

Professor Gerhard van der Horst – Biographical Note/Short CV

Prof Gerhard van der Horst (PhD, PhD) is an Emeritus Professor in the Department of Medical Bioscience, University of the Western Cape, South Africa, an Extra Ordinary Professor in the Physiology Division, Medical School, University of Stellenbosch, an Extra-Ordinary Professor in the Department of Animal Science, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, a Senior Consultant to Microptic SL, Barcelona, Spain and a Research Associate, National Zoological Gardens, SANBI, Pretoria, South Africa.

Prof van der Horst served as a Junior lecturer in Zoology, University of Stellenbosch, Senior lecturer at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, post-doctoral at University of Cambridge, and Senior Professor and Academic Chair in Physiology at the University of the Western Cape. All his post graduate qualifications are in the field of comparative sperm biology.

His research focus has been in understanding the biology of sperm from invertebrates to vertebrates with special reference to mammals including primates and humans. In this context he uses some novel techniques:

1. Computer Aided Sperm Analysis and sperm flagellar analysis in animals and humans and currently with the emphasis on human sperm as related to fertility. He is considered an international expert on CASA and has made major inputs into commercial CASA systems such as the Sperm Class Analyzer
2. A multitude of microscopic techniques to decipher sperm structure and functionality and its relationship with fertilization. In this context he uses cutting edge microscopic techniques such as Nomarski Differential Interference Microscopy, positive and negative phase contrast fluorescence microscopy, confocal microscopy, and both scanning and electron microscopy. In his institution he has access to all these applications and many of his papers have been based using these technologies.

He published >130 research papers (mostly in sperm biology) and presented 250 conference papers nationally and internationally in some 37 countries.

Apart from using CASA he has been involved in many new developments in this field that relate to sperm functional aspects and automation of previously subjective analyses in sperm vitality assessment and the acrosome reaction. These are all crucial aspects in the evaluation of sperm quality and potential fertilizing capacity.

He was the founder member of the Reproductive Biology Society (the Andrology Workshop) of South Africa in 1984. He has not only served as President of the Physiology Society of Southern Africa for two terms, but was the Convenor of the International Symposium of Spermatology in 2002 in Cape Town, a prestigious spermatology meeting presented only every four years. Since then he served on the International Steering Committee of the ISS. He has been appointed as Associate Editor of Reproduction in Domestic Animals from 1 June 2019.

In 2019 he has been invited as guest speaker to two International conferences in Ekatarinburg, Russia (May 2019) and The Polish Andrology Society, Lodz, Poland (October 2019)

He has been invited as speaker to two major global conferences in Reproduction in 2020: Association of Applied Animal Andrology, Bologna, Italy, June 2020 and the European Society of Human Reproduction, Copenhagen, July 2020. Both these invitations relate to papers in his expert field of CASA.

Currently he supervises some 6 PhD and 2 MSc students and is still actively involved in experimentation with his postgraduate students.

Publications

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