

## Biography of Rabia Johnson



Rabia Johnson is a Senior Scientist at the Biomedical Research and Innovation Platform (BRIP) and has recently been appointed as an extraordinary Senior Lecturer at Medical Physiology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University. She is a coloured female from a previously disadvantaged community in the Cape Flats that started her tertiary education at the University of the Western Cape where she majored in Biochemistry and Medical Microbiology in 1998. Between 1999 - 2001, she received the departmental and an NRF award and was able to complete her BSc Honour's and MSc at the same institute. In January 2002 she was offered a position at University of Stellenbosch, Tygerberg Campus. During her time at Tygerberg, she immersed herself in tuberculosis research and in January 2004-December 2007, she enrolled and graduated with a PhD degree in Medical Physiology from the Division of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics at the University of Stellenbosch. During this time she received the International Atomic Energy Association travel award as well as numerous NRF awards and was sent to London and Korea where she equipped herself in several specialized molecular techniques, such as transcriptomics, proteomics and radioactive SSCP analysis. She published 7 articles, 4 as first author and 1 book chapter in her time as a student and researcher at Stellenbosch University. In September 2009 she was offered a junior scientist position at BRIP. In 2011, Dr Johan Louw prompt her to start her own research focus area with the ultimate aim of establishing a cardiovascular research group within BRIP. To aid her in this endeavour she enrolled for a Health management diploma through Yale University where she graduated with a cum laude in 2015. Currently, her major focus is on cardio protection of the diabetic heart. Her research projects involve the (i) the identification of biomarkers for the early diagnosis of diabetic cardiomyopathy (DCM); (ii) screening of new adjunctive treatment therapies and unravelling the mechanism of action of these compounds within the disease process, and (iii) identification of SNP which predisposes individuals to develop DCM. To date, she has published several peer reviewed articles and one book chapter. As a Principal Investigator she has successfully obtained various grants from the NRF and MRC for her research, and has also obtained internships for M.Sc and Ph.D. students. Her major goal is to translate basic scientific findings into clinical relevance using a strategy that involves cell and animals models, and various genomic, transcriptomic and proteomic approaches with the aim is to empower other student from disadvantaged background to become the next generation of young male and female black scientist that can compete with their international peers.