Dankwoord / Acknowledgements
This thesis represents not only my research efforts, it is also a reflection of other people’ support, dedication, companionship and encouragement. My experience during the course of my doctoral studies has been nothing short of amazing. This thesis is the result of work and efforts done by dozens of people, who I wish to thank; and of many experiences I have encountered during the past 4-5 years from a long list of remarkable individuals whom I also wish to acknowledge. Without collaboration with, sharing of knowledge with and getting tremendous support from my supervisors, colleagues, friends and family, this thesis would have remained just a pipe dream.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my promotor and co-promotors. Maarten, thank you for giving me the opportunity to do research in your group and for your hands on guidance throughout the course of my PhD studies. Our relationship dates back to 2009 when I was doing my MSc in Medical Pharmaceutical Sciences. You took us for an introductory course and from there on I knew I had passion for health economics and a desire to work with you. I failed in an attempt to do my second master project with you as well as participating in your course. And I thought we were done, and the dream was over; time to look elsewhere. On 12/06/2011 you sent me a link to the T-REC advert in which they were looking for 4 PhD students from Ghana and Zimbabwe and you wondered if I was interested. To me, it was a no brainer of course! I applied and the rest is history. Had it not been because you shared that link, I would not have seen the advert and would not have written this narration at all, Thank you. With your busy schedule, I honestly never expected you to go through all my manuscripts. I’m glad and proud to have a busy promotor who read and made comments to all my manuscripts. I also greatly appreciate learning the ‘art’ of responding to comments and ensuring timeous publication of articles. Once again, a big thank you- I could not have imagined a better promotor.

To Rene, our journey began with a little setback – money. It’s not very surprising since that is the main focus of this thesis. I had had a better PhD offer (financially) from another university when I got the offer to work with you. Of course, I wanted to do health economics and to return to Zimbabwe, but it is the way you handled the discussions surrounding the stipend negotiations that swayed my final decision. I thought to myself, this is my guy and it turns out I was right. I had lots of challenges (scientific and mostly non-scientific) during the past 4-5 years and you were always there to help, support and guide me. The first year was particularly turbulent, but because of your support, albeit from a distance (7,600 miles), I survived. I initially dreaded our Wednesday Skype meetings, but with time I was always looking forward to them and I will definitely miss them. We always spend the first few minutes (5-20 minutes) talking about social issues – the Zimbabwean situation, your kids, your holidays, my welfare at NBSZ, my wellness, just to name but a few – and then delve into the more interesting stuff (science), as we called it. And you made sure we always shared a beer (or coffee!) when we met at conferences or meetings. You pushed me to be the independent researcher I’m today. Whenever there were differences in views over scientific issues, you’d tell me to make the final call since it was my thesis. You pushed
me to write papers and make sure they’re published – as evidenced in this thesis. Throughout the four or so years, you have always encouraged me to start thinking about life post PhD. And thank you for the PhD ceremony suit! I can go on and on, maybe I should write a book (and publish it!!) about the experiences. Rene, you were more than just a supervisor – a friend, colleague, mentor. Thank you.

In Star I had a friend and colleague who was a stone’s throw away. We discussed and shared ideas together. Whenever I got stuck or need to discuss problems, your door was always open. I knew I would always count on you to read, pay attention to detail and comment on all my papers timeously. I would like to take note of the HRQoL paper which we had to rewrite following the first rejection. You walked with me during the reanalysis of the data as well as the whole rewriting process. You patiently sat down with me, for the entire day, to revise the accepted paper. I remember we skipped lunch and had to go through each and every sentence until the paper was perfect – yes it got perfect, that’s why it is now published. It was a very tiring but fulfilling experience, thank you. And thank you for the biscuits that day!

David and Lucy, thank you for accommodating me and the hospitality at the NBSZ. I had a beautiful office with good internet and had access to stationary, thanks to you guys. David, you helped a lot in the stipend negotiations and I sincerely appreciate your efforts. I also thank you for the scientific inputs and comments. Thank you Tonde for all the help towards my project and for the chats and company in foreign lands while attending international conferences. To the late Dr Chitiyo, I appreciate the engagements we had. I always looked forward to chatting with you, Dr Emmanuel. Thank you for the scientific input, the language edits and of course the general chats and jokes. I loved working with you. Radhi, thank you for managing the finances and all the administrative work you did and helped with. Thank you for being a good friend and colleague -You are a real star. Siso, I appreciate all the help and friendship over the years – particularly during the costing study. I wouldn’t have measured the lab dimensions and understood them without your help. The NBSZ FC, and old men who used to chill under the tree at lunch time (‘pasi pemuti’), you made my days and helped me relax, away from the science. The entire NBSZ family was just so warm and welcoming – I had a great experience. A big thank you.

Blessing, thank you for being a good friend and the great effort you put into the HRQoL study. Herbert and Prussic, thank you for the help in data collection for the costing studies.

A big thank you to T-REC for financing my studies. Through this funding, I was able to live a decent life in Zimbabwe while studying. I also managed to attend several international training workshops and conferences. The experiences I had were amazing because there was funding. Imelda, thank you for being the mentor and colleague that you’re. And thank you for looking out for me and my future, most appreciated. Oliver, thank you for the talks we had when you
were in Zimbabwe and linking me up with John; it all made it possible for us to publish the paper on blood utilization. To the rest of the T-REC team, a very big thank you for the smiles, chats, compliments during the past four years. Like everyone else said during the last T-REC workshop in Pretoria South Africa, ‘can there be another T-REC’. I would sure want to be part of such an amazing family again.

To my friends Masimba and Lint (Madhara), thank you for all the support and encouragements. The lunches we had ‘kumabhonzo’ were always electric. Webster, thank you for the help with geo-mapping, support and encouragements. Friends and colleagues in the School of Pharmacy, thank you for encouraging me, particularly in the final stages. For encouraging me to keep pushing hard, thank you Tafadzwa. For the encouragements and particularly taking time to read my General Intro and Discussion, thank you Anna. We met during the struggle of our PhDs and we have supported each other ever since. Thank you very much for walking this journey with me, encouraging me when I was down and congratulating me for the ‘small victories’, thank you very much for this Ivai – it’s finally happening. Last but not least I say thank you to my friend and brother, Clint. You inspired and encouraged me to do a PhD in the first place and you keep pushing me to dream. The awesome stories we share on a daily basis and of course the drinks we always have together, despite being 1,300 miles apart, celebrating papers finished, papers submitted, papers accepted and even those rejected, kept me going. We started this journey together and you’ve been with me all the way-THANK YOU man.

To my family, Laeticia, Jameas, Reason, and Fine and your families; I would not have been who I’m and where I’m had it not been for your unwavering support, love and encouragements. Mai Tinashe and Mai Grascious, thank you for always being there for me. My nephews Tinashe and Kuziva, and nieces Mandipa and Grascious were always a joy to be with and a good distraction from the science. Edson, my cousin and good friend, you have always been there for me. The rest of the Chivave clan, unique in many ways, you are amazing – I’m sorry I cannot list you all by name. They say you can’t choose family…, but I would choose mine if that were to change. Thank you all.
Research Institute SHARE
This thesis is published within the Research Institute SHARE (Science in Healthy Ageing and healthcaRE) of the University Medical Center Groningen / University of Groningen.

Further information regarding the institute and its research can be obtained from our internet-site: http://www.share.umcg.nl/.

More recent theses can be found in the list below.

((co-) supervisors are between brackets)

2016

Lopez Angarita A
Self-compassion; a closer look at its assessment, correlates and role in psychological wellbeing
(prof R Sanderman, dr MJ Schroevers)

Zandstra ARE
Psychosocial adversity and adolescents’ mental health problems; moderating influences of basal cortisol, resting heart rate and Dopamine Receptor D4
(prof J Ormel, dr CA Hartman)

Armbrust W
The impact of juvenile idiopathic arthritis; moving beyond the joint
(prof PJJ Sauer, prof JHB Geertzen, prof NM Wulffraat)

Roy A
The development of depression in children and adolescents with ADHD
(prof AJ Oldehinkel, dr CA Hartman)

Holubcikova J
Eating habits, body image and health and behavioural problems of adolescents; the role of school and family context
(prof SA Reijneveld, dr JP van Dijk, dr A Madarasova-Geckova, dr P Kolarcik)

Nguyen TPL
Health economics of screening for hypertension in Vietnam
(prof MJ Postma, dr CCM Schuilinga-Veninga, dr TBY Nguyen, dr EP Wright)
Mihajlovic J
Health economics of targeted cancer therapies; a comparative analysis for Serbia and the Netherlands
(prof MJ Postma, dr P Pechlivanoglou)

Darvishian M
Real-world influenza vaccine effectiveness; new designs and methods to adjust for confounding and bias
(prof E Hak, prof ER van den Heuvel)

Berm EJJ
Optimizing treatment with psychotropic agents through precision drug therapy; it is not about the mean
(prof B Wilffert, prof E Hak, dr JG Maring)

Fugel H-J
Economics of stratified medicine
(prof MJ Postma, dr M Nuijten, dr K Redekop)

Salavati M
Assessing gross motor function, functional skills, and caregiver assistance in children with cerebral palsy (CP) and cerebral palsy impairment (CPI)
(prof CP van der Schans, prof B Steenbergen, dr A Wanninge, dr EAA Rameckers)

Wierike SCM te
‘The’ pathway towards the elite level in Dutch basketball; a multidimensional and longitudinal study on the development of talented youth basketball players
(prof C Visscher, dr MT Elferink-Gemser)

Jacobs JJWM
General practitioner on an island. How research and innovation help to improve primary care
(prof R Sanderman, prof T van der Molen)

Küpers LK
The first 1000 days and beyond
(prof H Snieder, prof RP Stolk, dr E Corpeleijn)
Kuiper JS
The importance of social relationships in the process of cognitive ageing
(prof RC Oude Voshaar, prof RP Stolk, dr N Smidt)

Göhner, C
Placental particles in pregnancy and preeclampsia
(prof SA Scherjon, prof E Schleuninger, dr MM Faas, dr T Plösch)

Vries AJ de
Patellar tendinopathy; causes, consequences and the use of orthoses
(prof RL Diercks, dr I van den Akker-Scheek, dr J Zwerver, dr H van der Worp)

Holland B van
Promotion of sustainable employment; occupational health in the meat processing industry
(prof MF Reneman, prof S Brouwer, dr R Soer, dr MR de Boer)

For more 2016 and earlier theses visit our website