

STATEMENT BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN AND G J KOTWAL

On 24 July 2006 the University announced that it was investigating allegations of misconduct regarding the laboratory of Girish J Kotwal following the publication of a news feature, "Bad Medicine", in Nature Medicine of 28 June 2006. The laboratory was closed and the research activities of Professor Kotwal suspended. A second report in Nature Medicine of 30 August 2006 clarified aspects of the first article. This investigation has proceeded and discussions have been held between the parties. The University and Professor Kotwal now make the following announcement to the University and the scientific community:

1. We place on record that the article by Kotwal and others in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* ("the Annals") (*Ann. N Y Acad. Sci.* **1056** 293-302; 2005) failed to report salient features and was in one respect misleading. In particular the article expressly states that: "the work was not supported by funding from Secomet (Pty) Ltd. and is an *independent study* [our emphasis] that was in no way influenced by Secomet", when in fact Dr S Leivers, a co-author, was and was known to be a director of Secomet (Pty) Ltd. Kotwal has submitted the attached correction to the *Annals* for publication.
2. The reported Secomet study had not been submitted for institutional ethical approval or for approval by the Medicines Control Council's ("MCC") Clinical Trials Division, (although in respect of the latter Dr Kotwal in good faith believed that everything that was required to be done was, including notification of the product to the MCC, completion of informed consent forms prepared by qualified medical and legal consultants signed by the patients and administration of the treatment by a certified medical practitioner, by Secomet (Pty) Limited.).
3. Professor Kotwal has no, and has never had any, financial interest in Secomet. He has not endorsed, championed or promoted Secomet's products; he has reported his laboratory analysis of Secomet V to the scientific community and media.
4. The University of Cape Town does not and has never endorsed or promoted Secomet's products. The University has cancelled a royalty agreement it entered into with Secomet (Pty) Ltd. The University and its staff will no longer have any interactions with Secomet and no further research will be carried out on Secomet V at the University.
5. The University has reviewed Professor Kotwal's laboratory. An absence of certain appropriate procedures, records and laboratory disciplines was noted during this review. No researcher, student or laboratory staff member was actually exposed to hazardous material or injured due to laboratory accidents. The laboratory has been closed and decontaminated.
6. Professor Kotwal will resign his chair at the University of Cape Town with effect from 31 December 2006. to pursue his research interests in natural medicine and translational research elsewhere.

24 October 2006