



## Associate Professor Nastassja Koen

**Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health  
Neuroscience Institute**

Nastassja Koen is an Associate Professor and head of the Division of Psychopharmacology and Biological Psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health. She is also co-head of the Psychiatric Genetics Group of the Brain-Behaviour Unit at the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Neuroscience Institute; co-director of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) Unit on Risk and Resilience in Mental Disorders; and incumbent chair of her Departmental Research Committee.

She completed her MBChB at UCT with honours, and distinction in the Pre-Clinical, Clinical and Final Clinical Examinations. This was followed by a PhD, postdoctoral fellowship, and then lecturing in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health. Koen was promoted, ad hominem, to senior lecturer in the department in 2018. And then appointed to an nGAP (New Generation of Academics Programme) permanent post in 2019. She was promoted to Associate Professor in 2022.

Her research interests include the genomic, epigenomic and transcriptomic neurobiology, and transgenerational effects of trauma-related disorders, particularly in South Africa and Africa. She is also enthusiastic about improved population and researcher inclusivity and diversity in global Psychiatric Genomics research; and is committed to mentorship and capacity-building in this field. In recognition of her work to date, Koen has received several competitive awards and accolades – including the UCT Postgraduate (doctoral) Research Associateship; the Biological Psychiatry Special Interest Group Research Career Award; the SAMRC Clinician Researcher Programme PhD Scholarship in Clinical Research; the Harry Crossley Postdoctoral Research Award; and the South African Medical Association (SAMA) Young Leaders Doctors' Award: Research. She also appeared on the *Mail and Guardian's* 200 Young South Africans list in 2015; and received her National Research Foundation (NRF) Y1 rating in 2020.

Most recently, she has been awarded a 2023 NRF Research Excellence Award for Early Career/Emerging Researchers (Life Sciences). She is honoured to receive this UCT College of Fellows Young Researcher Award.