

2026 PSYCHIATRY RESEARCH WEEK: SPEAKERS



Hannah Brown, MD is the Director of the Boston Medical Center (BMC) Wellness and Recovery After Psychosis (WRAP) clinical and research programs, Vice Chair of Research of the Division of Psychiatry at BMC, and Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Boston University Chobanian and Avedisian School of Medicine. Dr. Brown earned her MD from Harvard Medical School, completed residency training in adult psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH)/McLean Hospital and a fellowship in schizophrenia at MGH. Dr. Brown's work focuses on treatment of psychotic disorders and delivering equitable and accessible care for individuals with serious mental illness. She has served as principal investigator for multiple clinical research studies and regularly publishes peer-reviewed articles. Dr. Brown has also mentored many medical students, residents, fellows, and early-career faculty members, receiving the BMC psychiatry department Excellence in Mentorship Award, the resident-awarded Humanism Award, and was selected for the Boston University Medical Group Clinical Excellence Society.



Megan Loraine Campbell, PhD is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health at the University of Cape Town. Her research focuses on the intersection of psychiatric genetics and neuroimaging, with a particular focus on substance use. During her PhD, she specialized in imaging genetics, investigating how substance use impacts white matter tracts, particularly within the corpus callosum, and how this relates to psychiatric vulnerability. Her postdoctoral work expanded into large-scale genomic studies, contributing to NeuroGAP-Psychosis, where she led analyses of substance use patterns across diverse African populations. This work integrates genome and exome data to improve understanding of psychiatric risk and to ensure African cohorts are represented in global genetic research.

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Kazione Kulisewa MBBS, MMed (Psych) is a psychiatrist and the current head of the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health at Malawi's leading institute of higher medical education, the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences. Specialized in delivering quality and evidence based mental health interventions in low resource settings, he leads efforts to improve equity and access to mental healthcare in a country with only four psychiatrists for a population of 22 million. He has served in various leadership roles on several projects that focus on mental health integration and capacity building including a nationwide pilot study investigating effective integration strategies for the assessment and management of common mental disorders within various primary healthcare contexts such as HIV care, palliative care, tuberculosis care, and non-communicable diseases care. He previously led the development of an innovative program seeking to pilot community-based rehabilitation services for people living with psychosis in Malawi, in a country that lacks the infrastructure and human resource for community psychiatry.



Xoli Mfene, PhD is a clinical psychologist and senior lecturer at UKZN psychology discipline. She has an interest in neuropsychology and intersection between mental illness, cognition and aging. She completed her PhD in behavioural medicine looking at dementia prevalence, risk and knowledge in older adults from iLembe district.

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Evan Myers, PhD is a clinical psychology postdoctoral fellow in the Wellness and Recovery after Psychosis (WRAP) Program at Boston Medical Center. He is a recent graduate of Indiana University Indianapolis. He is interested in recovery-oriented psychotherapy, and his research interests include metacognition, disorganization, and stigma in psychosis.es.



Kalpesh Narsi, MBChB, FCPsych is a specialist psychiatrist in the public sector, currently based at the eThekweni District Office of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Department of Health. With 20 years of experience as a specialist psychiatrist at various government hospitals in KZN, his very recent interest in statistics stems from supporting primary healthcare doctors in integrating mental health into the district health system, and monitoring and evaluating district mental health indicators. Dr. Narsi serves as an honorary lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Medical School, where he contributes to both undergraduate and postgraduate education. He has research interests and peer-reviewed publications in cognitive resilience, healthcare worker wellness and education, and the integration of mental health into primary health care.

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Suntosh R. Pillay, MSocSc (Clinical Psych) is the chief clinical psychologist for the eThekweni district in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health. He has worked in the public sector for over 16 years. He is an honorary clinical fellow at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's discipline of Psychiatry and a PHD candidate at the University of South Africa. His research agenda focuses on the intersection of mental health, social inequities, and power structures, using a critical, decolonial, and ethnographic lens. He is a core member of the African LGBTQIA+ Human Rights Project; a research and training collective affiliated to the Sexuality and Gender Division of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA). He serves on the PsySSA Council as national chairperson of its Community and Social Psychology Division. He also serves on the policy committee of IPsyNET (the International Psychological Network for LGBTI Issues), hosted by the American Psychological Association. He reviews for three academic editorial boards: the South African Journal of Psychology (SAJP), Psychology in Society (PINS), and Psychology and Sexuality. He has published widely, in local and international journals, including in the Lancet Global Health and Medical Education. Mr. Pillay enjoys participatory action research processes, including visual methodologies. He uses Photovoice for a range of community- and research purposes with disenfranchised populations, including homeless people in the Durban city center, adult women with psychiatric illnesses, and bisexual and gay men. One of these projects resulted in the poetry and photo book, *This is how we mend our bones* (2023).



Yolandie Rafie, RN, MHSc, PhD is an interdisciplinary qualitative researcher with expertise in bioethics, nursing, anthropology, and public health. Her work examines equity in access to healthcare, reproductive health, and the ethical governance of emerging technologies, with a focus on African perspectives in global bioethics. As a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Global Health Bioethics Network, she advances research on the responsible use of AI in health research and context-specific ethical frameworks for global health innovation.

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Rocky Stroud II, BA, MPH is the Director of Global Research Operations within the Population Mental Health Lab and an Associated Researcher at the Stanley Center for Psychiatric Research at the Broad Institute. He is a co-investigator on several National Institutes of Health and philanthropic grants which investigate the genetic underpinnings of psychiatric disorders (including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, anorexia nervosa, and posttraumatic stress disorder) in Africa, Latin America, and the United States.



Grace Nduku Wambua, PhD is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) and a clinical psychologist dedicated to advancing child and adolescent mental health in low-resource settings. Her work focuses on bridging the treatment gap by developing scalable, culturally sensitive psychological interventions and integrating mental health care into broader health systems. Committed to building research capacity in the Global South, Nduku actively mentors and supervises Master's and PhD students. She is driven by a vision of global mental health equity, striving to empower vulnerable populations through innovative, evidence-based solutions that address their unique challenges.

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Doug Wassenaar, PhD is a clinical psychologist and Co-Director (with Prof Mariana Kruger) of the SARETI PhD programme at UKZN. SARETI is the South African Research Ethics Training Initiative, a US National Institutes of Health/Fogarty-funded programme currently offering Research Ethics PhD training at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (2022-2025). He chaired or co-chaired the UKZN Biomedical Research Ethics Committee (BREC) 2008-2023. He chaired the HSRC REC 2006-2019. He was a member of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19 2020-2023. During this time, he was one of the founders of RESCOP, an ad-hoc group of RSA Ethics chairs who initiated a network of SA RECs to initiate rapid collaborative review of urgent protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic in SA. He was co-PI of the US NIH-funded DRILL research capacity-building programme for health researchers at UKZN. He is Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics. He was a member of the WHO/UNAIDS Vaccines Advisory Committee and chaired the WHO/UNAIDS African AIDS Vaccine Programme's Ethics Law and Human Rights Group. He served on the Steering Committee of the Global Forum for Bioethics in Research 2008-2020. He is a consultant to the HIV AIDS Vaccines Ethics Group (SAMRC) and on several related advisory boards. He has conducted ethics reviews for the European Union and served on the Biomedical Ethics and International Public Engagement funding committees of the UK Wellcome Trust. He has conducted research ethics training workshops in over 20 countries and facilitated a retreat for the Ethics Review Committee of the World Health Organization. He served as Deputy Chair of the KZN Department of Health PHREC 2013-2024. He has been PI or CO-PI on externally funded grants to UKZN exceeding ZAR 200 million.