

Immunologist of the Month – 2021

Immunologist of the Month

Every month we will feature a new interview with an Immunologist. These Immunologists are at the cutting-edge of research and education, they have kindly offered to give us their time and insight into their research and studies.

December 2021

Prof Gerhard Walzl is a clinician scientist trained in the fields of internal medicine, pulmonology and intensive care medicine. His research focuses on the immunology of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (M.tb) infection and in particular host biomarkers, including diagnostic markers, markers of TB treatment response and markers of protective immunity against M.tb. In addition, he has set up a 'site of TB disease' research program at Tygerberg Academic Hospital that includes research bronchoscopies, thoracocentesis and pleural biopsies to investigate immune responses in the lung and pleura. His research spans the divide between clinical and basic sciences in a high TB prevalence area.



He is a distinguished professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences of the SU Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, an entity that he has led since 2017. He also heads the Molecular Biology and Human Genetics Division, is director

of the Immunology Research Group (SU-IRG) and leads the NRF Chair for Tuberculosis Biomarkers.

We are proud to have him close out a brilliant year as our December immunologist of the month!

[Read his interview: HERE](#)

November 2021



Our immunologist of the month is Dr. Caroline Beltran from the Immunology Research Group, Division of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. She is a postdoctoral research fellow who was awarded the prestigious Crick African Network Fellowship from the Francis Crick Institute in the UK. We were excited to get in touch with her and learn about her interesting work.

[Read her interview: HERE](#)

September 2021

This month we conducted a special interview of Wasihun Hailemichael, an early career scientist based at the Debre Tabor University in Ethiopia. Wasihun Hailemichael received the 19th Tore Godal Research Award* awarded by Armauer Hansen Research Institute (AHRI), biomedical research institute in Ethiopia. Wasihun Hailemichael received the award for his research on T cell exhaustion and senescence in people living with HIV and coinfecting with visceral leishmania.

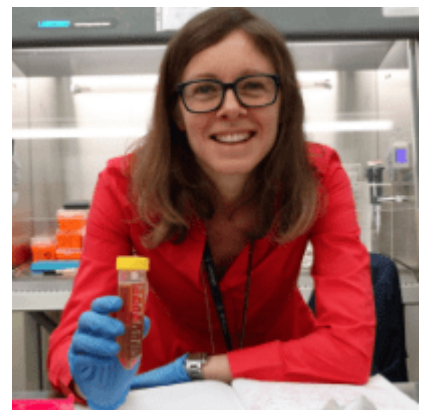


Listen to our short audio interview of Wasihun Hailemichael, where he describes the inception of the Tore Godal award and why it was an honour to receive the award. He also briefly describes his current research interests and future plans.

[LISTEN HERE](#)

August 2021

Anca Flavia Savulescu PhD, research scientist based at the Institute of Infectious Diseases and Molecular Medicine, University of Cape Town. Many people who conduct immunology research are not trained as immunologists and use skills learned in other disciplines to advance the field of immunology. Anca Flavia Savulescu is an example of such a researcher. Her research interests are mainly in understanding the subcellular spatial location of biomolecules (RNA and proteins) and how this plays roles in various branches of biological studies, including immunology and immune diseases.



Immunopaedia Ambassador Dr. Dana Savulescu was fortunate to

conduct this interview which focused on how non-immunologists can use their skills to contribute to immunology knowledge as well as tips for future scientists.

[Read her interview: HERE](#)

July 2021



This month's immunologist of the month is Carlos Alberto Fossati an Emeritus Professor of Immunology at the Faculty of Exact Sciences of the National University of La Plata (UNLP), Argentina and Superior Researcher at the Argentinean National Scientific and

Technical Research Council (CONICET). He has worked in the field of Brucellosis* and has received many scientific prizes and awards, including "Xeme Grand Concours International 1978", Académie Internationale de Lutèce, Paris, for his PhD thesis, and has been recognized for his trajectory by the Argentinean Society of Immunology (SAI) and the Argentinean National Academy of Pharmacy and Biochemistry.

Immunopaedia Ambassador Dr. David E. Romanin was fortunate to conduct an interview with Emeritus Professor Carlos Alberto Fossati which focused on his research interests and major contributions.

[Read his interview- HERE](#)

June 2021

This month's immunologist of the month is Professor Martín Rumbo, Principal Researcher at the Argentinean National Research Council (CONICET) and Professor of Biology at the National University of La Plata, Argentina. He has established a research group at the Instituto de Estudios en Inmunología y Fisiopatología (IIFP-CONICET) at the National University of La Plata, dedicated to the study of the innate mechanisms of the mucosal immune response. The general aim of the group is to develop rational strategies for the modulation of mucosal innate response for improving human health.



Immunopaedia Ambassador Dr. David E. Romanin was fortunate to conduct an interview with Professor Martín Rumbo which focused on his research interests and major contributions, as well as how the IIFP adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Read his interview- HERE](#)

May 2021



This month's immunologist of the month is Professor Martin Herrmann, PhD, MD. He started his career as a scientific assistant in the department of Internal Medicine, Rheumatology and Immunology, University Hospital, Erlangen, Erlangen-Nuremberg in Germany. He had a short postdoctoral training at the University of Alabama, Birmingham, USA. He then returned to Germany and took up a position as a lecturer and head of the Autoimmunity Research Group, he was then promoted to extraordinary Professor in 2004. He has over 400

hundred peer-reviewed publications in the field of Immunology.

[Read his interview](#) by Rebecca Chukwuanukwu

April 2021

This month's immunologist of the month is Professor Takafira Mduluzza, Senior Lecturer at the Biochemistry and Biotechnology Department at the University of Zimbabwe. Prof. Mduluzza His research aims to characterize the induction and regulation of effector mechanisms of innate and acquired immunity to infecting agents, and how they promote parasite clearance without inducing immunopathology. He also conducts research oriented to the development and evaluation of anti-parasite vaccines. He has contributed to the development of policy to tackle some of the health challenges in Zimbabwe. Takafira has also led teams that developed the baseline surveys and data/information that resulted in the introduction of a National policy on Neglected Tropical Diseases in Zimbabwe.



Immunopaedia ambassador, *Lorraine Pfavayi*, was fortunate to interview Takafira Mduluzzae. In this interview, Takafira discusses his research interest in Schistosomiasis and implications his research has had on health policy in Zimbabwe.

[Read his interview.](#)

March 2021



Our immunologist of the month is Fatoumatta Darboe, Post-doctoral researcher fellow at the Tuberculosis Immunology laboratory at the Medical Research Council (MRC) Unit The Gambia at London School of Health and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). Dr Darboe is currently working on the [Tuberculosis Sequel project](#), which aims to identify immune sequelae of TB, as well as in response to antibiotic therapy.

Immunopaedia ambassador, *Vanessa Mwebaza Muwanga*, was fortunate to interview Fatoumatta Darboe. In this interview, Fatoumatta discusses her research interest in Tuberculosis and her journey from undergrad to becoming a Post-Doc fellow in immunology.

[Read her interview.](#)

February 2021

Our immunologist of the month is Simon G. Kimuda, a Post- Doctoral research fellow supported by the Crick African Network based at the Francis Crick Institute, UK and the MRC/UVRI and LSHTM Uganda Research Unit, Uganda. His research focuses on understanding humoral immunity against *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, and hopes his research will contribute to the development of improved diagnostics and TB vaccines.



The immunopaedia team, specifically *Vanessa Mwebaza Muwanga*, was fortunate to conduct an interview with Simon Kimuda. In this interview, Simon discusses how he began his career in as immunologist focusing on humoral M.tb immunity, some of his research outputs and much more.

[Read his interview.](#)