

## SU comments on study perpetuating racial stereotyping

Stellenbosch University's Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Professor Jimmy Volmink has acknowledged the concerns raised about an article published by researchers from the Department of Sport Science, and reaffirmed the faculty's commitment to transformation.



Professor Jimmy Volmink

The article entitled [\*Age- and education-related effects on cognitive functioning in coloured South African women\*](#), recently appeared in the journal *Aging, Neuropsychology, and Cognition*. It has been widely criticised for perpetuating racial stereotypes, using questionable scientific methods, and for drawing unwarranted conclusions.

"The history of our country is complex and layered and we recognise that past injustices continue to perpetuate inequities today. We acknowledge the deep hurt, anger and frustration that this publication and the research underpinning it has caused, and that it has been perceived as racist, insulting and offensive. As a faculty we strongly condemn any form of discrimination, including racial stereotyping," said Volmink in a statement.

"We, furthermore, wish to acknowledge that systemic factors within our institution may have led to the unintended entrenchment of discrimination and inadequate responses to implicit bias. We will continue to work with all our colleagues and students to address such challenges.

"The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences has over the past decade built a strong reputation for advancing health and equality. We actively promote behaviours guided by our espoused values of inclusivity, compassion, accountability, respect, excellence and equity."

The authors, four students from the sports science department, and the publishers subsequently retracted the article, saying in a statement: "While this article was peer-reviewed and accepted according to the journal's policy, it has subsequently been determined that serious flaws exist in the methodology and reporting of the original study. In summary the article contains a number of assertions about 'colored' South African women based on the data presented that cannot be supported by the study or the subsequent interpretation of its outcome. Specific data that would be relevant to these assertions was not collected. In addition, the references provided are not supportive of the claims that are made about the participants in the study or about South African women more generally."

**Source:** Stellenbosch University

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