



The 12th SASOHN Academic Day

Have you attended a SASOHN Academic event recently? What an awesome turnout at the recent Academic Day hosted by SASOHN Pretoria in Johannesburg on 4 May! The Academic Day is held annually in two regions and, at the time of writing this, the same programme was scheduled for 18 May in Cape Town with SASOHN Western Cape as the hosts. This year, delegates had the privilege of members from the Scientific Committee for Occupational Health Nursing (SCOHN) sharing their expertise at the Academic Days, providing delegates with an opportunity to network, compare and align their practices with global trends in occupational health. SCOHN Secretary, Kim Davies, inspired delegates in Johannesburg, while Dr Susan Randolph, SCOHN Chairperson and Clinical Assistant Professor in Occupational Health Nursing (OHN) at the University of North Carolina and fellow of American Association of OHN, will address delegates in Cape Town.

The Academic Days traditionally fall either in or near International Nurses Day which is celebrated on 12 May each year. In recognition of the 2017 celebrations, Denise Minnie, the current SASOHN President, opened the event with a motivational presentation, reminding delegates of the value that each OHN continues to bring to the workplace. Dr Maarschalk followed and highlighted the challenges of complying with the Department of Mineral Resources reporting strategies which, it was recognised, are largely dependent on input from the OHNs. The time invested by OHNs, collating extensive data, has proved invaluable in providing evidence used to modify occupational health clinic services in recent years. This has resulted in more efficiently meeting the health needs of mine workers. An example given was the implementation of standard threshold

shifts instead of percentage loss of hearing in the audiometric surveillance programmes. Busisiwe Nyamtumbu, representing the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH), updated the audience on the proposed changes to the OSH Act with the focus being the draft Ergonomic Regulations which closed for public comment on 27 April 2017. This raised some constructive debate, with Milly Ruiters, Director of Occupational Health and Hygiene at the Department of Labour (DoL), on hand to provide clarity.

One area of concern raised was the definition of 'the competent person'. There currently is no definition but this will be clarified once the public comments are reviewed. It was stated that, despite the training programme being initiated by Rhodes University, many more stakeholders and/or service providers would be brought on board to prevent monopolisation. The DoL, however, does not approve providers so it would be the OHN's responsibility to find a suitable training provider if needed. Did you critically review the draft regulations and consider how they will influence your service delivery?

This examination of change was continued when Lindsay Zurba, the Marketing Manager of Momentum OCSA and a spirometry expert, had the audience contemplating the implications of possible changes to spirometry reference values. She provided a heads-up on the Global Lung Function Initiative (GLI) reference ranges which are currently under review and at the stage of including 4000 lung function reference results from African countries. This will enhance the reference values that practitioners are using in South Africa as there will be an African reference value database. In addition, practitioners using the GLI would need to intervene at the lower limit of normal rather than the predicted percentages of normal, as currently applied.



SASOHN Academic Day 2017 – Standing up for Evidence-Based Practice as facilitated by K Michell

Source: Angela Butkovic

If that was not enough to get practitioners to sit up and reflect on the quality of spirometry testing, Karen Michell's interactive presentation on research, with particular reference to audiometry testing, soon had the audience on their feet in response to how they were using research for evidence-based practice. The majority of evaluation forms indicated that delegates now had renewed intent to use reliable research articles to improve their service delivery and the required risk-based tests.

An ethics panel discussion was a new initiative to the Academic Day and was well received. The hypothetical case study presented to the panel was based on a combination of authentic reports submitted to the SASOHN National Office, requesting assistance. As Milly Ruiters so eloquently stated, "This is an ethical nightmare." – a sentiment that was supported by Dr Andre Kotze (SASOM), Lynn Botha (SASOHN), and Dr Spo Kgalamano (NIOH). The panel explained why some issues in the study, which initially appear to be straightforward, actually raise significant and challenging ethical concerns. They then had to face the real challenge of suggesting solutions that would best assist the OHN resolve her predicament. The audience enthusiastically assisted when they were given the opportunity to provide their input, through a digital survey using Kahoot via their cellphones.

SASOHN hopes to 'go green' for all future events. Perhaps



SASOHN Academic Day Task Team 2017 in Johannesburg – SASOHN Pretoria

Source: Michelle Bester

even certificates will be available on-line once the participant logs in via the SASOHN website, as is done internationally. We are looking forward to you learning with SASOHN as we develop together at the next Academic Day and/or conference.

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