Quarraisha Abdool Karim, PhD, is an infectious diseases epidemiologist, who’s main research focuses are on understanding the evolving HIV epidemic in South Africa; factors influencing acquisition of HIV infection in adolescent girls; and sustainable strategies to introduce ART in resource-constrained settings. She is the Associate Scientific Director of CAPRISA, Professor of Epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University and Adjunct Professor in Public Health at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Her most important scientific contribution to HIV prevention is the CAPRISA 004 tenofovir gel trial which demonstrated effectiveness of coitally-applied tenofovir gel in preventing HIV and HSV-2 acquisition in women. She is the Principal Investigator of the CAPRISA 008 tenofovir gel implementation effectiveness trial. Further, her research on HIV epidemiology in young women has been widely utilized in developing responses to the HIV epidemic in southern Africa. She was part of the team, initially as its leader, that conducted the SAPiT trial on TB-HIV treatment, which has shaped international treatment guidelines on the clinical management of co-infected patients.

In terms of policy and implementation, she currently chairs the SANAC Prevention Technical Task Team, which draws upon her past experience in establishing South Africa’s National AIDS and STD Programme in 1995.

She is the Vice President for the African Academy of Science, Southern Africa, and Foreign Associate Member of the Institute of Medicine (IoM) of the National Academies. She has been the recipient of several international and national awards for her scientific contributions, including the Order of Mapungubwe, bronze, for outstanding work in the field of HIV/AIDS and TB research, and health policy development.