

An extraordinary career lauded

UWC Extraordinary Professor **Praneet Valodia** has always been fascinated by medicines – how they work, their effects on people's bodies and the high pace at which medicines are developing.

"The thing about medicine is that it evolves very fast. There are lots of innovations and it is an area that is difficult to keep up with. There are so many new medicines on the market," Prof Valodia explains.

Prof Valodia's sterling work in the field of pharmacy over the past three decades has been recognised with four awards in two years, three of which were achieved in one year. In 2015, the University of the Western Cape (UWC) honoured him with the Chancellor's Award for an Outstanding Alumnus, in the Health Sciences category.

In 2016, the South African Pharmacy Council awarded Prof Valodia two awards in one evening – the National Pharmacy Award for research, consultancy and clinical work and the overall National Pioneer Pharmacy Professional Award. In the same year the Board of Healthcare Funders of Southern Africa gave him its Titanium Lifetime Achievement Award, which was open to all disciplines in Southern Africa. "It's great to get recognition for

the work one has put in over the years. This may be for the 30 years of work, and culminating in this way is certainly satisfactory. I'm pleased about it," Prof Valodia says.

Born in Lansdowne in Cape Town, Prof Valodia obtained both his bachelor's and master's degrees in pharmacy at UWC >>



(his third child is in her second year of pharmacy studies at UWC). After serving on the academic staff at UWC for 16 years, he joined Metropolitan Health in 2002, which he served as a director of medicine risk management, clinical executive, head of product development, research and development executive and chairperson of the company's drugs and therapeutics committee.

In 2009, Prof Valodia was appointed as an advanced specialist in medicines and beneficiary management in the Health Intelligence Unit at Medscheme, and joined the Independent Clinical Oncology Network (ICON) as an executive manager for innovation and development in 2011. He also served as the chairperson of the oncology formulary committee at ICON.

With vast experience in managed healthcare, public health, pharmaceutical policy and training, and a strong track record in healthcare innovation, Prof Valodia has worked with world-renowned experts on data analysis and statistical models and has developed unique models to measure the value of healthcare interventions. He also published the first health outcomes study in the world showing the value of clinical pharmacokinetics in epilepsy management. His current interest focuses on the delivery of affordable and quality healthcare in South Africa.

He was a member of the national Department of Health Pricing Committee from 2005 to 2016 and was the chairman of that committee's pharmacoeconomics task team.

In 2015, Prof Valodia started his own independent healthcare consultancy offering services in the fields of data analytics, medicine management, disease management, clinical trial evaluation, pharmaco- and health economics, innovation in healthcare, developing market access solutions for medicines, health outcomes research, advisory services to managed healthcare and medical schemes, harm reduction programmes and healthcare advocacy.

"As a consultant I study new medicines, evaluate and give advice on them," says Prof Valodia. One of his key goals is to produce a paradigm shift in the way healthcare delivery takes place in South Africa. "I think healthcare is far too expensive and new innovations are required to reduce the cost of healthcare. I'm hoping to play a leading role in this going forward."

Prof Valodia believes that one of the main challenges facing the healthcare sector is to improve access to medicines and to empower patients to use medicines appropriately. "Even if people have access to medicines, if they don't use those medicines appropriately there will be a huge wastage of resources."

He says new medicines are beyond the reach of many South Africans. "I do a lot of work in the area of cancer medicines. However, many of them are expensive. How do we improve access to expensive medicines? It's a big challenge for us."

Prof Valodia credits UWC for laying a good foundation for his successful career. "UWC is a special place for me. It shaped my career and instilled certain values in me that I use in the business environment. Values such as caring, compassion for others, integrity, working as a team and becoming independent."

Prof Valodia has been appointed by UWC as an extraordinary professor six times since joining the corporate sector.

"I think healthcare is far too expensive and new innovations are required to reduce the cost of healthcare. I'm hoping to play a leading role in this going forward."