

THE ROLE OF GENETIC COUNSELLING



WHAT IS GENETIC COUNSELLING?

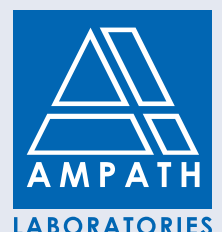
Genetic counselling is an educational and psychosocial process where genetic counsellors collaborate with other healthcare professionals to provide information and support to individuals and their families affected by, or at risk of, genetic conditions.

Genetic counsellors help those affected to understand the meaning of a genetic condition diagnosis, taking into account the relevant cultural and ethical interpretations, and specific personal experiences. Genetic counsellors provide education but can also advocate for families, when required. They often have links with other healthcare providers and patients, and are able to refer individuals and families to relevant healthcare professionals and lay organisations for ongoing support.

Genetic counsellors assist both patients and families in making informed decisions around genetic testing and exploring their healthcare options for the future. A clinical geneticist is a medical doctor with an additional specialty in clinical genetics. A clinical geneticist's role involves providing a diagnostic service, together with the associated genetic counselling related to the potential and/or proven diagnosis.

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MEET THE TEAM

Dr Lindsay Lambie

MBBCh, FCPaed (SA), Cert (Medical Genetics) (SA), MSc (Med) Genetic Counselling



Lindsay is a Paediatrician and Clinical Geneticist. She worked at the NHLS and also at the University of the Witwatersrand Human Genetics Department as a lecturer and consultant Clinical Geneticist for 10 years, before joining Ampath in 2018. Lindsay assists colleagues with choices around genetic testing and differential diagnosis for genetic disorders. She provides clinical assessments and genetic counselling services. Lindsay has a particular interest in paediatric genetics and rare diseases, reproductive genetics and neurodevelopmental disorders.

Contact Lindsay on 012 678 0645 or via email at lambiel@ampath.co.za.

Julie Lampret

MSc (Med) Genetic Counselling (WITS), Cert (Social Work) (UNISA)



Julie is a genetic counsellor who has a deep compassion for individuals, couples, and families facing a new diagnosis, helping them work through the trauma and/or loss as well as treatments available for inherited cancers and genetic conditions. It is her passion to walk alongside these families and offer support. Julie qualified and worked at the NHLS, Wits University as a genetic counsellor, where she was also involved in lecturing medical students and training nurses. She was employed as a senior researcher for the ongoing projects and offered basic counselling skills courses to support groups. She subsequently worked in the private sector in Johannesburg and KwaZulu-Natal before moving abroad where she worked for Children's Health Ireland in a children's hospital in Dublin. Julie has a broad range of experience and has worked extensively in prenatal, cancer and cardiac genetics. She is currently located in Ballito and is at present, the only genetic counsellor in KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact Julie on 012 678 0645 or via email at lampretj@ampath.co.za.

Julie Malan

MSc (Med) Genetic Counselling



Julie is a genetic counsellor who qualified in 1999. Julie worked in the Cytogenetics and FISH laboratory at Genepath for a year. In 2003 Julie registered as a private genetic counsellor and, between 2003 and 2007, worked as a consultant for Genecare. During this time she also joined the Familial Cancer Centre at Femina, where she counselled patients in a multi-disciplinary set-up that included a psychologist and gynae-oncologist. In 2006, Julie's son was born and was diagnosed with Haemophilia A soon after his birth. Julie joined the South African Haemophilia Foundation (SAHF), where she became involved in the administration of the Foundation as in counselling and support to the families of newly-diagnosed Haemophilia patients. Julie also participated in organising Parents-empowering-parents (PEP) workshops for parents of boys with haemophilia. In September 2019 Julie joined Ampath's genetics team as a genetic counsellor. She has a special interest in cancer genetics, retinal disorders and haemophilia. Julie is still involved in both the Familial Cancer Centre and the SAHF where she has received funding from the World Federation of Haemophilia (WFH) to provide a genetic counselling outreach project through tele-medicine.

Contact Julie on 012 678 0645 or via email at malanj@ampath.co.za.

Sarah Walters

MSc (Med) Genetic Counselling



Sarah started her career as a medical scientist, qualifying in 1994. She worked in the cytogenetics laboratory at the NHLS, Wits, until her passion for connecting with people affected by genetic conditions led to completing her Master's degree as a genetic counsellor. Since then, Sarah has worked as a genetic counsellor at the NHLS, as well as for the Southern African Inherited Disorders Association (SAIDA) as a nurse trainer, where she trained over 350 nurses and doctors working in primary healthcare clinics in genetics and basic counselling skills. She worked in private practice for a while before joining Ampath's genetics team in 2013 as their first genetic counsellor.

Sarah's special interests include cystic fibrosis, primary immune deficiencies and adult onset conditions such as inherited predisposition to cancers and Huntington's disease. She keeps her scientific skills sharpened by assisting with result interpretation in the cytogenetic and cytomolecular fields.

Contact Sarah on 012 678 0645 or via email at walterss@ampath.co.za.

AMPATH GENETICS CLINICS

Ampath Genetics has two physical clinics. The first is based in Highveld Park, Centurion, Gauteng. Here, the genetic counsellors and clinical geneticist are available to see individuals and families on an appointment-only basis. The second clinic, in Ballito, KwaZulu-Natal, works on the same basis, with the genetic counsellor available to patients.

While virtual genetic counselling appointments are offered for patients located in outlying areas, clinical assessments cannot be accommodated in this manner.

Once an appointment is confirmed, a registration form is completed prior to the appointment date. Any referral letters and/or previous results can also be forwarded through to the clinic.

Appointments can be made telephonically on 012 678 0645, or via email at geneticsclinic@ampath.co.za.

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