



# JANET VAN NIEKERK

2025

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
FOR BAYESIAN  
ANALYSIS AND  
STATISTICS AND  
COMPUTING,  
SERVES ON THE ISI  
NOMINATIONS  
COMMITTEE AND  
THE ISI COMMITTEE  
ON WOMEN IN  
STATISTICS,  
YOUNG ABASSADOR  
2024 FOR THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
BIOMETRIC SOCIETY

CITATIONS: 410  
H-INDEX: 11  
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# 1. Biographical sketch

## 1.1. General information

|                         |                               |  |                 |  |                      |    |                         |   |                               |  |  |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|--|----------------------|----|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Surname</b>          | VAN NIEKERK                   |  |                 |  |                      |    |                         |   |                               |  |  |
| <b>First names</b>      | JANET                         |  |                 |  | <b>ID Number</b>     |    | 8912010018081           |   |                               |  |  |
| <b>Citizenship</b>      | South African                 |  |                 |  | <b>Title</b>         | Dr | <b>Female</b>           | X | <b>Male</b>                   |  |  |
| <b>Place of birth</b>   | Pretoria                      |  |                 |  | <b>Date of birth</b> |    | 01/12/1989              |   |                               |  |  |
| <b>Population group</b> | <b>African</b>                |  | <b>Coloured</b> |  | <b>Indian</b>        |    | <b>White</b>            | X | <b>Other (Please specify)</b> |  |  |
| <b>Passport number</b>  | M00335798                     |  |                 |  |                      |    | <b>Nationality</b>      |   | South African                 |  |  |
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## 1.2. Qualifications

| Degree / Diploma                      | Field of study                      | Higher education       | Year | Distinctions      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|------|-------------------|
| BSc                                   | Actuarial and Financial Mathematics | University of Pretoria | 2011 | With distinction  |
| BSc(Hons)                             | Mathematical Statistics             | University of Pretoria | 2012 | With distinction  |
| MSc                                   | Mathematical Statistics             | University of Pretoria | 2013 | With distinction  |
| PhD                                   | Mathematical Statistics             | University of Pretoria | 2017 |                   |
| Higher Education Teaching Certificate | Higher education teaching           | Harvard University     | 2022 | Final mark of 97% |

### 1.3. Work experience

| Name of employer  | Capacity and/or type of work  | Period<br>From: mm//yy to<br>mm//yy        |
|---|---|--|
| King Abdullah University of Science and Technology<br><br>Computer, Electrical and Mathematical Sciences and Engineering School<br><br>Saudi Arabia | Research Scientist  | 2021 - present                             |
| King Abdullah University of Science and Technology<br><br>Computer, Electrical and Mathematical Sciences and Engineering School<br><br>Saudi Arabia | Post-Doctoral fellow  | 09/2018 - 2021                             |
| University of Pretoria<br><br>Department of Statistics<br><br>South Africa  | Extraordinary lecturer<br><br>Senior Lecturer (previously lecturer) | 09/2018 - present<br><br>01/2013 – 09/2018 |

## 2. Research outputs

### 2.1. Publications in peer-reviewed or refereed journals

2025

1. Abdul-Fattah, E., **Van Niekerk, J.**, & Rue, H. (2025). INLA+--Approximate Bayesian inference for non-sparse models using HPC. *Statistics and Computing* 35(1), pp. 1-12.
2. Burger, D.A., van der Merwe, S., **Van Niekerk, J.**, Lesaffre, E. & Pironet, A. (2025). Joint quantile regression of longitudinal continuous proportions and time-to-event data: application in medication adherence and persistence. *Statistical Methods in Medical Research*, 34(1), pp. 111-130, doi:10.1177/09622802241300845.
3. Ye, X., **Van Niekerk, J.**, & Rue, H. (2025). Principled priors for Bayesian circular models. *Journal of the American Statistical Association (JASA)*, (submitted).
4. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Le-Bert Heyl, M. & Rue, H. (2025). Permeable barriers in spatial modeling. *Annals of Applied Statistics*, (submitted).
5. **van Niekerk, J.**, Dutta, S. & Rue, H. (2025). Skewing the Laplace method using Variational Bayes - beyond symmetric approximations. *Statistical Science* (under review).

2024

6. **Van Niekerk, J.** and Rue, H. (2024). Low-rank Variational Bayes correction to the Laplace method. *Journal of Machine Learning Research* 25(62), pp. 1-25.
7. Rustand, D., **van Niekerk, J.**, Krainski, E. T., Rue, H., & Proust-Lima, C. (2023). Fast and flexible inference approach for joint models of multivariate longitudinal and survival data using Integrated Nested Laplace Approximations. *Biostatistics* 25(2), pp. 429-448.
8. Alvares, D., **Van Niekerk, J.**, Krainski, E. T., Rue, H., & Rustand, D. (2024). Bayesian survival analysis with INLA. *Statistics in Medicine*, 43(20), pp. 3975-4010.
9. Fattah, E. A., Krainski, E., **van Niekerk, J.**, & Rue, H. (2023). Non-stationary Bayesian Spatial Model for Disease Mapping based on Sub-regions. *Statistical Methods in Medical Research*, 33(6), pp. 1093-1111.
10. Alahmadi, H., **Van Niekerk, J.** & Rue, H. (2024). Joint quantile disease mapping with application to malaria and G6P deficiency. *Royal Society Open Science* 11(1), pp. 1-19.
11. De Bie, M., **Van Niekerk, J.** & Bekker, A. (2024). Spatio-temporal insights for wind energy harvesting in South Africa. *International Journal on Geomathematics* (under review)
12. **Van Niekerk, J.** and Rue, H. (2024). Restricting feedback in joint models for robust inference. *The American Statistician* (under review).
13. Freni-Sterrantino, A., Rustand, D., **van Niekerk, J.**, Krainski, E. T., & Rue, H. (2024). A Graphical Framework for Interpretable Correlation Matrix Models. *Statistical Methods and Applications* (revised, awaiting decision).

14. Van Wyk, A., **Van Niekerk, J.**, Arashi, M. & Bekker, A. (2024). Bayesian Variable Selection for Skew Normal Models. *Journal of Multivariate Analysis* (under review).
15. Chiuchiolo, C., **van Niekerk, J.**, & Rue, H. (2023). An Extended Simplified Laplace strategy for Approximate Bayesian inference of Latent Gaussian Models using R-INLA. *Electronic Journal of Statistics* (in revision) arXiv preprint arXiv:2203.14304.

2023

16. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Krainski, E., Rustand, D., & Rue, H. (2023). A new avenue for Bayesian inference with INLA. *Computational Statistics & Data Analysis*, 18(1), pp. 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csda.2023.107692>
17. Gaedke-Merzhäuser, L., **van Niekerk, J.**, Schenk, O., & Rue, H. (2023). Parallelized integrated nested Laplace approximations for fast Bayesian inference. *Statistics and Computing*, 33(1), pp. 1-25.
18. Rustand, D., **Van Niekerk, J.**, Rue, H., Tournigand, C., Rondeau, V., & Briollais, L. (2023). Bayesian estimation of two-part joint models for a longitudinal semicontinuous biomarker and a terminal event with R-INLA: Interests for cancer clinical trial evaluation. *Biometrical journal*, 65(4), pp. 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bimj.202100322>
19. Chiuchiolo, C., **van Niekerk, J.**, & Rue, H. (2023). Joint posterior inference for latent Gaussian models with R-INLA. *Journal of Statistical Computation and Simulation*, 93(5), 723-752.
20. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Bakka, H., & Rue, H. (2023). Stable non-linear generalized Bayesian joint models for survival-longitudinal data. *Sankhya A*, 85(1), 102-128.

2022

21. Fattah, E. A., **Van Niekerk, J.**, & Rue, H. (2022). Smart Gradient-An adaptive technique for improving gradient estimation. *Foundations of Data Science*, 4(1), 123-136.
22. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Bekker, A. and Arashi, M. (2022). Matrix-variate beta generator – developments and application, *Journal of the Iranian Statistical Society*, 20(1), pp.289-306.

2021

23. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Bakka, H., Rue, H., & Schenk, O. (2021). New Frontiers in Bayesian Modeling Using the INLA Package in R. *Journal of Statistical Software*, 100, 1-28.
24. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Bakka, H., & Rue, H. (2021). Competing risks joint models using R-INLA. *Statistical Modelling*, 21(1-2), 56-71.
25. **Van Niekerk, J.**, and Rue, H. (2021). Skewed probit regression – identifiability, contraction and reformulation. *REVSTAT-Statistical journal*, 19(1), pp.1-22.
26. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Bakka, H. and Rue, H. (2021). A principled distance-based prior for the shape of the Weibull model. *Statistical and Probability Letters*, 174, pp.98-109.

2019

27. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Bekker, A. and Arashi, M. (2019). Beta regression in the presence of outliers – a wieldy Bayesian solution. *Statistical Methods in Medical Research*, 28(12), pp.3729-3740.
28. Benson, J. F., Schoeman, J. P., Venter, F. J., Ker, J. A., Zeiler, G. E., Bester, L., **van Niekerk, J.** and Tintinger, G. R. (2019). Aortic arch baroreceptor stimulation in an experimental goat model: a novel method to lower blood pressure. *Frontiers in Cardiovascular Medicine*, 5, 193.

29. Arashi, M., Bekker, A. and **Van Niekerk, J.** (2019). Weighted distributions of Eigenvalues, *Linear Algebra and its Applications*, 561, pp.24-40.
30. Masoumi Karakani, H, Human, S.W. and **Van Niekerk, J.** (2019). A double generally weighted moving average exceedance control chart, *Quality and Reliability Engineering International*, 35(1), pp.224-245.

2017

31. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Bekker, A. and Arashi, M. (2017). *Weighted-type Wishart distributions with application*. *RevStat*, 15(1), pp.205-222.
32. Bekker, A., **Van Niekerk, J.** and Arashi, M. (2017). Wishart distributions: Advances in theory with Bayesian application. *Journal of Multivariate Analysis*, 155, pp.272-283.
33. Prinsloo, T., de Villiers, C., & **van Niekerk, J.** (2017). The role of the Namibian Livestock Traceability Systems in containing the recent foot-and-mouth disease outbreak: Case study from the Northern parts of Namibia. *IEEE Next Generation Computing Applications (NextComp)*, pp.30-35.
34. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Bekker, A. and Arashi, M. (2017). A gamma-mixture class of distributions with Bayesian application. *Communications in Statistics-Simulation and Computation*, 46(10), pp.8152-8165.
35. Gawler, N. and **Van Niekerk, J.** (2017). Judicial decision making: a statistical perspective. *South African Statistical Journal proceedings*, pp.17-24.

2012 - 2016

36. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Bekker, A., Arashi, M. and De Waal, D.J. (2016). Estimation under the matrix variate elliptical model. *South African Statistical Journal*, 50(1), pp.149-171.
37. **Van Niekerk, J.**, Bekker, A., Arashi, M. and Roux, J.J.J. (2015). Subjective Bayesian analysis of the elliptical model. *Communications in Statistics-Theory and Methods*, 44(17), pp.3738-3753.
38. **Van Niekerk, J.** and Bekker, A. (2012). Bayesian estimation of location parameter of the normal model with unknown variance. *South African Statistical Journal proceedings*, pp.10-17.

## 2.2. Books or book chapters

1. **Van Niekerk, J.**, & Rue, H. (2022). Use of the INLA Approach for the Analysis of Interval-Censored Data. In *Emerging Topics in Modeling Interval-Censored Survival Data* (pp. 123-140). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
2. Lombardo, L., Freni-Sterrantino, A., **Van Niekerk, J.**, Tanyas, H., Krainski, E., Castro-Camilo, D., Opitz, T and Chiuchiolo, C. (2025). Temporal and Spatial modeling of Landslide hazards. Wiley (in process).
3. Rustand, D., **Van Niekerk, J.**, Krainski, E.T. and Rue, H. (2025). Advanced survival and longitudinal joint analysis with INLA. CRC Press (in process).
4. **Van Niekerk, J.** and Rue, H. (2025). Efficient spatio-temporal Bayesian modeling with INLA. In *Environmental Statistics: Innovative Methods and Applications*, CRC Press (in process).

### 3. Research-based contributions

#### 3.1. Conferences

##### 3.1.1. Invited and plenary contributions

2025

O'Bayes international conference, Athens, Greece

Invited discussant

<https://obayes25.aueb.gr/speakers.html>

INLA: Past, present and future international workshop, Glasgow, Scotland

The present of INLA (Keynote speaker)

2024

WASA international workshop, Brasilia, Brazil

Complex survival analysis with INLA (Opening plenary speaker)

<https://viwasa.softaliza.com.br/palestrantes/>

IBC: International Biometrics Conference, Atlanta, USA

Approximate Bayesian inference for Biostatistics (Showcase and Award winner)

<https://members.biometricsociety.org/ibc2022/events/is22>

CMStatistics, London, UK

C0096: Innovative statistical approaches for climate change studies

International Symposium for Modern Statistics and Biostatistics, Pretoria, South Africa

Workshop presenter of Spatial Modeling with INLA

<https://www.up.ac.za/cf-symposium2024/article/3232129/workshop-presenters>

GEOMED, Hasselt, Belgium

Beyond the basic Laplace Approximations for Biostatistics

<https://www.uhasselt.be/en/events-en/2023-2024/geomed2024/material>

2023

JSM, Joint Statistical meetings, Canada

New Methodological and Practical Approaches for Facilitating Drug Approvals in Rare Disease

2022

CMStatistics, London

E0148: Statistical summits: Highlights of contemporary results in methodology and computing.

IBC: International Biometrics Conference, Latvia

IS.16: New advances in Bayesian modeling

<https://members.biometricsociety.org/ibc2022/events/is22>



2021

CMStatistics, London

E0312: Statistical joint modeling with longitudinal and survival data

<http://www.cmstatistics.org/CMStatistics2021/fullprogramme.php>

SASA2021: Annual conference of the South African Statistical Association, 2021, Stellenbosch, South Africa

Advanced survival data analysis and causal inference

<https://www.sastat.org/events/conferences/sasa-2021>

2020

ICOMCOS 2020: International Conference in Mathematics, Computation Sciences and Statistics, Indonesia

<http://icomcos.fst.conference.unair.ac.id/index.php>

2019

62nd ISI World Statistics Congress, Malaysia

IPS-97: Developing leadership skills in Women in Statistics

### 3.1.2. Contributed participations

2020

ISBA 2020: Complex survival models with R-INLA

SAfJR 2020: Workshop in Survival Analysis for Young researchers, Germany.

2019

IWSM 2019: Workshop in Statistical Modelling, Portugal.

SAfJR 2019: Workshop in Survival Analysis for Young researchers, Denmark.

ISBS 2019: International Symposium in Statistics and Biostatistics, South Africa.

2018

ISBA 2018: International Society for Bayesian Analysis World Meeting, Scotland.

2017

ISI 2017: 61st ISI World Statistics Congress, Morocco.

2012 - 2016

SASA 2016: Conference of the South African Statistical Association 2016, South Africa

ISI 2015: 60th ISI World Statistics Congress, 2015, Brazil

SASA 2015: Conference of the South African Statistical Association 2015, South Africa

SAAWK 2015: Symposium of the academy of science and art, 2015, South Africa

SASA 2014: Conference of the South African Statistical Association 2014, South Africa

SAAWK 2014: Symposium of the academy of science and art, 2014, South Africa

ISI 2013: 59th ISI World Statistics Congress, 2013, Hong Kong

ISBASA 2013: Workshop of the International Society for Bayesian Analysis South African chapter, Grahamstown, South Africa

SASA 2012: Conference of the South African Statistical Association 2012, South Africa

SAAWK 2012: Symposium of the Academy of Science and Art, 2015, South Africa

### 3.2. Short courses developed and presented

2024

Data science for Public Health, Centers for disease control and prevention, Atlanta, USA  
Data science for Environmental Sciences, Pretoria, South Africa

2022

Advanced epidemiological models with R-INLA, Bordeaux  
New advances in Bayesian inference, Lisbon

2021

Valencia International Bayesian Analysis summer school, Spain  
<http://vabar.es/events/vibass4/>

2019

Statistical modelling using INLA, June 24-27, University of South Africa  
<https://www.wits.ac.za/media/wits-university/faculties-and-schools/science/computer-science-and-applied-mathematics/Invitation%20INLA%20UNISA%2024-27%20June%202019.pdf>

### 3.3. Membership in national and international bodies

| Registration category   | Professional Body   | From           |
|---|---|----------------|
| Associate Editor – Bayesian Analysis<br><a href="https://www.e-publications.org/ims/submission/BA/help/about/">https://www.e-publications.org/ims/submission/BA/help/about/</a>   | Journal of the International Society of Bayesian Analysis | 2022 - 2025    |
| Associate Editor – Statistics and Computing<br><a href="https://link.springer.com/journal/11222/editorial-board">https://link.springer.com/journal/11222/editorial-board</a>  | Springer Nature journal                                   | 2025 - 2029    |
| ISI Nominations Committee<br><a href="https://www.isi-web.org/isi-community/committees/nominations">https://www.isi-web.org/isi-community/committees/nominations</a>  | International Statistical Institute                       | 2020 - current |
| Management of the committee on Women in Statistics<br><a href="https://cw-isi.org/">https://cw-isi.org/</a> and <a href="https://www.isi-web.org/isi-community/committees/women-in-statistics">https://www.isi-web.org/isi-community/committees/women-in-statistics</a> | International Statistical Institute                       | 2016 - current |

|                |                                       |              |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Regular member | South African Statistical Association | Since 2014   |
| Regular member | International Biometrics Society      | Since 2022   |
| Regular member | Bernoulli society                     | Since 2012   |
| Member         | Golden Key Honorary Society           | October 2009 |

### 3.3. *International research visits*

1. Flatiron Institute, New York, USA: 8 – 12 December 2024
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, USA: 15 – 31 May 2024
3. University of Lisbon, Portugal: 15 – 31 July 2022
4. INCERM, University of Bordeaux, France: 1 – 14 July 2022

## 4. Scholarly service

### 4.1. *Statistical consultant*

- R-INLA project <http://www.r-inla.org/home>
- Accutrak <http://www.accutrak.co.za/>
- South African National Joint Registry (SANJR) <https://www.sanjr.co.za/>
- African Health Placements (AHP) <https://ahp.org.za/>
- Netcare group <https://www.netcare.co.za/>
- University of South Africa <http://www.unisa.ac.za>
- Werner Boshoff attorneys <http://www.wernerboshoffinc.co.za/>

### 4.2. *Referee duties*

Reviewer for:

- Bayesian Analysis
- Journal of the American Statistical Association
- Canadian Journal of Statistics
- Biostatistics
- Statistical Methods in Medical Research
- Journal of Quantitative Analysis in Sports
- Numerical Algorithms

- Communications in Statistics – Theory and Methods
- South African Statistical Journal

## 5. Funding obtained

2015

World bank Trust fund for Statistical Capacity building (TFSCB) award

2017

World bank Trust fund for Statistical Capacity building (TFSCB) award

2018

University of Pretoria research development program (RDP) award

National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa: Teaching development grant (TDG) award (Grant numbers: 123 and 110117)

2023

Competitive research grant (CRG) at KAUST award for “A Bayesian computing framework for precision medicine”.

2024

International Biometrics Society and International Statistical Institute young ambassador travel grant

## 6. Teaching activities

I have been involved in teaching in higher education since 2012 and obtained my Higher Education Teaching Certificate from Harvard University, USA in 2022. I have presented courses from first year level to PhD level as well as to scientists at public institutes like the CDC, USA. My expanded teaching portfolio is available at <https://github.com/JanetVN1201/Documents>.

### 6.1. Courses presented (Summary)

| Course                   | Level (e.g. second year, Masters) | Self developed (Yes or No) |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Bayesian analysis        | Postgraduate                      | Yes                        |
| Computational Statistics | Postgraduate                      | No                         |
| Biostatistics            | 1 <sup>st</sup> year, Honours     | Yes                        |

|                         |  |     |
|-------------------------|--|-----|
| Mathematical Statistics | 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> year | Yes |
| Statistics              | 3rd year                                 | Yes |
| Research methodology    | Honours                                  | Yes |
| SAS and R training      | Honours, Masters                         | Yes |

## 7 Awards and scientific/scholarly recognition

### 2008

- University of Pretoria Undergraduate Achievement Bursary

### 2009

- University of Pretoria Undergraduate Achievement Bursary
- Golden Key membership

### 2011

- University of Pretoria Postgraduate Achievement Bursary
- University of Pretoria Academic Honorary colours
- STATOMET bursary award

### 2012

- University of Pretoria Academic Honorary colours
- STATOMET bursary award
- SASA students project competition – 4<sup>th</sup> place
- African Bank award for the top achiever in the BSc(Hons) program
- Blue Stallion award for contribution of scientific merit

### 2013

- University of Pretoria Academic Honorary colours
- STATOMET prize for the most exceptional student in the Magister program of the Department of Statistics
- World Bank Fund prize for participation in the 59<sup>th</sup> World Statistics Congress in Hong Kong in 2013

### 2014

- University of Pretoria Research Support bursary

### 2015

- World Bank Fund award for participation in the 60<sup>th</sup> World Statistics Congress in Brazil
- Best doctoral presentation at the South African Statistical Association conference

### 2016

- University of Pretoria Postgraduate Achievement bursary

### 2017

- University of Pretoria Teaching award for excellence in teaching
- University of Pretoria incentive award for being the youngest PhD Mathematical Statistics graduate

2018

- International Society for Bayesian Analysis Travel Award.

2024

- International Biometrics Society Young Ambassador Award.

## 8 References

**1. Haavard Rue (current line manager)**

*Professor, CEMSE, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology,  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

[Haavard.Rue@kaust.edu.sa](mailto:Haavard.Rue@kaust.edu.sa)

**2. Ding-Geng Chen**

*Professor and Executive Director in the Biostatistics College, Arizona State  
University, United States of America*

[ding-geng.chen@asu.edu](mailto:ding-geng.chen@asu.edu)

**3. Lola Ugarte**

*Professor, Mathematics and Statistics, Universidad de Navarra, Spain*

[lola@unavarra.es](mailto:lola@unavarra.es)

**4. Sara Martino**

*Associate Professor, Mathematics and Statistics, Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology, Norway*

[Sara.martino@ntnu.no](mailto:Sara.martino@ntnu.no)

**5. Renee Ehlers**

*Previous Colleague: Department of Statistics, University of Pretoria, South  
Africa*

[Rene.Ehlers@up.ac.za](mailto:Rene.Ehlers@up.ac.za)

**6. Virgilio Gomez-Rubio**

*Professor: Department of Statistics, University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain*

[virgilio.gomez@uclm.es](mailto:virgilio.gomez@uclm.es)