

# Are these Africa’s best researchers?

## University of Pretoria leads the pack in South Africa-heavy list

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Thirty-one researchers who call Africa home are listed among the world’s most highly cited in a preliminary study compiled by Thomson Reuters last month.

All but six of the 31 are at least partly based in South Africa. The University of Pretoria dominates with nine researchers on the list, followed by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

Kenya follows South Africa with three highly cited researchers affiliated to the Kenya Medical Research Institute: Kevin Marsh, Robert Snow and John Vulule.

Matty Demont in Senegal, Gerry Killeen in Tanzania and Moses Kamya in Uganda also make the list.

One researcher—Victor Kuete—is linked to two universities: the University of Yaounde I in Cameroon and the University of Pretoria.

All the researchers are listed under this article.

The study assesses the number of times that scientific papers published between 2002 and 2011 have been cited by other researchers. It lists nearly 5,000 scientists across the world in a variety of disciplines.

Africa-based researchers stand out in five disciplines: pharmacology, plant and animal science, environment and ecology, chemistry and clinical medicine.

Jason Young, the product manager at Thomson Reuters, says South Africa dominates because it produces more research papers than any other country in Africa.

“South Africa has well-established international links, enabling many of its researchers to engage in programmes that bring their work to international attention,” Young says.

Five of the University of Pretoria researchers work in pharmacology. The remaining four are plant and animal scientists.

Stephanie Burton, the university’s vice-principal for research and postgraduate education, says Pretoria’s lead position is due to its strong international collaborations.

“These researchers have chosen to publish their work in high impact journals, they have established collaborations with other internationally recognised researchers, and their work has received high international exposure,” she says.

Nelson Ijumba, the deputy vice-chancellor for research at UKZN, says having highly cited researchers helps institutions perform well in academic rankings. It also helps institutions attract world-class academics and students.

The University of Cape Town (UCT), often ranked as Africa’s top research university in international lists, has only two researchers in the list.

Marilet Sienaert, the director of research at UCT, says highly cited researchers are but one of many indicators used to assess its performance.

The list doesn’t identify how many times each scientist was cited. Thomson Reuters says it will publish a more comprehensive analysis in April.

- ### Africa’s most highly cited
- William Bond, University of Cape Town, SA, environment/ecology
  - Mark Brown, University of KwaZulu-Natal, SA, plant/animal science

- Richard Cowling, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, SA, environment/ecology
- Pedro Crous, CBS Fungal Biodiversity Centre/ University of Pretoria, The Netherlands/SA, plant/animal science
- Matty Demont, Africa Rice Centre, Senegal, economics/business
- Colleen Downs, University of KwaZulu-Natal, SA, plant/animal science
- Jacobus Eloff, University of Pretoria, SA, pharmacology
- Moses Kamya, Makerere University, Uganda, clinical medicine
- Gerry Killeen, Ifakara Health Institute, Tanzania, clinical medicine
- Andrew Knight, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, SA, environment/ecology
- Victor Kuete, University of Yaounde I/University of Pretoria, Cameroon/SA, pharmacology
- Namrita Lall, University of Pretoria, SA, pharmacology
- Trevor Letcher, University of KwaZulu-Natal, SA, chemistry
- Amanda Lombard, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, SA, environment/ecology
- Kevin Marsh, Kenya Medical Research Institute, Kenya, clinical medicine
- Lyndy McGaw, University of Pretoria, SA, pharmacology
- Marion Meyer, University of Pretoria, SA, pharmacology
- Tebello Nyokong, Rhodes University, SA, chemistry
- Deresh Ramjugernath, University of KwaZulu-Natal, SA, chemistry
- David Richardson, Stellenbosch University, SA, environment/ecology
- Matthie Rouget, University of KwaZulu-Natal (formerly South African National Biodiversity Institute), SA, environment/ecology
- Bernard Slippers, University of Pretoria, SA, plant/animal science
- Robert Snow, Kenya Medical Research Institute/University of Oxford, Kenya, clinical medicine
- Magnus Sverke, North-West University, SA, economics/business
- Johannes van Staden, University of KwaZulu-Natal, SA, pharmacology
- Lyn Wadley, University of Witwatersrand, SA, social sciences
- Carolyn Williamson, University of Cape Town, SA, microbiology
- Alvaro Viljoen, Tshwane University of Technology, SA, pharmacology
- John Vulule, Kenya Medical Research Institute, Kenya clinical medicine
- Michael Wingfield, University of Pretoria, SA, plant/animal science
- Brenda Wingfield, University of Pretoria, SA, plant/animal science

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