



From the Editor . . .



**Gill Nelson,
Editor-in-Chief**

In this, our last issue of 2016, we focus on wellness in the workplace, a topic that is of great interest, based on the number of recent publications (2 534 and 1 850 articles with the keywords “wellness” and “workplace” are registered on PubMed for 2015 and 2016, respectively). To quote Craig Nossel, Head of Vitality Wellness at Discovery, “Employers need to take responsibility for promoting the health and wellbeing of their employees.”¹ As workers spend most of their waking time in the workplace, this is clearly the environment in which to provide facilities and services to improve health. The results of Discovery Health’s Healthiest Company Index, published in 2013,² showed that a variety of health-promoting facilities were available at the participating companies. Emergency medical response training was widely available in 90.1% of the companies, while other services were not as common (disease and condition management programmes, 47.9%; worksite-based health centres, 35.2%; and assistance with smoking cessation, 22.5%).

The first step is to provide wellness programmes. However, awareness and attitudes need to be addressed as these affect utilisation of the services, as demonstrated in a study by Dawad and Hoque. Lourens and Ballard looked at wellness from a slightly different perspective, and investigated the consequences of a hospital revitalisation programme – something that many health services will undergo as South Africa’s National Health Insurance is implemented.

Moving from workplace wellness to specific exposures, Moto and Claassen report on 1-OHP-Cr levels of welders and tappers in a chrome smelter. Workers in smelters such as these are exposed to coal tar pitch volatiles which are carcinogens. This is not an exposure that is commonly reported in the South African literature. Other occupations where

there is a risk of exposure include coking, roofing, road paving, wood preserving and any others where coal tar is used.³ The study highlights the importance of personal hygiene practices in reducing exposures to coal tar pitch volatiles.

The Societies have been very busy and have lots to report. SASOM members attended a Department of Labour Workshop on Occupational Health Service Providers in September; and an update about the training collaboration between SASOM and the Foundation for Professional Development is provided, for all to read. The MMPA held its 19th Annual Congress over two days in early September. MMPA President, Dr Kanyile Baloyi, has written a comprehensive report on all the sessions. SAIOH President, Jaco Pieterse, together with Claudina Nogueira, also report on their Annual Congress, including the awards that were handed to the well-deserving participants for outstanding achievements. Beverley Beute, on behalf of SASOHN, writes about the 6th World Congress on Community Health Nursing in June 2016, in Cape Town, in which many members participated.

The year has flown by, and it is time again for me to wish you a happy, restful and safe Festive Season spent with loved ones. May those of you returning to work in 2017 have renewed energy and motivation to register for or complete your degrees, finish writing the paper that is sitting on your desk, or start the research that you have been delaying.



REFERENCES

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2. Patel D, Goetzel RZ, Beckowski M, Milner K, Greyling M, da Silva R, Kolbe-Alexander T, Tabrizi MJ, Nossel C. The Healthiest Company Index. A Campaign to Promote Worksite Wellness in South Africa. *J Occup Environ Med.* 2013; 55(2):172-178.
3. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Safety and Health Topics: Coal Tar Pitch Volatiles (undated) Available at: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/coalpitchvolatiles/hazards.html> (accessed 21 Sep 2016).