

Featured Doctor

MASH, Prof Bob

President, South African Academy of Family Physicians



What work do you do now?

I head up a clinical department at Stellenbosch University that includes family medicine, primary care and emergency medicine. My clinical work has always been in providing primary care in Khayelitsha, a large informal settlement on the edge of Cape Town where patients mostly speak isiXhosa. Family physicians in my department work in district hospitals and primary care facilities across rural and urban communities in the Western Cape.

I teach medical students, medical officers, general practitioners and registrars in family medicine. Much of our teaching is on-line as our students are scattered over hundreds of kilometres throughout the Western, Northern and Eastern Cape. I also have an interest in teaching motivational interviewing and behaviour change counselling.

Other interesting things you have done?

When we had our first democratic government in 1994 the medical schools began to show more interest in teaching family medicine and primary health care. In order to help us develop our teaching I created the Handbook of Family Medicine to help medical students make sense of their encounters with primary care. The Handbook is now in its 4th edition and is used extensively throughout sub-Saharan Africa as a textbook for both under- and post-graduate education. We added the SA Manual of Family Practice that focuses on clinical skills.

[▶ Link to Handbook of Family Medicine and SA Manual of Family Practice](#)

I also became involved in establishing a network of departments of family medicine and primary care in sub-Saharan Africa, which is now called [Primafamed](#). Primafamed has 25 countries and 40 departments in the network and we try to help each other develop education, training and research through South-South-North collaboration. Primafamed is now the official academic wing of WONCA Africa.

Primafamed also initiated the [African Primary Health Care and Family Medicine journal](#) so that researchers in Africa could publish their work. I have become the Editor-in-Chief and the journal has been very successful, with an increasing impact factor and inclusion in PubMed and Scopus.

Currently I am the President of the SA Academy of Family Physicians, which is the official member of WONCA. The Academy is working hard to advocate for family medicine, engage with policy such as the introduction of national health insurance, organise annual conferences, publish a national [SA Family Practice Manual](#) and provide continuing professional development. We are thinking about bidding for WONCA World to come to Cape Town in 2024 and hope for your support!

What is top of your research agenda at present?

As I write this I am in Delhi representing Primafamed at the creation of a new global Primary Health Care Research Consortium. The consortium also includes WONCA as well as a number of other partners. We have published our initial evaluation of key knowledge gaps and research questions in the *BMJ Global Health*. Our initial research will most likely focus on integration of PHC services and measurement of PHC performance.

Closer to home I am busy with a national study to evaluate the implementation of Group Education and Training (GREAT) for diabetes. Diabetes has become the leading killer of women in South Africa.

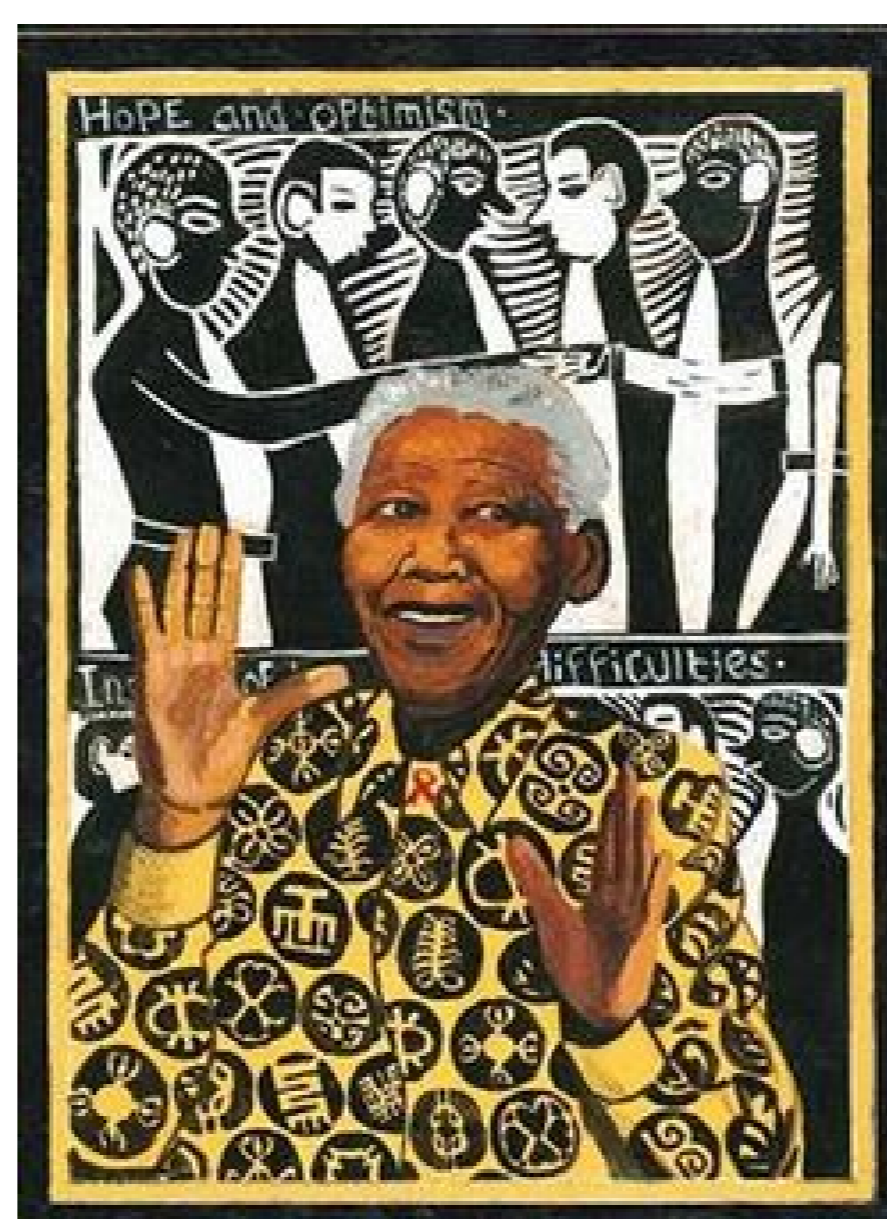
I am also interested in research capacity building and have just completed a project to build doctoral and supervisory capacity at two historically disadvantaged SA universities. We are hop

ing for substantial funding from the African Academy of Science to extend this work into the region with family doctors, nurses and midwives.

Your interests at work and privately.

I am an artist and work mostly in acrylic, this was my second career option! I have been [posting my paintings](#) every week on Instagram to have an electronic repository. One example of many at right.

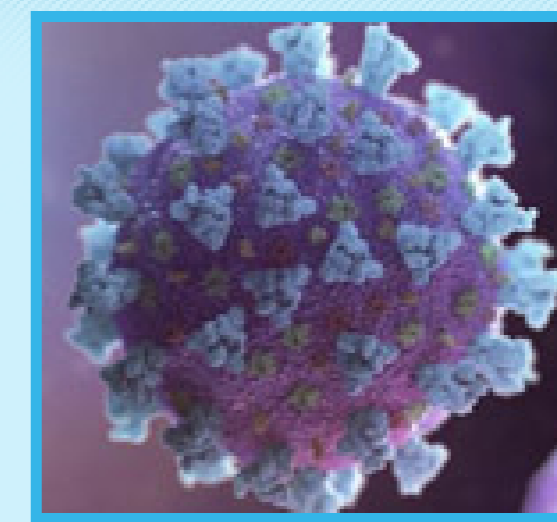
I am also a keen cyclist and am getting ready for the Cape Town Cycle Tour - the largest timed cycle race in the world.



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