

# PAN AFRICAN THORACIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear PATS Members and Family,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 4th issue of our Pan African Thoracic Society newsletter.

I am excited to share that I recently had the honour of representing PATS at the American Thoracic Society (ATS) conference in San Diego, California in the United States. It was an incredible experience filled with valuable insights, ground-breaking research presentations and the opportunity to network with leading experts in the field of respiratory medicine. Our participation not only underscores the growing recognition of PATS on the global stage but also reinforces our commitment to advancing lung health across Africa.

I am also thrilled to announce that our new website is now live! The revamped site features a range of exciting updates and opportunities designed to enhance member engagement and support our collective mission. You will find a wealth of resources, including the latest research publications, upcoming event details and member-exclusive content. I encourage you all to explore the new platform and make the most of the tools and information available. Most importantly, you will also have seamless payment process through the website.

During the ATS conference, I was proud to be recognized, along with other esteemed female leaders, for our contributions to leadership in respiratory medicine. This recognition is not only an honour but also a testament to the significant role that women play in our field. We will continue to support and mentor women and I am excited that with the support of a generous donation from Professor Sonia Buist who initiated the MECOR program at ATS, we will be launching the African Women's Leadership Program for our MECOR graduates in Kenya. This program will offer both leadership training as well as coaching for our first cohort in September 2024.





During the opening ceremony, MAMA MECOR Sonia Burst, was honored by ATS president for her vision and leadership of MECOR globally.



Prof Refiloe Masekela at the PATS booth at the 2024 ATS Conference



Prof Refiloe Masekela and Dr Uju Ozoh Representing PATS MECOR at the 2024 ATS Conference

We are also introducing a new "Letters to the Editor" section in our newsletter, starting from the next issue. This will be a dedicated space for you to share your thoughts, feedback and experiences. Your contributions are invaluable as they help us to continually improve and stay connected with the needs and perspectives of our members. Most importantly, if you have photos or stories to tell this will be a platform from our community to engage.

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Letters  
to the  
editor



In addition, we have some fantastic events lined up for the coming months. I am particularly looking forward to our upcoming MECOR course which will be held in Kenya in September. I hope to see many of you there, contributing to and benefiting from these enriching experiences.

As always, I am immensely grateful for your continued support and dedication to PATS. Together, we are making significant strides in improving lung health across Africa.

Warm wishes

Refiloe Masekela  
President of Pan African Thoracic Society



# Invest in the Future of Women in African Respiratory Health

## Donate to the ATS/MECOR Women's Leadership Training Program

Imagine a future where African women are the driving force behind advancements in respiratory health across the continent.

The ATS/MECOR Women's Leadership Training Program in Africa makes this future a reality. But we need your support.

**Your donation empowers exceptional women with the skills and resources to become tomorrow's leaders.**

**By donating, you are investing in:**

- **Empowering female leadership:** Equip women with the tools to excel in leadership roles.
- **Strengthening healthcare systems:** Build a generation of leaders who can improve healthcare delivery in Africa.
- **Advancing research:** Fuel groundbreaking research that will save lives.
- **Fostering collaboration:** Create a vibrant network for women to share knowledge and drive innovation.

### Why is this program crucial?

- Women are underrepresented in leadership positions globally, including healthcare.
- The success of existing MECOR programs in Africa demonstrates the immense potential of women in leadership.
- Investing in women in leadership leads to **better health outcomes** for everyone.

Together, we can create a brighter future for respiratory health in Africa.

# Donate Today!

*P.S. Consider a recurring donation to provide ongoing support for this vital program!*



MECOR  
Africa

Women's Leadership  
Training Program in Africa



DR RAHEL KEBEDE

**I am Dr. Rahel A. Kebede, an enthusiastic advocate for the well-being of children on our continent. As a pediatric pulmonary and critical care subspecialist, I am committed to amplifying their voices across the region, continent and the world, advocating for improved access to high-quality healthcare. Having served as the immediate past clinical service director at Addis Ababa University's teaching hospital, Tikur Anbessa Specialized Hospital, and currently holding the position of Vice President for Strategy and Reform at Addis Ababa University.**

I am dedicated to enhancing healthcare quality through innovative and participatory leadership. Indeed, respiratory diseases in Africa significantly contribute to morbidity and mortality. Evidence indicates that both communicable and non-communicable respiratory diseases disproportionately affect low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). These conditions often lead to a diminished quality of life and impose direct and indirect costs, including expensive medications and reduced productivity. Notably, respiratory diseases impact all age groups, with children bearing a substantial burden.

Unfortunately, Africa faces challenges related to limited respiratory health professionals, resulting in difficulties accessing quality care. Additionally, there is insufficient mobilization of resources for relevant studies on the continent.

To address these issues, I propose strengthening medical education with a focus on quality which encompasses better access, safe and evidence based practices. Collaborative efforts among universities can lead to the development of standardized curricula for mid-level and subspecialty respiratory health professionals. Furthermore, I advocate for integrating research into early medical training, including undergraduate programs, to enhance health professional recruitment. Establishing a robust research mentorship program will facilitate this goal.

Additionally, I envision strengthening the Pan African Thoracic Society (PATS) by creating a consortium of respiratory professional societies working in Africa. This collaborative effort will enhance advocacy, continuous professional development opportunities, and multidisciplinary research outputs.

In conclusion, I am committed to diligently working toward our society's vision.

**Marco Zampoli completed his paediatric pulmonology training in South Africa where he currently holds the position of Associate Professor in Paediatrics at the University of Cape Town and Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. He completed his PhD on various aspects of cystic fibrosis epidemiology and treatment in South Africa and Africa. His other research and clinical interests include primary ciliary dyskinesia, pleural effusions, sleep medicine and long-term home ventilation. He is an enthusiastic advocate for affordable access to innovative medicines in LMICs for especially rare diseases which are neglected in under-resourced settings. On a personal note, Marco lives in Cape Town with family and will not travel the world without his binoculars to pursue his passion of birdwatching and dog walks keep him busy on weekends.**

The modern publishing world is fiercely competitive with abundant proliferation of medical journals, including in our field of thoracic medicine. Junior and emergent researchers in Africa often face an uphill battle to publish their work in international accredited journals which may not regard African research or African health care priorities as a priority. There are indeed many unique aspects and challenges to improving respiratory health in Africa.

The Journal of PATS is uniquely positioned to provide a platform to publish work of African scientists and researchers, especially the junior and emerging generation through successful in-house programmes such as MECOR. My vision for JPATS is for it to be the preferred journal for every young African researcher to publish their work relating to thoracic medicine or surgery.

Although the Big-Five lung conditions (asthma, COPD, tuberculosis, pneumonia, and lung cancer) remain a priority, we should not forget nor neglect uncommon or rare lung conditions which collectively contribute significantly to the burden of lung diseases even in under-resourced settings. The Journal of the PATS, first launched in 2020, is growing slowly in strength and diversity of published content.

I want to thank the past editor-in-chief Dr. Obianuju Ozoh, for her early leadership and the editorial board members for their tireless support. I call and invite all PATS members to keep up the support and let's together carry the journal over the next milestone which is full accreditation and recognition in the publishing space.



DR. MARCO ZAMPOLI