



SASOM Annual Congress 2017

This year's SASOM Congress took place on 9 and 10 June at the Protea Hotel by Marriott, Oliver Tambo International Airport, Kempton Park, Gauteng. The

meeting of the SASOM Executive Committee (ExCo) was held on the evening of 8 June. The Congress was attended by delegates, invited presenters, session chairs and exhibitors who came from far and wide within South Africa and from beyond our borders.

The Congress offered participants a comprehensive and varied programme aligned with the theme 'Challenges in Occupational Health – Doing right, at the right time', which sought to include elements relevant to ethics and legislation for all the topics presented. The Congress organising committee takes this opportunity to thank and recognise the contributions made by the presenters, exhibitors and delegates in making the Congress a success.

Delegates who completed and submitted the Congress

Evaluation Forms for both days earned 16 Continuing Professional Development points (CEUnits), from the South African Medical Association, for full attendance.



The SASOM Congress hosted the ICOH Regional (African) National Secretaries Meeting. From left to right: Prof. Seong-Kyu Kang (ICOH Vice President for National Secretaries), ICOH Board members Ms Claudina Nogueira (South Africa) and Dr Dingani Moyo (Zimbabwe), ICOH National Secretaries Dr Blessing Garamumhango (Zimbabwe), Dr Adriaan Combrinck (South Africa), and Dr Cheikh Cisse (Senegal)

Photograph: Claudina Nogueira



SASOM Congress delegates

Photograph: Dr Arne von Delft, © TB Proof



Delegates attending the session on ergonomics

Photograph: Dr Arne von Delft, © TB Proof



Congress delegates, with and without masks, participate in the interactive presentation delivered by Dr Arne von Delft of 'TB Proof'

Photograph: Dr Arne von Delft, © TB Proof



The NIOH was one of the exhibitors at the Congress

Photograph: Claudina Nogueira



The lunches and teas were served in the same venue where the exhibitors displayed their stands, promoting networking and discussion opportunities between Congress attendees

Photograph: Claudina Nogueira

A detailed report of the many interesting papers presented at this two-day Congress may be accessed on the *Occupational Health Southern Africa* website: www.occhealth.co.za

SASOM 2017 Annual General Meeting and Conference

The next SASOM Conference/Academic Day will take place on 25 November 2017 to coincide with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will be organised and hosted by the SASOM KwaZulu-Natal Chapter, at the Coastlands Hotel in Umhlanga, KwaZulu-Natal.

Workshop on Hazardous Biological Agents

At the request of the Department of Labour (DoL), SASOM participated in the Hazardous Biological Agents (HBAs) Workshop, held on 29 June 2017, to initiate discussion on amending the Regulations for Hazardous Biological Agents (2001). The programme was co-ordinated and led by the DoL with inputs on various aspects of the regulations from representatives of the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH – Dr Tanusha Singh), the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH – Jaco Pieterse), The South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners (SASOHN – Denise Minnie), and SASOM.

Prof. Mary Ross initiated the SASOM contribution with a presentation on 'Medical surveillance for employees exposed to biological agents'. She emphasised the need for surveillance, not only for healthcare workers who are indeed a high priority group, but also for workers as disparate as those working with animals, in agriculture, with waste, and occupational

travellers such as expatriates and the military. A limitation of the current regulations is that, despite inclusion of 'self-employed' workers, they do not actually cover the informal sector, comprising several million workers.

SASOM sponsored Dr Bart Willems from the Western Cape, and as a representative of the NGO 'TB Proof', to complete the SASOM input. Based on his own experience of contracting occupational tuberculosis (TB), and with a relative who contracted occupational multiple drug-resistant (MDR) TB, Dr Willems gave a riveting presentation on the dire threat of the TB epidemic to vulnerable healthcare workers in South Africa. The SASOM input engendered active discussion on healthcare workers in general and, particularly, the need to reclassify HBAs such as MDR and extreme drug-resistant (XDR) TB.

The DoL will be establishing an expert group to assist with the amendment of the HBA regulations.

Seminar on driver fitness and certification

Collaboration between SASOM and Rolling Rehab

A seminar on driver fitness and certification was hosted by Ms Caroline Rule of *Rolling Rehab* (www.rollingrehab.co.za) on 5-6 May 2017, at the Golden Pipit Conference Centre, Club View in Centurion. Ms Rule is an occupational therapist (OT) with a special interest in driving assessments for people with impairments, as well as vehicle adaptations for drivers with physical limitations. The core content of the seminar covered the newly revised South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM) guidelines on driver fitness, presented by the document's author/editor, Dr Greg Kew, a specialist in occupational medicine and senior lecturer at the University of Cape Town. Dr Kew is also Chair of the Western Cape Chapter of SASOM.

Other presentations at the seminar included issues specific to the OT functional assessment of impaired drivers, and vehicle adaptations by Ms Rule; a personal journey and useful guidance on the legal aspects of fitness certification by Mr Eugene Searle, a lawyer living with a physical disability; and an overview of relevant sections of the National Road Traffic Act by Mr Japie Mbele, Deputy Director of Licensing Standards in the Department of Transport.

There was an impressive turnout of 71 delegates, most of whom were OTs, but other attendees included psychologists, doctors (a neurologist, two rehabilitation doctors and two occupational medicine practitioners), and an occupational health nurse. In addition to Mr Mbele, two other representatives from the Department of Transport attended the seminar, including the Director of Compliance, Ms Laetitia Botma.

The seminar comprised four parts. The first addressed general issues, including the legal framework for driver testing and fitness to work certification, the origins and scope of the guidelines, and the validity and legal standing of the guidelines. The second addressed a general approach to implementing a Fitness to Work (FTW) testing programme, introduced new terms and definitions in the guidelines, and discussed general criteria for fitness to drive and the issue of notification of impaired drivers (by an impaired driver to a Member of the Executive Council (MEC), according to the definitions given in the National Road Traffic Act). The third part covered the section in the SASOM guidelines in which specific impairments



Presenters and organisers of the Seminar on Driver Fitness and Certification. From left to right: Mr Japie Mbele (Licensing Standards, Department of Transport), Ms Caroline Rule (Rolling Rehab), Mr Eugene Searle (lawyer in private practice) and Dr Greg Kew (SASOM and UCT)

Photograph: Rolling Rehab

in various organ systems are addressed (notably, neurology, metabolic conditions, etc.). The fourth session comprised case studies which were co-hosted by Ms Lizette Swanepoel, the head of the OT driver testing facility at the University of Stellenbosch.

Very positive feedback was given by the delegates who learned a great deal. They were also pleased to be able to contribute to the content of the final document.

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