

SANS CONFERENCE 2026

Advancing Brain Health - From Molecules to Mind

DAY 1: THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2026

08:30 - 13:00	Pre-Symposium Workshop – Mental Health Capacity Building for Primary Health Care Pre-Symposium Workshop – Neuromics and Bioinformatics	
14:00 – 15:00	Arrival and Registration	
18:00 - 18:30	Opening ceremony and welcome – Chair A/Prof Rachael Dangarembizi	
18:30 - 19:30	Opening Keynote <i>Professor Graham Fieggen</i> <i>The Neuroscience Institute at UCT: A decade of discovery, and our strategy for the future</i>	
19:30 – 21:00	Cocktail Dinner and Networking (light meal provided)	

DAY 2: FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2026

08:00 – 08:30	Registration			
08:30 - 10:00	Plenary Session - Chair Dr Dorit Hockman			
	Matthijs Verhoog	Human neurons undergo protracted functional maturation into adulthood		
	Caroline Ross	Inducible formation of fusion transcripts upregulates haploin sufficient CHD2 gene expression		
	Chris Dulla	When your Ferrari breaks down: Cell type-specific metabolism in PV+ interneurons powers 'high performance' inhibition		
10:00 - 10:30	Tea Break			
10:30 - 12:00	Plenary Session - Chair A/Prof Joseph Raimondo			
	Monray Williams	HIV-1 viral diversity and mechanisms relevant to HIV neuropathogenesis: integrating preclinical and clinical evidence		
	Blessing Mangale	Direct mycobacterial interaction with immature neural cells: A proteomic investigation into CNS tuberculosis neuropathogenesis.		
	Rachael Dangarembizi	Mechanisms underlying brain injury in fungal meningitis (A BIOCOCOM Africa - sponsored lecture)		
12:00 -13:00	Panel discussion - Beyond Discovery: Translating Brain Research into Societal Impact Chair – A/Prof Sylvester Omoruyi Panellists – Bonginkosi Chiliza; Sian Hemmings; Basil Enicker; Tjerignimin Adissa Silue and Brian Harvey			
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch			
14:00 - 15:30	Concurrent Oral Session Crystal Room 1 Chair – Prof Pradeep Kumar Tabo Mwila Amy van der Hoven Tosin A. Olasehinde Zethembiso B. Ngcobo Victoria Williams	Concurrent Oral Session Crystal Room 3 Chair – A/Prof Bonginkosi Chiliza Blessing Gumbu Oladiran Olateju Simran Atulkumar Patel Taskeen Fathima Docrat Tiaan Anthonie Steyn	Concurrent Oral Session Boardroom 6 Chair – Dr Zama Msibi Rinae P. Gadisi Sancia Govender Kamohelo L. Mokhudu Amanda Miya Shameemah Abrahams	
15:30 - 16:30	Break/ Poster Session			
16:30 – 18:00	SANS Annual General Meeting 2026			

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DAY 3: SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2026

08:00 - 08:30	Registration		
08:30 - 10:00	Plenary Session – Chair A/Prof Monray Williams		
	Peter Kamerman	Pain in keloid scars	
	Victoria Madden	Studying pain in the whole person: spinal signalling, psychology, and immune signalling	
	Ronald Kipkirui	Altered executive functioning, maladaptive metacognitions, and psychopathology in gambling disorder	
10:00 - 10:30	Break		
10:30 - 12:00	Plenary Session - Chair A/Prof Oladiran Olateju		
	Jenna Annandale	Antenatal exposure to maternal depressive symptoms and early-life longitudinal immune markers and behaviour in South African children	
	Pradeep Kumar	Functionalized Neuromaterials for Neurodegenerative Interventions and Effective Neuroregeneration	
	Tjerignimin A. Silue	Building Sustainable Brain Health Innovation Ecosystems in Africa: From Research Discovery to Patient Access and Economic Development	
12:00 -13:00	Special Session: Challenging false dichotomies of caregiving in science Chairs: Dr Sahba Besharati, Dr Dorit Hockman		
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch		
14:00 - 15:30	SANS Student Oral Competition Chairs: A/Prof Ajonijebu C. Duyilemi and Dr Amalia Awala Aminu Musa - Nelson Mandela University Jessica Kanyemba - University of Cape Town Mickey Banda - University of the Witwatersrand Zolani Jacobs - University of the Western Cape Livhuwani Mabasha - North-West University Tusekile S Kangwa - University of Cape Town Hendrina M Marole - Sefako Makgatho University Yanga B Pato - University of Cape Town		
15:30 - 16:30	Break/Poster Session		
16:30 - 18:00	Concurrent Oral Session Crystal Room 1 Chair – Dr Basil Enicker Joel Defo Alexander Sittmann Justine van Greenen Taskeen F. Docrat o.b.o. Elias Chipofya Amalia Awala	Concurrent Oral Session Crystal Room 3 Chair – Dr Tanya Calvey Naadiya Seedat Seipati Mokhosi Ngoni Magate Yomelela Golimpi Demi Govender	
	Free Time		
18:00 - 19:00			
19:00 - 20:00	Closing Keynote – Chair Dr Zama Msibi Dr Sahba Besharati The social origins of bodily self-consciousness		
20:00 - 22:00	Conference Dinner + Prize Giving		