



The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)  
cordially invites you to a webinar on:

## Health Research and its contribution to South Africa's democracy

**Date:** 30 August 2022

**Time:** 14:00 to 15:30

**Register:** [Click here](#) to register

**Venue:** Zoom (link to be provided upon registration)

### BACKGROUND

Freedom of speech encompasses freedom of research and is an important component of any democracy. Health research, and communication around this research, have contributed to strengthening South Africa's democracy. Generally, COVID-19 research has been well disseminated and discussed openly, between scientists, civil society and government. To this extent, COVID-19 related health research can be said to have strengthened the functioning of our democracy. However, the pandemic has brought to the forefront important questions about the role of health research in a democracy.

### This webinar seeks to understand:

- 1) The extent to which the discussion around health research during COVID-19 excluded other research voices from the mainstream
- 2) The extent to which health research should be a matter of discussion amongst non-specialists? Should there be limits on information shared/discussions held?
- 3) In an environment of the free flow of information, does the way in which health research information is shared enhance or undermine our democracy?
- 4) How does the dissemination of health research information affect the relationships between scientists, government and civil society?

### MODERATOR:

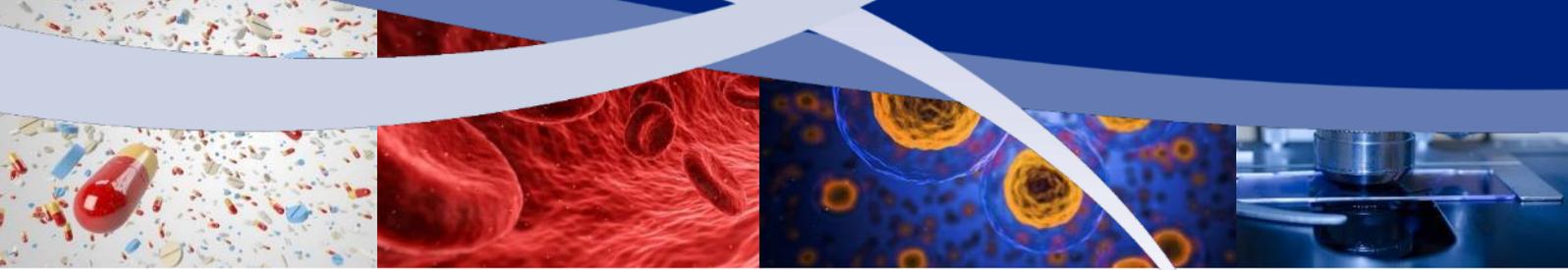
**Dr Elizabeth Lutge**

Honorary lecturer, School of Nursing and Public Health, University of KwaZulu-Natal

### SPEAKERS:

**Professor Helen Rees**, Founder and Executive Director of the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute (Wits RHI), Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Witwatersrand

**Professor Mosa Moshabela**, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation, University of KwaZulu-Natal



## ABOUT THE SPEAKERS



**Prof Mosa Moshabela**, MBChB, M.Med (Family Medicine), MSc (Demography and Health), PhD (Public health) is a Professor of Public Health and Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. An esteemed academic and clinician scientist, he held a Wellcome Trust Fellowship (2015 - 2018), and was awarded a Ministerial Special Covid-19 Award (2020 - 2021) for Covid-19 Science Communication and Public Engagement. Prof Moshabela leads the Quality Health Systems and Transformation (QuEST) Center in South Africa, a collaboration with the T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Harvard University, USA, and he is a faculty member in HIV, Infectious Disease and Global Health Research Institute (HIGH IRI) at the University of Washington in St. Louis, USA.

His contribution has primarily been in the improvement of access and quality healthcare to combat infectious diseases, in relation to HIV and TB, and in the areas of health systems, services and policy research. His research focus on implementation science cuts across multiple disciplines, and involves the design, implementation and evaluation of complex interventions in healthcare services and programs, and seeks to improve access, quality and equity in healthcare, for resource-poor settings in sub-Saharan Africa.

He is the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Health in the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), and chairperson of a committee to evaluate the Covid-19 health sector response in SA, commissioned by the National Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. He is also the Health Commissioner to the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, as one of the seven multi-sector commissioners on the Premier's Provincial Planning Commission.

Globally, he is a member of the international advisory board for the Lancet Healthy Longevity, Lancet commission on synergies between Health Promotion, Universal Healthcare Access and Global Health Security, and the commission of the US National Academies for Science, Engineering and Medicine on the Global Roadmap to Healthy Longevity.

**Prof Helen Rees** is the Founder and Executive Director of Wits RHI, the largest research Institute at Wits University. Prof Rees is internationally recognised as an award-winning global health practitioner who has dedicated her professional career to improving public health in Africa, with a focus on vaccine preventable diseases, HIV and sexual and reproductive health. She has over 250 academic publications to her name, is a Personal Professor in the University of Witwatersrand's Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and the Co-Director of Wits African Leadership in Vaccinology Expertise (ALIVE), a Wits University flagship programme. She is an Honorary Professor in the Department of Clinical Research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, an Honorary Fellow of Murray Edwards College, Cambridge University and has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Science (Medicine) by the University of London.



Prof Rees Chairs the Board of the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority and also Chairs the World Health Organisation's AFRO Region Immunization Technical Advisory Group. Professor Rees has joined the many regional and global voices calling for equitable global access to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics and is a keen advocate for increasing research capacity in LMICs and the African region and is a member of the Facilitation Committee of the COVID-19 LMIC Clinical Research Coalition. She is a member of the South African Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19 and a member of the South African Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19 vaccines. Prof Rees is involved with the oversight of the COVAX facility that GAVI, CEPI and WHO are jointly driving. She is a member of the COVAX committee on COVID-19 maternal immunization and a member of the WHO IHR Emergency Committee on COVID-19, member of the WHO Expert Committee on COVID-19 vaccines, and a member of WHO's Scientific and Technical Advisory Group on Infectious Hazards. Prof Rees Chairs the WHO's International Health Regulation Polio Emergency Committee and Co-Chairs the WHO SAGE Working Group on Ebola Vaccines.



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**Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)**

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B. Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) Events

I. Other

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2022-08

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<https://youtu.be/AVLWXTEhYwc>

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