



Marli Dercksen

Doctor Marli Dercksen is the head medical scientist at the Potchefstroom Laboratory for Inborn Errors of Metabolism (PLIEM) situated in the center of human metabolomics, North West University (NWU), South Africa. She undertook and completed her pre-graduate studies and M.Sc in biochemistry at the NWU from 1998 to 2006 and started her career as researcher at PLIEM in 2004. Her initial interest was in effective diagnosis of carbohydrate related disorders through mass spectrometry and Congenital Disorders of Glycosylation (CDGs).

In 2008 she was awarded the MacGillevry PhD fellowship by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences at the University of Amsterdam. Her research, focusing on isovaleric acidemia and hyperammonemia in organic acidemias, was performed under the supervision of Professor Ronald Wanders, Professor Carool Reinecke and Doctor Ries Duran and she defended her thesis successfully in September 2014 and subsequently received her PHD in clinical biochemistry

During her PhD studies she was able to build a strong relationship with one of the leading CDG centers at the University of Leuven. Here she worked closely with Professor Jaak Jaeken and Professor Gert Mattijse to elucidate the CDG genotype-phenotype observed in the South African population. The diagnosis of CDGs in SA was improved through this research and prenatal analysis was subsequently made available to affected families.

Dr. Dercksen was offered the position of head medical scientist in October 2014 and followed in the footsteps of Professor Japie Mienie, the founder of PLIEM more than 34 years ago. Her current duties include the management of the lab, the interpretation of metabolic profiles and consultation with clinicians in collaboration with Professor Chris Vorster, chemical pathologist and director of the center for Human metabolomics. She also assists in academic research projects and acts as co-supervisor and advisor for post-graduate biochemistry students.