



SASOHN's 38th AGM and Conference

Harvesting Knowledge

OVERVIEW

The South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners' (SASOHN's) 38th Annual Conference took place from 31 October to 2 November 2018 in the beautiful town of Stellenbosch, surrounded by vineyards, tranquil gardens and historic farm buildings. The Western Cape region hosted the Conference and aligned presentations to meet the SASOHN goals as far as possible, as listed below:

- The promotion of the highest possible standards in occupational health practice by encouraging accreditation and upgrading professional qualifications;
- The provision of a supportive network for occupational health nursing practitioners (OHNPs) working in a business environment, and a forum for sharing problems and experiences;
- The development of professional capacity and excellence through the presentation of workshops, conferences and training projects, including specific efforts to keep members abreast of changes in technology and legislation;
- The encouragement of the cost-effective delivery of quality occupational health services in the country; and
- The promotion of adherence by organisations to the legal requirements set in terms of current South African and International legislation.

The Western Cape regional executive committee wanted delegates to share a very different conference experience at the historic Spier Wine Estate, established outside Stellenbosch in 1692, and embodying the vision of sustainability, recycling and 'going green'.

The themes of the Conference were based on the concept of planting and harvesting seeds of knowledge, as well as the fermenting and bottling of seeds of ethics, research, management, leadership and technology, encouraging nurses to embrace and utilise new ideas and advances in their clinical practice. The selection of workshops and conference topics were intended to familiarise OHNPs with the soon-to-be-adopted continuous professional development (CPD) programme.

The Conference started with three simultaneous workshops presented by experts in the occupational health field. Dr Regis Rugira Marie Modeste of Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) presented the first workshop on publishing our own researchable activities, by providing attendees with the tools for the development of their own research. This interactive workshop provided an opportunity for participants to think about their own practice, identify research problems and apply the research process in developing their own studies that will be relevant and appropriate to their practice. Dr Modeste provided guidelines on how the workshop attendees should work towards developing a research problem, research purpose and objectives, based on relevant issues identified in their own workplaces. The various research methodologies were discussed to

highlight the steps that need to be taken in conducting research to solve the identified problem. The very interactive workshop in developing a research proposal was well received by members, and will hopefully ensure that the methodology is appropriately chosen within an acceptable ethical framework.

Dr Annemarie Lombard, founder and CEO of Sensory Intelligence Consulting, invited us to grow self-knowledge and to use sensory intelligence to create healthy and happy office environments. Dr Lombard presented on health and wellbeing in the modern workplace, and discussed how it has gained momentum as mental illness in the workplace steadily rises. The implications of the high costs of absenteeism and illness were outlined, together with the ongoing efforts that are needed to encourage and empower employers to tackle this problem effectively.

Mr Terence Hermanus, a senior lecturer at CPUT, presented the third workshop about personal branding of the practitioner. He defined the concept and importance of personal branding to optimally promote our own true value, regardless of age, position or type of business. We were reminded to take lessons from the big brands to know what it takes to stand out and prosper in the new world of work.

The day concluded with a 'Hallowine' night market and cocktail dinner – an evening of fun under a fresh night sky, with delegates and exhibitors sampling delectable food from market stalls, while enjoying cocktails and some superb Spier wine.

Day Two started with an opening address by the SASOHN President, Ms Denise Minnie, that encouraged members to change the focus of SASOHN so as to align themselves and the Society with business values. By giving relevant feedback from meetings, workshops and conferences, the OHNP promotes the profession and adds value to the business.

The Conference session themes continued to refer to the concepts of harvesting, fermenting and bottling. The first session, 'HARVESTING', was galvanised by Sharen Russell communicating passionately about the importance of body language, words and voice tone when interacting with people. Sharen is the owner of the Dale Carnegie franchise in the Cape and has every confidence in her abilities as a trainer, believing that her record speaks for itself. Her hands-on business background, and proven success in business management in high-pressure environments, give her the added advantage in being able to relate closely to the real-world challenges and pressures faced by all in her training.

Prof. Penelope Engel Hills, an Associate Professor and Acting Dean in the Faculty of Health and Wellness at CPUT, spoke about ethical decision-making for the OHNP and how to apply care ethics in our practices by being conscientious moral agents.

Dr Jack Meintjies, Head of the Unit for Infection Prevention



and Control, Department of Interdisciplinary Health Sciences, Division of Community Health, Stellenbosch University (SU) and Tygerberg Academic Hospital, concluded the first session. Case studies from the Tygerberg Occupational Health Unit reminded us to not forget the basic question when diagnosing: where does the person work? Valuable case studies were shared with the Conference delegates, as well as how easily we sometimes overlook the basics in diagnosing problems in clients.

The second session focused on 'FERMENTING', the process in which an agent causes an organic substance to break down into simpler substances. The session started with Mr Michael Bagraim, a practicing attorney, founder of Bagraims' Attorneys, and a Member of Parliament for the Democratic Alliance. He addressed the ever-popular subject of medical certificates. Delegates seemed to agree that there is discordance between the primary healthcare model of health delivery in South Africa and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act No. 75 of 1997) that defines who may issue medical certificates. This was followed by Dr Younus Essack who presented two case studies to illustrate the pre-analytical variables that could impact a clinical result. Dr Essack is a consultant chemical pathologist and coordinator of point-of-care testing at Pathcare. The final speaker was Prof. Karien Jooste, Head of Nursing Science, CPUT, who discussed encouraging mastery through self-leadership.

The third session, 'BOTTLING', appealed to delegates to embrace technology and to understand how it has impacted on the millennial generation. Dr Waghid, a lecturer in Educational Technology at the Centre for Innovative Educational Technology (CIET) and the project manager of Analytics for Learning at CPUT, guided us towards blended-learning opportunities, using technology as a medium for teaching and learning. Debbie Jackson, leadership expert and business coach, helped the baby boomers and Y generation members of the audience to appreciate the 'magic of the millennial' and how to coach and mentor them. She pointed out millennials can do the same for the more mature colleague in the workplace – after all, they are ones who understand technology. Dr Jack van Zyl concluded the Conference with his presentation on occupational health

and employee benefits. A strong workplace commitment to health and safety; work modification for injured/ill workers; supervisor training in work disability and prevention; making early contact with injured/ill workers; and good communication between the employer and healthcare providers, are all good strategies that may help to reduce disability claims. Dr Van Zyl is Group Risk Manager of Sanlam Employee Benefits, overseeing all occupational health issues of the Sanlam group of companies and clients of the Sanlam group, including the mining industry, motor manufacturing, local authorities and parastatal organisations.

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

At the 'Uncork and Enjoy Gala Dinner', 2018 proved to be another exceptional vintage where we recognised the fruits of labour of our members:

Ian Webster Gold Award:	Karen Michell (PhD)
Ian Webster Silver Award:	Helene Mausling (Western Cape)
Janet Taylor Award:	Helen Mapeleba
Mentor of the Year:	Helen Horsman (Western Cape)
Region of the Year:	Pretoria region
Honorary Life Member:	Denise Minnie (West Rand)

The Conference had a poster display area at the entrance to the venue, which helped delegates gain new knowledge and skills from the awesome displays. Nine entries were received in three categories.

Poster Competition Winners

Category 1: Formal Research – Agnes Huiskamp

Category 2: Informal Research – Susan Martinuzzi

Category 3: Health Promotion – Karen Koegelenberg

A poster quiz was held to encourage the delegates to visit the poster display. There was good participation and the winner of the quiz competition received a prize donated by Vaal PathCare.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) commenced with a presentation by Justin Malherbe and Robin Vers on cannabis in



Pretoria won the 'Region of the Year' award

Photograph: Sandra Muller



Amtronix sponsored the Gala Dinner

Photograph: Sandra Muller



the workplace, and the implications of the recent Constitutional Court 'Prince' judgement. The Constitutional Court judgement was put into context and the findings were elaborated upon with the conclusion that an adult may lawfully use or consume cannabis (in its various forms), as long as it is done in private. Issues in the workplace include:

- *Can an employee carry or use cannabis whilst on the employer's premises?*

The workplace is not a private space, thus possession and use of cannabis at work is still unlawful. Disciplinary codes that prohibit the possession and use of cannabis are still valid.

- *Can an employer discipline an employee for being 'under the influence' of cannabis?*

Subject to the normal principles of fairness, an employer may dismiss an employee for possession and use of cannabis at work. The onus will be on the employer to show that the level of intoxication has an adverse effect on the employee's job, or has the potential to have an adverse effect, and can make the workplace unsafe. According to Mr Malherbe, this is a factual issue that the employer must prove on a balance of probabilities, and there must be a distinction between intoxication and the mere presence of cannabis in the blood.

- *Can an employer test its employees for cannabis use?*

Testing is permissible if an employer's business requires it, especially if dangerous machinery is used; but an employee must be aware that testing might be carried out and the testing must be conducted in an ethically and medically appropriate manner.

There are many unanswered questions and much hinges on the way Parliament amends the legislation.

CONCLUSION

Our members acknowledged the 'known' exhibitors and advised that the Conference would not be the same without them; and appreciated and welcomed the 'new' exhibitors and the interaction and learning opportunities provided. SASOHN Western Cape extends heartfelt thanks to all exhibitors and sponsors for their support and attendance at the Conference, without whom it would not be possible. As service providers to the industry, they fulfilled our needs to keep pace with new ideas, trends and information relating to occupational health.

Feedback was also received from members regarding the incorporation of the session sponsors and the value of these presentations in terms of the types of products and their uses being made known to them. The Conference was well attended by our SASOHN members and the information shared was, as always, well worth the attendance.

Visit www.occhealth.co.za to see more photographs from this event.

Report by:

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MMPA NEWS



MMPA welcomes you to a greater 2019

This year, the Mine Medical Professionals Association (MMPA) is focused on ramping up and delivering great value to its members. We are quite ambitious in our goals on a number of fronts. We will work aggressively to reach out to more medical professionals in South Africa and to grow our membership, and we aim to become more visible as an organisation. To this end, we will be leveraging more on digital platforms, including social media, to increase visibility and raise awareness about the activities of the MMPA. We will continue building momentum on what we achieved in 2018. As we grow, we will learn from our mistakes and apply lessons learnt to have a more successful year.

We held a number of symposiums in 2018, and strongly believe that we can increase attendance of these events. We will continue the quarterly symposiums and have our Annual Congress later this year. In addition, the MMPA will

co-host the OSHAfrica 2019 conference. We aim to have a beautiful and eventful 2019.

In summary, the year 2019 is the year of GREATER!

- GREATER visibility
- GREATER awareness
- GREATER membership
- GREATER value

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