boma last night to hear Dr Paul Cromhout and Dr Ashraf Coovadia speak.

"It is a great honour to welcome you all," Cromhout said. "PATA's mission is to expand access to care to children and their families throughout the African continent. The only way we can do that is by working with you, the teams."

Cromhout said that PATA can help each health care worker who attends the forum to be the best they can be. "You help to bring treatment, love, care and hope and tonight we salute you. Our purpose is to assist you and to help identify those things which you

really want to improve at your clinic. We hope you really have fun this week, but we also want you to participate."

Dr Coovadia (on behalf of Wits Echo and the Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital's Paediatric HIV Services) welcomed attendees as "a local boy", as he currently lives in Johannesburg despite starting his career in Zambia.

"I'm a relative newcomer to PATA," he said, "But I'm really excited and inspired for what PATA stands for, the exchanging of ideas and the sharing of experiences."

"We hope that, when you get back home afterwards, you will perhaps be richer and function in a more invigorating way in your clinic."



Top left: Dr Ashraf Coovadia was accompanied by his wife, Dr Feroza Moola (a dentist) at last night's welcome dinner in the boma. After the words of welcome, delegates tucked into the delicious food on offer (below).

Lost in transit? We hope everyone is here safely by now...

Glitches in arrivals are part of the process of any conference. Whilst one team may lose a piece of luggage; another may lose a team member in the hub of a busy airport like OR Tambo International; others may get lost when trying to find their transport to the conference hotel.

This year's PATA forum cemented the continuation of this 'arrivals trend'.

One delegate from Lesotho missed her plane to Johannesburg yesterday morning and instead travelled by taxi to the conference. Dedication indeed!

An Angolan delegate got lost in the airport for three hours, but arrived safely in time for dinner last night.

And we are still waiting to hear what happened to the Namibian delegate who got stuck in limbo at the airport due to not having enough empty pages in his passport.

PATA 2009 brings together 30 paediatric HIV health care clinic teams from 10 different Southern African countries.

We hope everyone is here safely by now so that we can get down to work in the plenary, feedback and masterclass sessions.