



H3ABioNet

Pan African Bioinformatics Network for H3Africa

Issue 23: July 2017



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Foreword

We are now officially at the end of the H3ABioNet project funding, still awaiting the outcome of the renewal application. In the mean time, we have requested a no cost extension and are continuing to wrap up year 5 deliverables. All the working groups have been busy tying up loose ends and preparing products for dissemination or papers for publication. Since the working groups as we know them may not be continuing into the next phase of the project due to changes in the project structure, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the chairs and co-chairs who have been so efficient at driving the working group activities. These are the core of the consortium activities and cut across many of our nodes. You will read more about the working group activities later in this newsletter.



The second Introduction to Bioinformatics online course has now drawn to a close and Kim is busy putting together final marks and letters of completion. It was another success, and the IBT paper has just been accepted for publication. The pilot Genomic Medicine course for nurses is also wrapping up and classrooms are working on their group projects, many of which will be submitted for publication in a special issue. The newsletter also reports on the second Sickle Cell Ontology Workshop, which was held in Cape Town at the end of May. The workshop contributed significantly to the further development of the ontology and standardisation of data collection, demonstrating the value in gathering experts together to achieve a set of goals.

At H3ABioNet central we have been very busy working on the archive, wrapping up projects, and redesigning the website. We hope to launch the new website at the upcoming H3ABioNet SAB meeting in Uganda in October.

Please read on to find out more details about our activities over the past month.

Nicky Mulder

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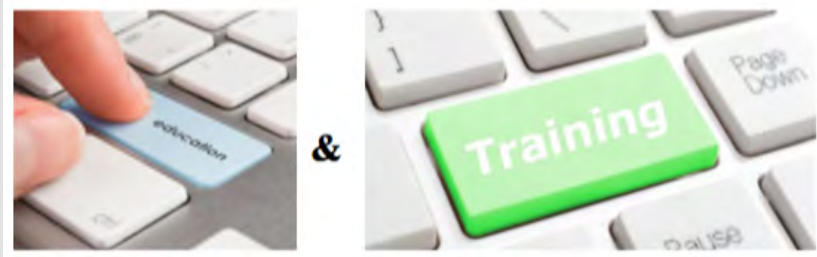
Education and Training Working Group

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Education and Training Working Group



As the official 5 year cycle of the H3ABioNet project draws to a close the E&T working group has been busy with wrapping up some of the on-going projects:

- **IBT_2017:** It is hard to believe that almost 3 months has past since the start of the IBT_2017 course, as it drew to a close at the beginning of August. The course was concluded this year with a wrap up session designed to allow the participants with the opportunity to reflect on the knowledge and skills gained from the course. In addition, participants were provided with an overview of H3ABioNet activities, tools and resources as well as bioinformatics resources available through their closest H3ABioNet node. The final part of the wrap up session presented the classrooms with the opportunity to decide on the best avenue to use for participants to stay in touch and keep the IBT community connected. The IBT core team would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the local staff, expert trainers, consultants, Vula and Mconf teams and the participants, without whom the course would not have been possible. We shall provide a summary of the course feedback in an upcoming issue of the newsletter. On a related note, the IBT paper has been accepted for publication in PLOS Computational Biology, so keep a look out for it soon.
- **H3ABioNet Bioinformatics Curriculum Resource:** Updating of the current modules are almost complete and the content for the additional modules are in the process of being generated and should be completed soon. The web resource is also in the process of being updated and refreshed.
- **Career Development Workshop:** Two career development workshops will be run alongside the ISCB-Africa ASBCB Conference on Bioinformatics in Entebbe, Uganda in October 2017. Both workshops will be two days long, with one workshop focused on grant proposal development and aimed at post doctoral and early career scientists, while the second entitled Communicating Science has been designed for an MSc and PhD audience. The curricula for the workshops have almost been finalised and we are looking forward to an exciting and productive workshop!
- **Adding Subtitles and Translation of IBT training material:** As previously mentioned, in order to increase the accessibility to the IBT training material, we are looking into options to generate subtitles and translate the lecture recordings from the IBT course. As this is likely to be a very labour intensive process we are exploring the option of employing the services of a university-affiliated department to complete this task.

Finally, we would like to thank all the E&T WG members for your hard work, enthusiasm and dedication to all the projects that the working group has undertaken and successfully completed. We look forward to an exciting next chapter of H3ABioNet.

#H3ABioNetEducationAndTraining

Nicky Mulder and Shaun Aron

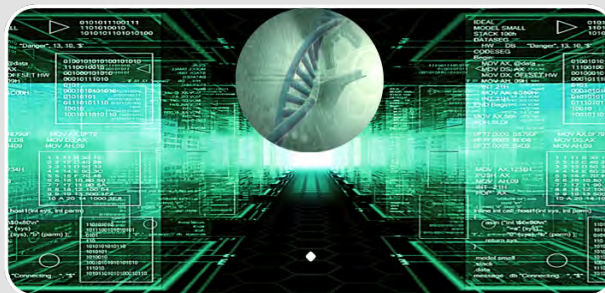
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Infrastructure Working Group

Infrastructure Working Group



eBiokits:

A number of nodes are in the process of acquiring eBiokits. Several have had trouble in acquiring the hardware in their own countries. We are still trying to find a solution to this.

Aspera/Globus Online:

One of our projects which has attracted significant attention is our project to compare Globus Online and Aspera. Progress is being made. A PerfSonar box has been setup at CBIO – this is specialised hardware for testing networks. A number of nodes are active in this. We are trying to get as many Globus Online nodes up and running by the beginning of August.

Data Management Task Force:

Last month we reported that our first H3Africa data had been submitted to the EGA and that a second H3Africa group had submitted their data to H3ABioNet. Two more groups are starting the process of submitting data to H3ABioNet. Lots of work ahead.

Cloud Task Force:

This group is making progress on completing the four pipelines that it has committed to. Some final tweaks and testing are being done. A draft paper has been prepared and is almost ready to be submitted.

Documentation:

In preparation for phase 2 of the project, we are revising our documentation, and the organisation of our documentation. This type of housecleaning is time-consuming but will be essential for the next 5 years.

#H3ABioNetInfrastructure

Scott Hazelhurst and Suresh Maslamoney

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Research Working Group

Research Working Group



The theme for the H3ABioNet seminar series for July 2017 was "**Structural Bioinformatics**". But, due to the Mconf connectivity problem on 20th of July, the webinar was postponed. Therefore, on the 3rd of August Dr. Pamela Greenwell presented her talk entitled "**Identification of inhibitors/drugs using molecular modelling**", which explored the tools that can be used to investigate the binding of small molecules to proteins to identify novel drugs or potential off-target drug actions. The seminar was informative and very well received by the audience.

The Chair of the Research Working Group disseminated a draft of the webinar manuscript to the H3ABioNet webinar task force seeking their comments, suggestions and contribution towards its final format. In order to select the best presentation that was conducted by H3ABioNet graduate students and postdoctoral fellows during the H3ABioNet webinars series from May 2015 to July 2017, an evaluation form was prepared and disseminated among the H3ABioNet webinars series moderators. The ex-moderators and current moderators of the webinars were asked to evaluate the webinars retrospectively using the evaluation form and to come up with the 3-5 best presenters. The chairs and network manager will evaluate these further and select the 1-2 best presenter/s and pass that to the H3ABioNet Management Committee to give the final approval, as well as determine which of these two should attend the annual meeting of H3ABioNet and SAB in Entebbe, Uganda in October 2017.

In July, the full members of the Hackathon of Malaria organizing Committee met online to discuss the way forward for starting the process of Hackathon data analysis and they began drafting a paper on that. They also agreed on submitting one abstract on behalf of the three teams from the Hackathon to the upcoming **ISCB-Africa ASBCB Conference on Bioinformatics**, which will be held in Entebbe, Uganda, 10-12 October 2017.

The Chairs provided support in drafting the career development workshops curricula, together with the central office staff and members of the Training and Education Working Group. Two career development workshops, the first entitled "Communicating Science" aimed at graduate students, and the second entitled "Grant Proposal Development" aimed at post docs/ early career scientists, will be held during the upcoming **ISCB-Africa ASBCB Conference on Bioinformatics**.

#H3ABioNetResearch

Faisal Fadlelmola and Amel Ghouila

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User Support Working Group

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User Support Working Group



H3ABioNet has developed over the five years of its existence into a fully functional scientific network. It has developed and continues to provide training in bioinformatics, and developed a postgraduate bioinformatics curriculum to facilitate bioinformatics training in Africa. The Network has also developed tools and made them publicly available to the scientific community.

The User Support working group (USWG) of the Network is mandated to offer users support services and outreach activities. In line with the working group mandate, USWG has appointed H3ABioNet Node Ambassadors to engage on H3ABioNet's outreach activities. An H3ABioNet Node Ambassador is a selected representative from an H3ABioNet Node to be responsible for communicating and raising awareness of H3ABioNet activities, events and outputs within their institution or country. The H3ABioNet Node Ambassadors are encouraged to keep up to date with bioinformatics activities happening at their Node and they should tell the Social Media Core Team of the Network about announcements, events and products via filling out the following Google forms:

- **announcement** (e.g. publications, graduations, grant award, new H3ABioNet member)
- **event** (e.g. workshop, course, conference, meeting, hackathon, jamboree, seminar)
- **product** (e.g. bioinformatics tool, SOP, database, educational resource)

H3ABioNet Node Ambassadors are also expected to reach out to their audience via social media platforms by retweeting and sharing H3ABioNet's **Twitter** tweets and **Facebook** posts, respectively, to their personal social media pages as well as to the pages of their institution (if the institution's own social media team is fine with this).

The Node Ambassadors are to engage in raising the visibility about H3ABioNet at their Node by emailing the H3ABioNet bulletin to their Institutional / lab mailing lists, disseminating H3ABioNet invitations to attend the seminar and journal clubs, putting up posters at their Node, handing out flyers for relevant events and also aiming to present about H3ABioNet at their Institutional seminars etc. The USWG is working hard to update and develop flyers, brochure and posters to reflect the H3ABioNet achievements and current activities.

The Node Ambassadors should also provide feedback to the USWG on any issues or difficulties the Nodes might have and require assistance with.

#H3ABioNetUserSupport

Jonathan Kayondo and Pandam Salifu

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10th H3Africa Consortium Meeting: Sustainability and Collaboration

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Tenth Meeting of the H3Africa Consortium: Sustainability and Collaboration

Southern Africa once again played host to the H3Africa Consortium in May 2017, when the Tenth Meeting of the Consortium was held at the Grand Palm Conference Centre in Gaborone, Botswana. The Tenth H3Africa Consortium Meeting represented a significant transition phase for the Initiative. While it coincided with the end of the first funding cycle from its key funders, the National Institutes of Health and Wellcome Trust, it also coincided with progress in Sustainability efforts, establishment of the Data and Biospecimen Access Committee (DBAC), and new partnerships with the African Academy of Sciences' Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AAS-AESA) and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).

Sustainability

The Sustainability WG received a boost in May 2017 when Nicola Mulder was invited to represent H3Africa at the World Economic Forum regional meeting in Durban, an update was provided at the Principal Investigators Meeting, 12 May 2017. The meeting played host to major stakeholders which resolved to pursue sustainability through the newly formed Coalition for African Research and Innovation (CARI). H3Africa was mentioned by Francis Collins and others during these discussions. It was highlighted that funding bodies should invest with established initiatives such as H3Africa as success was more likely with established foundations. Noteworthy was the opportunity for the Department of Science and Technology (South Africa) to cross pollinate with the Department of Health. While discovery science feeds into health, these key players rarely compare notes and ensure more effective use of resources and time. In an effort to maintain the momentum of this type of engagement, the local hosts Gabriel Anabwani and Mogomotsi Matshaba worked tirelessly to ensure that the Botswana Government (Health and Education) and the private sector were well represented. The Honourable Minister Madigele was particularly impressive, he not only offered encouragement in his after dinner speech but also humoured the group by taking unprepared questions and had a photo opportunity with the H3Africa Fellows. The Consortium was further treated to useful information and innovative ideas during Ereck Chakuaya's presentation "Unlocking domestic resources for research and innovation-lessons from SANBio partnerships", interestingly the Botswana Government invests 2% GDP into R&D, leading the way in Africa. The Botswana Government has demonstrated both motivation and commitment, R&D is intimately linked to food security and trade in this scenario. Botswana have a Beef export trade agreement with the EU and requires domestic diagnostic and treatment solutions for domestic Beef related diseases such as Foot and Mouth disease and Beef Measles (*Taenia Saginata* Beef Measles *Cysticercus Bovis*). This is one model that may be applicable more broadly across Africa.



13 May Formal Dinner Receiving the Minister - Left to right: Jennifer Troyer; Audrey Duncanson; Enock Matovu; Dan Gerendasy; Nicola Mulder; Gabriel Anabwani and Hon Minister Madigele

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10th H3Africa Consortium Meeting: Sustainability and Collaboration

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H3Africa Data and Biospecimen Access Committee (DBAC)

The Tenth Consortium Meeting also marked the first occasion to host a face to face DBAC meeting. Professor Collet Dandara noted that the DBAC is a very well balanced committee, this became evident during discussions in the DBAC working group session, the diverse backgrounds offered unexpected insights.

Principal Investigator and Fellows

This year's Steering Committee recognized the need for a joint Principal Investigators/Fellows presentation format, providing Fellows with the opportunity to engage with the mainstream audience. This forms part of several mentoring initiatives for young scientists within the organization. The Consortium was treated to at least eleven professional high quality presentations by H3Africa Fellows. **Presentation Awards** went to: Shaun Aron; Babu Muhamed; Savannah Mwesigwa and Oscar A. Nyangiri. **Poster Awards** went to: Tamega Abdoulaye; Yosr Hamdi and Abdoulaye Yalcouye and the Special Award for Perseverance went to: Alice Bayi.



15 May at University of Botswana - Left to Right: Savannah Mwesigwa (Fellow) and Shaun Aron (Fellow)

New Funders

We were also fortunate to have the AAS-AESA and GSK teams in attendance. H3Africa and DELTAS Africa are the two major research programmes Wellcome has handed over to AAS-AESA. Over the last two years the funders have worked closely with AESA to develop a robust and transparent grant management system now under the leadership of Jenniffer Mabuka-Maroa. Nine million pounds has been committed for Phase II of H3Africa. Nested within AESA H3Africa Programme is the GSK funding opportunity that targets applications looking at NCDs only. Please direct inquiries to H3Africa@aasciences.ac.ke.

Guest Speakers

We were fortunate to have Dr Eric Green, Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute present on his insights into the future role of H3Africa in Genomics and Precision Medicine. As one of the pioneers of the H3Africa Initiative and through his key position at NIH Dr Green has a birds eye view of the H3Africa road map and pointed out that the initiative was at a transitional phase where capacity building should prudently give rise to capacity implementation. He also offered his congratulations to the group for the milestones achieved through their tireless collaborative efforts.

Dr Thomas Kariuki, Director of AESA, also took some time out of his schedule to attend the Tenth Consortium Meeting. Tom encouraged the H3Africa community to communicate more and "blow your trumpet a bit louder". He also emphasized the need to focus on translational research and developing clinical applications, succinctly put "the right interventions, delivered to the right population, at the right time". In a bold move AESA is also promoting AFRICA OPEN RESEARCH: An online open publishing portal for Science which is currently being developed.

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10th H3Africa Consortium Meeting: Sustainability and Collaboration



13 May Formal Dinner - Left to Right: Prof Ruth Chadwick (IEC); Prof Dame Kay Davies; Nidhee Jadeja (Wellcome); Thomas Kariuki (Director of AESA)

Proceedings of the meeting took place as follows:

Day 1: On the 12th May Several Parallel Sessions were held: Grant Applications; Pharmacogenomics; Genome Analysis Publications & Writing Sub group and Study Coordinators.

Day 2: On the 13th May all the Working Group Sessions took place. The highlights included Ereck Chakauya’s presentation and the inspirational after dinner speech by the Honourable Minister Dr Alfred Madigele Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology. Minister Madigele is a medical doctor and is passionate about supporting research as he appreciates its value.

Day 3: On the 14th May it was the first instalment of the joint Principal Investigators and Fellows Presentations. The H3Africa Fellows delivered excellent speeches of high scientific quality. The evening ended with a brilliant bush braai excursion to Mokolodi Nature Reserve where Professor Dame Kay Davies showed us that she knew more about indigenous dancing than any of us.

Day 4: On the 15th May it was the second instalment of the Principal Investigators and Fellows Presentations, which took place at the University of Botswana. We had the pleasure of hosting Government and Private Sector representatives who participated in a Sustainability Stakeholders discussion and provided further insights into sustainability mechanisms in place in Botswana and further opportunities for collaboration within the continent.



15 May at University of Botswana - Left to Right: Mogomotsi Matshaba; Dr Maitshwarelo Matsheka (BITRI Senior Researcher); Dr Budzanani Tacheda (Botswana Innovation Hub Research Director); University of Botswana Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor Kgomotso Moahi

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10th H3Africa Consortium Meeting: Sustainability and Collaboration



13 May Formal Dinner: PI Ambroise Wonkam and DBAC Member Collet Dandara



15 May at University of Botswana: Permanent Secretary Dr Theophilus Mooko (Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research Innovation)

In conclusion the H3Africa Coordinating Centre would like to thank the Funders, Local Organizing Committee, IEC, DBAC, Principal Investigators, Members and especially Fellows for contributing to another successful Consortium Meeting.

Thank you,
Michelle Skelton

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2nd Sickle Cell Disease Ontology Workshop

Second Sickle Cell Disease Ontology Workshop



Sickle cell disease (SCD) is monogenic and characterised by substantial variations in clinical presentations and outcomes. The highest incidence rates of SCD are found in tropical regions, however this disease is fast becoming a global health concern due to widespread migrations. The need for standardized terms and organised knowledge in the Sickle Cell domain is well recognised. A Sickle Cell Disease Ontology (SCDO) working group was formed through a collaboration between H3ABioNet and Sickle Cell Pan African Network (SPAN) to create an ontology in this domain.

The aim of the SCDO group is to establish community standardized SCD terms and descriptions, model this into a hierarchical structure and use the resulting ontology for the management and exploration of SC data.

After a successful Sickle Cell Disease Ontology Workshop in 2016, the working group held the 2nd Sickle Cell Disease Ontology Workshop which took place in Cape Town from 29 May to 02 June 2017. There were 42 attendees from 16 countries. A photograph of the attendees is below. These workshops were supported through a supplement to H3ABioNet from NHLB.



As with the first workshop, there was active and enthusiastic participation from all attendees. They contributed their knowledge and expertise in sickle cell disease to further the development of the ontology and to explore development of a standardised case report form for data collection. Significant progress was made on all fronts, thanks to input from ontology and sickle cell experts.

Vicky Nembaware

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'Meet the PI'
Interview

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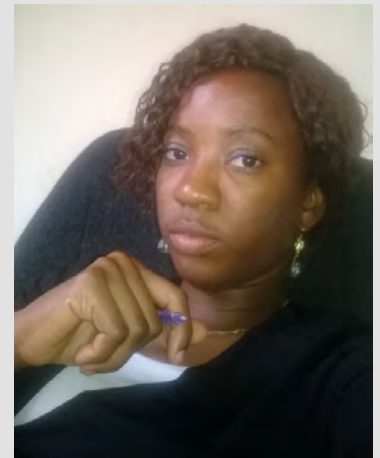
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H3ABioNet 'Meet the PI' Interview



Prof. Hugh Patterton
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Interviewer: I am Fasesan Deborah, a PhD student at the Microbiology department, University of Ibadan, and a Senior Scientific Officer at the Center for Genomics Research and Innovation, National Biotechnology Development Agency (CGRI/NABDA), Abuja, Nigeria. I am affiliated to the H3ABioNet NABDA Node, where I perform various bioinformatics tasks including education, training and research.



Details of the interview:

Deborah: Tell us a bit about yourself.

Prof. Patterton: I obtained my PhD in Biochemistry at the University of Cape Town in 1991, and then moved to the US to pursue a post-doc fellowship at the Institute of Kidney and Digestive Disease at NIH. In my PhD I looked at the effect of negative superhelicity of DNA on the formation and positioning of nucleosomes. This required quite a bit of structural analysis, and probably represented the first time I engaged in serious structural bioinformatics coding and analysis. During my post-doc years at NIH, I extended this work, making use of living yeast systems, designing specific substrate plasmids and chromosomes to further investigate packaging and the role of chromatin structure on the regulation of the genetic processes of the DNA molecule.

After my post-doc at NIH, I became a Research Associate at the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Penn State University in Pennsylvania, and I worked there for two years. One of the major things I did was to follow the progress being made with the yeast genome, and waiting for a possible identification of the linker histone H1 gene in the yeast genome, a protein that had never been biochemically detected before. When that data deposition was made, I immediately sub-cloned the encoding gene and characterised the yeast H1.

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H3ABioNet
'Meet the PI'
Interview

I subsequently returned to South Africa, and was awarded a Wellcome Trust International Senior Research Fellowship. I made use of my fellowship to spend five years at the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Cape Town, and researched, amongst others, physical gene clustering and genome-wide chromatin compaction. After the fellowship, I accepted a position at the University of the Free State where I set up a research cluster focused on Genomics and Proteomics, and developed an under-graduate course in Proteomics. I moved down to Stellenbosch University about two years ago, and was asked to start a Centre for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology. That is a brief overview of my career up to this point.

Deborah: Tell us a bit about your institution.

Prof. Patterton: Stellenbosch University is a typical South African University, but is certainly one of the most beautiful universities in South Africa. It is a typical university in terms of size with about 30,000 full-time students. In terms of International ranking, it is one of the top two Universities in South Africa. It has the normal range of faculties ranging from Humanities, Sciences, Engineering and so on. It has a very active post-graduate program, and is very active in research, being a research led institution.

Deborah: How did you get into bioinformatics?

Prof. Patterton: That is quite an interesting question. I think very early in my PhD I realised that computation and using computers to address biological issues was extremely powerful and I was also simply intrigued by computers. In the early 1980s I acquired a Sinclair ZX81 "microcomputer" that came with a massive 1K of RAM, expandable to 20K! You could program it using assembly language or a structured BASIC. The memory constraints forced one to write really tight code. After I tired of the limitations of the ZX81, I purchased an Acorn BBC model B. It came with 64K of RAM and 8 bit colour and music. This was the era of the Apple II and years before the launch of the PC. I used the Beeb to ask questions related to DNA sequences, and also did structural analyses of chromatin in the PhD.

When I moved to the NIH in the early 90s I experienced the popularisation of the internet and data exchange and analysis in the days when bioinformatics was not yet called bioinformatics. In fact, I remember the journal CABIOS, which stood for Computer Application in the BIOSciences, which, a few years later, became what we now know as the journal *Bioinformatics*. In those days I was also quite keen on the coding aspect of solving problems and so trained myself to program in the C++ language. I used this to address questions that involved sizes of data or types of data that one could not easily analyse with conventional methods. I feel that I have been around bioinformatics for ages and have actually had the privilege of seeing the discipline coming from a point where nobody called it bioinformatics, to a point where it has permeated many of the basic biological sciences today.

Deborah: What are your research interests?

Prof. Patterton: I was trained as a Biochemist, specifically looking at the packaging of DNA and the role of the packaging on the regulation of DNA function. So, my research interest is taking all of this together [chromatin dynamics, gene expression, epigenetics] and includes studying the way in which histones and DNA are chemically modified and how that plays into the regulation of DNA function.

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H3ABioNet 'Meet the PI' Interview

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Deborah: What do you enjoy *most* about your job?

Prof. Patterton: A combination of teaching people and exposing them to new and interesting aspects of science and, in my own research, the freedom to pursue things that interest me.

Deborah: What do you enjoy *least* about your job?

Prof. Patterton: Supplying the same information again and again for administrative purposes (laughs).

Deborah: How has being a part of the H3ABioNet community impacted your research group?

Prof. Patterton: It has been interesting being a part of the community. I think we have become exposed to many other research groups in Africa and actually I was pleasantly surprised to see the quality of some of the research that we are performing in Africa. We have had collaborative opportunities not only at the bioinformatics level, but also at the H3Africa level as well. So I think the major impact that I have seen is being exposed to the level of excellence in Africa, that was a great thing to see.

Deborah: What advice would you give a young person that is interested in pursuing a career in bioinformatics?

Prof. Patterton: If they are coming from school, do mathematics, genetics, biochemistry, computer science and statistics. Obviously, you cannot do all the courses in all of these at the undergraduate level, but I think the ability to actually code is becoming very important in bioinformatics. I think the new generation of bioinformaticians has to look at new tool development, application of new mathematical theories and ideas to analyse biological data, to implement and use the tools to answer questions.

At the post-graduate level, I would recommend that they try to get some experience in programming. We are in the period of bioinformatics where it seems that the mere use of tools has passed, so I think it has become much more important to code and have a solid background in things such as statistics and mathematics.

Deborah: Tell us something about yourself that not many of your colleagues know, for example, a hidden talent or hobby?

Prof. Patterton: I'm a little bit of an audiophile, so I really enjoy putting together and tweaking high quality hi-fi systems that can reproduce music at a level that is as close as possible to the quality of the instruments that were played in the studio. I listen to anything from hard metal and grunge to opera and instrumental classical, but have a soft spot for the Blues. I am currently enjoying "Master of the Scrolls", a CD on 14th century English music.

Final words...

Prof. Patterton: Bioinformatics is something that has permeated a lot of fundamental biology, and it is something that has become extremely important and must feature in the next generation of scientists that we train. Even wet bench biological scientists need to have significant training in bioinformatics. It is really pleasing to have seen a discipline that I have been part of for more than two decades, developing and achieving its initial promise and it is promising to become much more.

#MeetthePI

Deborah Fasesan and Hugh Patterton

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Announcements

- Congratulations to the RUBi (South Africa) node on their recent publication in *Glob Heart* entitled *Role of Structural Bioinformatics in Drug Discovery by Computational SNP Analysis: A Proposed Protocol for Analyzing Variation at the Protein Level*. ([doi: 10.1016/j.gheart.2017.01.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gheart.2017.01.009)).
- Congratulations to Lyndon Zass (CPGR, South Africa) node on graduating with a Masters degree earlier this year.
- Congratulations to Jean-Baka Domelevo Entfellner and Nicki Tiffin on their recent publication in *Stem Cells* entitled *The TCF7L2-PGC1 Axis Connects Mitochondrial Biogenesis And Metabolic Shift With Stem Cell Commitment To Hepatic Differentiation* ([doi: 10.1002/stem.2688](https://doi.org/10.1002/stem.2688)).
- Congratulations to Chaimae Samtal (UMP, Morocco) for being awarded a Fulbright - Joint Supervision Doctorate scholarship. Chaimae will take up the year long scholarship at The George Washington University, Washington, USA in September this year. The Genomics data for her project will be generated by the International Consortium of Prostate Cancer Genomics in the frame of a H3ABioNet pilot project initiated by Prof Faisal Fadlelmola (Sudan node), Prof Oyekanmi Nash (NABDA, Nigeria), and her supervisor Dr Ghazal Hassan (UMP, Morocco).
- Congratulations to the IBT team on the recent acceptance of the IBT paper by *PLOS Computational Biology* entitled *Designing a Course Model for Distance-Based Online Bioinformatics Training in Africa: the H3ABioNet Experience*.

Do you have an ANNOUNCEMENT for upcoming editions of the H3ABioNet newsletter or for the H3ABioNet social media pages?

Tell us about your announcements [here](#)

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Upcoming Events

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Upcoming Events

- **August 13th to August 16th 2017:** *17th Biennial Congress of the Southern African Society for Human Genetics*, will take place in Durban, South Africa.
- **August 20th to August 23rd 2017:** *The 8th ACM Conference on Bioinformatics, Computational Biology, and Health Informatics (ACM BCB)*, will take place in Boston, MA, USA.

This year, the *Workshop on Algorithms in Bioinformatics (WABI)* will be co-located with ACM-BCB.

- **September 27th to September 29th 2017:** Drug Discovery Africa, inaugural edition. Conference, workshop, collaborative discussions and presentations. This event will take place in Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- **October 9th to October 10th 2017:** H3ABioNet SAB and AGM meeting, will take place in Entebbe, Uganda.
- **October 10th to October 12th 2017:** *ISCB Africa ASBCB Conference on Bioinformatics 2017*, will take place in Entebbe, Uganda. Please note: registration now open.
- **November 16th to November 18th 2017:** *African Society for Human Genetics (AfSHG) Conference*, will take place in in Cairo, Egypt. Please note: abstract submission deadline is 31 August.
- **November 28th to November 29th:** *UNESCO - Merck Africa Research Summit - MARS 2017*, will take place in Mauritius. Please note: abstract submission deadline is 20th August 2017. Applications for sponsorship are open.
- **Every third week of every month:** *CPGR Foundation in Genomics Course*, from standard molecular technologies to advanced 'omics' application in 3 days, aimed at scientists who are new to 'omics' as well as researchers interested in an overview of a dynamically evolving field.
- For a comprehensive list of bioinformatics and genomics conferences, please consult: [Conference service - Bioinformatics](#)

Do you have an **EVENT** for upcoming editions of the H3ABioNet newsletter or for the H3ABioNet social media pages?

Tell us about your events [here](#)

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Issue 23: July 2017



**Upcoming H3ABioNet
working group
meeting
schedule**

Upcoming H3ABioNet working group meeting schedule*

*Schedule until end September 2017

Summary of H3ABioNet upcoming working group meetings

Month	Date	Day	Working Group (WG)	Time (UTC)
August	11th	Friday	Research WG	13:00
August	11th	Friday	User Support WG	9:00
August	15th	Tuesday	Education and Training WG	11:00
August	18th	Friday	Infrastructure WG	13:00
August	25th	Friday	User Support WG	9:00
September	8th	Friday	User Support WG	9:00
September	8th	Friday	Research WG	13:00
September	19th	Tuesday	Education and Training WG	11:00
September	22nd	Friday	User Support WG	13:00

Timezone conversions to UTC for all H3ABioNet working group meetings

UTC Time Offset	Time Zone Name	Region/ Country in the Time Zone offset
-6 hours	CDT	Chicago, USA
0 hours	GMT	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Morocco, Senegal
+1 hour	WAT	Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, Namibia, Nigeria, Niger, Tunisia
+2 hours	CAT	Botswana, Egypt, Malawi, South Africa, Sudan, Zambia
+3 hours	WAT	Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda

This edition of the newsletter was compiled and edited by Kim Gurwitz. For any corrections, please contact Kim at kim.gurwitz@uct.ac.za

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