



SASOHN Gauteng Central managers' brunch

The South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners (SASOHN) Gauteng Central had the pleasure of hosting a business brunch for managers on 14 March 2018. The objective of the brunch was to inform managers of the activities and roles of SASOHN as a society, and more importantly, for them to understand the value of the occupational health nursing practitioners (OHNPs) they employ. The brunch was held at Ora Bella Restaurant in Boksburg, the venue that SASOHN Gauteng Central uses to host their monthly meetings and workshops. Ora Bella exceeded expectations with their wonderful decor, table settings and scrumptious buffet brunch. Shortly after arriving, guests and members were encouraged to enjoy the buffet brunch and to network.

Sue Martinuzzi, the SASOHN Gauteng Central Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed both managers and members. There were 60 people in attendance, 13 of whom were managers. The meeting intentionally commenced with the usual business matters on the agenda, giving the managers an opportunity to participate and witness a normal SASOHN regional meeting. Sue addressed matters arising from the previous meeting and all new items on the agenda. This discussion was followed by the Committee Portfolio Holders who presented their reports.

Yvonne van Zijl, in her role as Treasurer, invited everyone to donate small change towards the 'Coffee Kitty' before delivering her financial report. All money raised through the region is donated to the social project supported by SASOHN Gauteng Central. It is amazing how much money is collected in this way, and at this meeting in particular, with the extra help of the managers, a very generous sum accumulated. Yvonne explained how SASOHN gives back to its members through bursaries and sponsorships. In 2018, three SASOHN Gauteng Central members were sponsored to attend the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) conference in Dublin, all of whom presented papers.

Agnes Ramodipa, holder of the Portfolio for Education, presented the education report. The Academic Day, to be held in May 2018 in Johannesburg, was discussed, and members were urged to book and attend. The Continued Professional Development (CPD) points, as proposed by the South African Nursing Council for introduction in 2019, were discussed briefly, and members were encouraged to begin their portfolios of evidence. The importance of the manager's support of the OHNP in obtaining the required CPD points was emphasised. The required support includes allowing the OHNP time off to attend regional meetings, academic days, conferences and workshops. Agnes reminded everyone that March is Tuberculosis (TB) Awareness Month, and that members should also educate their clients about listeriosis.

Andiswa Bombil, who manages the Social Responsibility Portfolio, gave a brief overview of the Siyabonga Isineke Stimulation Centre, the SASOHN Gauteng Central social responsibility project for 2018. She reminded everyone that winter is coming and that blankets and other items of warm clothing are desperately needed for the organisation. The Centre has no permanent home as it burned down and they are in dire need of donations.

In concluding the business meeting, Agnes introduced the SASOHN President, Denise Minnie. Denise gave an informative talk, exploring the role of SASOHN as a professional society. SASOHN was established in the 1960s as a discussion group, and developed into a professional society in the 1980s. Currently, there are 10 regional societies under the SASOHN umbrella. From humble beginnings of a few industrial nurses, the Society now has more than 1 200 paid-up members across South Africa. There are also a number of members in neighbouring Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries.

The Society's objectives were highlighted with an emphasis on the value added to companies that engage and embrace occupational health services. SASOHN strives to develop members professionally through regular regional meetings, conferences, academic days and workshops.

The regional meetings provide a network where members provide support, share information, and discuss problems and experiences with each other. Senior, experienced members play an important role in the mentoring of junior OHNPs, prior to them practicing independently. This is important for the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next. For practical experience, student occupational health nurses spend time with experienced OHNPs in the work environment and are provided an opportunity to translate theory into practice.

OHNPs play a varied role in the company: from ensuring compliance with occupational health legislation, advising management on occupational health issues, reducing absenteeism through case management, and implementing medical surveillance, to the treatment and management of work-related injuries and diseases. The role of the occupational medical practitioner (OMP) is not forgotten, as the OHNP and OMP work closely together.

SASOHN engages and cooperates with various state departments, including the Departments of Labour, Health, Mineral Resources and Transport, as well as the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH). The society works closely with other professional organisations with an interest in occupational health, such as The South African Society for Occupational Medicine (SASOM) and the Southern African Institute of Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH). SASOHN is represented at an international level within organisations such as ICOH, which ensures the Society's continued professional development.

SASOHN bestows professional recognition on members for excellence in the field of occupational health nursing. This recognition includes awards for the best OHNP student of the year, the best OHNP of the year in either a corporate or individual capacity, and the best OHNP mentor of the year. A further benefit of membership is the professional indemnity insurance that SASOHN provides to all paid-up members, as well as the subscription to *Occupational Health Southern Africa*.

Feedback received from members and the regional committee members was positive, and it is hoped that the managers left with a better appreciation of SASOHN as a society, and also enjoyed this social time with their OHNPs.

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