

# These are the women who make up South Africa's COVID-19 occupational health outbreak response team

This being Women's Month, we salute South Africa's extraordinary occupational health experts who are leading the country on national COVID-19 guidelines and procedures, online training and education, as well as surveillance and research. This is with the objective of promoting health and safety in workplaces across the country. The national COVID-19 Occupational Health Outbreak Response Team (OHORT) was established soon after the outbreak of the pandemic in South Africa, bringing together various experts and collectively carrying out rigorous daily online training, across many sectors of society, to mitigate the burden of the disease.

These experts have trained essential frontline healthcare workers, CEOs, paramedics, government departments, retailers, shop stewards, the food industry, security and cleaning personnel, and many other sectors on how to deal with COVID-19 cases. These

detailed training sessions include – but are not limited to – what employers should do when a worker tests positive, control measures for workplaces, screening protocol, cleaning and decontamination procedures, compensation matters, the correct methods of donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE), how to carry out biorisk assessments, and guidelines for all other aspects relating to COVID-19. They have worked tirelessly and continue to train workers from both the formal and informal economies. They are mothers, daughters and sisters, but they are also exceptional leaders from the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH), a division of the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS). The NIOH is a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre and a Mine health and Safety Council (MHSC) Centre of Excellence.



## DR SPO KGALAMONO

Dr Kgalamono is a renowned expert in occupational medicine and is presently the acting executive director for the NIOH. She has over 20 years' experience in occupational health and holds a joint appointment at Wits University's School of Public Health. Over the years, Dr Kgalamono has received many

awards and, in 2011, the Public Health Association of South Africa recognised her as one of the three most influential women in public health in South Africa. She sits on several committees, including the International Working Group on Occupational Diseases, and the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases Review Authority.

Research Laboratory for airborne TB detection in workplaces. She sits on several committees, including the International Labour Organization and the WHO.



## JEANNETH MANGANYI

Ms Manganyi is a registered occupational hygienist and head of the NIOH Occupational Hygiene Section. Prior to joining the NIOH in 2009, she worked at a private approved inspection authority (AIA) and was involved in both qualitative and quantitative exposure assessments in a wide range of industries, including iron and

steel, railways, power utilities, manufacturing and office buildings. Ms Manganyi is also involved in teaching and training, as well as critical research into respirator fit testing and facial anthropometry for respirator design. Through this, she aims to improve the protection of workers using tight-fitting respirators. Ms Manganyi also serves on technical committees as part of advisory support.



## DR TANUSHA SINGH

Dr Singh is the head of the Immunology and Microbiology Section at NIOH and the OHORT chair. With over 21 years of experience in occupational health, she is the recipient of a number of research grants, and holds a joint appointment with the Department of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases at Wits University.

She is revered for pioneering the Bioaerosol Monitoring Unit – the only one of its kind in South Africa – and the Aspire laboratory, a novel initiative and the only one globally. Dr Singh also spearheaded the development of the Airborne Mycobacteria Tuberculosis



## DR NISHA NAICKER

Dr Naicker is head of the NIOH Epidemiology and Surveillance Section, responsible for carrying out critical research, including policy development projects. She is a National Research Foundation-rated scientist and an associate professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University

of Johannesburg. Dr Naicker is also an honorary senior lecturer in the School of Public Health at Wits University, and a research associate in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. She sits on numerous committees, including the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) Scientific Committee on Unemployment, Job Insecurity and Health.



**DR ODETTA VOLMINK**

Dr Volmink is a medical doctor, an occupational medicine specialist, and one of the lead COVID-19 trainers. She worked in the public hospital setting, both in urban and rural areas in South Africa, before heading to the United Kingdom, where she was first introduced to the field of occupational medicine. Since returning to the country, Dr Volmink joined

the NIOH and has both a clinical and teaching role in occupational medicine. This includes work with different universities as well as delivering training in the registrar programme in occupational health and public health medicine. She also serves in an advisory role on technical committees at the Department of Employment and Labour.



**DR MPUME NDABA**

Dr Ndaba is an occupational medicine specialist and one of the lead COVID-19 trainers. She is also a fellow of the Public Health College of Medicine in SA and has 15 years of experience in the occupational health environment. At the NIOH, she prepares course material and undertakes public health training programmes at Wits University

and the University of Pretoria. Dr Ndaba is also deeply involved in the NIOH specialist occupational medicine clinic, where she attends to patients who have been referred from a variety of settings, including workplaces. She compiles medical reports, provides expert reviews, clinical advice, and also participates in operational research activities. Dr Ndaba further serves as a member of the Reviewing Committee of the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases.



**DR SAMANTHA IYALOO**

Dr Iyaloo is an occupational medicine specialist, and operates the COVID-19 Workplace Hotline. She previously worked as a medical epidemiologist at the Centre for Healthcare-Associated Infections, Antimicrobial Resistance and Mycoses at the National Institute

for Communicable Diseases (NICD). She assisted in setting up epidemiological surveillance systems, data analyses, disease outbreak investigations and epidemiological research reports. Dr Iyaloo was awarded a Field Epidemiology Fellowship at the NICD, rotating field placements in Enteric Diseases and the Outbreak Response Unit. She assisted with outbreak investigations and worked specifically on situational analyses and surveillance activities during the 2013 Orange African Cup of Nations, hosted in South Africa.



**MS ANGEL  
MZONELI**

Ms Mzoneli is the head of Information Services and Training and has over 20 years of experience in her field. She was instrumental in the consolidation of libraries following the merger of Peninsula and Cape Technikon. She serves in various committees, mentors students

and has helped them establish resource centres for non-governmental organisations. Ms Mzoneli's areas of expertise include knowledge and information management, project management, strategy and policy development, change management, and general management.



**MS MIRANDA  
RAAFF**

Ms Raaff is a communications specialist, having come from a strong media background as a seasoned journalist and editor. She also served as a deputy director for communications at the Department of Telecommunications and later delved into the world of public relations (PR).

She brings a wealth of experience with regard to media strategy, marketing and content development. In 2018, Ms Raaff was part of a small PR team that scooped several local and international awards for its work on the Siemens Fabric project. Among the accolades were a Platinum Award for Campaign of the Year in Africa at the 2019 EMEA Sabre Awards, gold and silver medals at the Prism Awards, a silver medal at Creative Circle; and a Gold Award at the Loeries. So pioneering and innovative was this communications campaign that it was tweeted by the Presidency, and short-listed for a Cannes Lion 2019 Award.

For more information on the NIOH training, please go to <https://www.nioh.ac.za/>