OBITUARY

Frans Mbokazi, 1962–2017

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The late Mr. Manzane Frans Mbokazi was born in Mgobodi, Nkomazi Municipality, in Mpumalanga Province in October 1962. He attended Mdzabu High School where he matriculated in 1987. During his career he earned a National Diploma and a B. Tech degree, both in environmental health. In 2013 he obtained the degree of Master of Science in Medicine in the field of Biology and Control of African Disease Vectors from the University of the Witwatersrand.

Frans Mbokazi was a committed public health professional who was especially dedicated to malaria elimination in South Africa. He joined the Mpumalanga Province Malaria Control Programme in 1997, and initially played a key role in the Nkomazi sub-district by supervising the implementation of malaria control activities, consisting mainly of indoor residual spraying and malaria disease surveillance. Frans' commitment to his work as a junior supervisor earned him an appointment as an Assistant Director in 2006. From there he played a major role in developing a provincial malaria strategic plan in line with the departmental cycle; developing an annual operational plan; managing the vector control programme in the affected sub-districts; coordinating training of personnel on malaria control activities; managing programme assets, including building and transport; monitoring implementation of all malaria control strategies; and assisting with the procurement of commodities. During Frans' involvement in the provincial malaria programme, local transmission was eliminated in two sub-districts (Umjindi and Thaba Chweu)—primarily through his efforts—and was also reduced in the Nkomazi and Mbombela sub-districts. Through all of these activities Frans inevitably tried to resolve the challenges he encountered before seeking assistance from his superiors. Frans was subsequently appointed as Mpumalanga's acting malaria programme manager from January 2017 until his untimely passing on 24 September 2017.

Frans applied his skills to particularly useful effect by enhancing mosquito vector surveillance in Mpumalanga's malaria-affected districts. He was a member of the South African Malaria Elimination Committee (SAMEC) and the Sub-committee on Vector Control (SVC). In addition, he served as a key malaria control strategy advisor to the personnel of several countries who visited Mpumalanga Province for training purposes.

These included visitors from Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Botswana, Mozambique, Swaziland and Namibia. Frans also contributed to the training of regional malaria control personnel as part of the Lebombo Spatial Development Initiative (LSDI) project.

Frans was actively involved in research, and co-authored several manuscripts. Notable research contributions included participation in the use of a geographical information system to plan a malaria control programme in South Africa,¹ the evaluation of the therapeutic efficacy of sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine for *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria,² and assistance in the discovery of a new malaria vector mosquito in South Africa.³

The untimely passing of Mr Manzane Frans Mbokazi came as a great shock to all who knew him. His patience, graciousness, kindness and dedication will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace.

References

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- 3 Burke A, Dandalo L, Munhenga G et al. A new malaria vector mosquito in South Africa. *Scientific Reports* 2017; 7: 43779.

AFFILIATIONS

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