

Biography:

I matriculated in 1992 and registered at the US in 1993 for a BSc in Psychology. I continued my studies part-time from 1995 through UNISA, while working at Virgin Active in Paarl as an administrative clerk. I finished my BSc degree in May 2002 and continued the following year with an honours degree in Psychology (HSc)(UNISA). While still busy with my BSc (Hons), I applied for a part-time position at the US as a research assistant for a project that investigated the cardio protective effects of the drug, Levosimendan. This project lead to a publication in May 2008 (Br J Pharmacol.) and ultimately a thesis for my MSc degree in December 2008. I also received my BSc (Hons) from UNISA in May 2008. I then pursued another very promising and interesting project that was available for a PhD at that time and registered for a PhD in 2009, with the title: "Exposure of Cardiac Microvascular Endothelial Cells to harmful stimuli: A study of the Cellular Responses and Mechanisms". This is the project and study I am currently working on. My supervisor is Prof Hans Strijdom, who has completed his PhD in 2006 on "Hypoxia and the heart: the role of nitric oxide in cardiac myocyte and endothelial cells". He has done extensive research on nitric oxide and has decided to further explore the role of this in the microvascular endothelium. Our team further consists of three PhD students, two MSc students and two Honours students. Collectively we are exploring the cellular responses and mechanisms of cardiovascular endothelium to circulating harmful stimuli. We further aim to explore the role that nitric oxide plays in this scenario and investigate the endothelial cell responses and mechanisms from various angles, utilizing different models and techniques. So far, I have presented this work at various local conferences (PSSA- best poster 2011, SA Heart – best poster 2008 and AJD at US) as well as one international meeting in Kyoto, Japan in 2010 (ISHR). I am also involved in postgraduate training in several techniques, such as western blot analysis and basic laboratory methods. I have also co-supervised two honours projects thus far.