

Another remarkable Academic Day – this time hosting a hybrid national event with the International Nurses Week of 2021

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The South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners (SASOHN) started the year by coming to grips with the 4th Industrial Revolution, viz. becoming technologically savvy! The COVID-19 pandemic has globally impacted the manner in which meetings, workshops and conferences are facilitated.

SASOHN Gauteng Central and Eastern Cape regions boldly co-hosted the annual SASOHN Academic Day for 2021 as SASOHN's inaugural national hybrid event, based at the Emperors Palace Conference Centre in Kempton Park, Gauteng on 6 May 2021. The theme *Nurses transforming the workplace* complemented the advantages experienced by delegates participating in, presenting in, and/or hosting a hybrid event. The Academic Day attracted occupational health professionals located across South Africa, and two international colleagues. One member from Mpumalanga reported the satisfaction of being able to participate in the first morning session of this event, using her cell phone, while traveling by overnight bus, for instance. The high calibre of guest speakers that were sourced and co-ordinated by Michelle Bester, the national educational representative, expertly navigated their presentations both in-person and online.

Denise Minnie (SASOHN president and occupational health nurse practitioner (OHNP)) motivated the delegates with her opening welcome, followed by an inspirational in-person presentation on 'Resilience of the OHNP post-COVID' by Naledi Mqhayi (clinical psychologist). Prof. Daan Kocks (SASOM president and occupational health medical practitioner (OHMP)) joined online to facilitate the delegates through 'Dealing with ethical challenges in contemporary occupational health'.

The second session focused on refining some clinical skills needed by practitioners to steer their clinical services through the repeated COVID waves. This was, for example, addressed online by Dr Annah Sefolosha (nurse educator and OHP) in her rekindling of the occupational health practitioner's (OHP's) psychiatric skills in 'Managing violence in the workplace', followed by Penelope Mathumbu (clinical psychologist), who showcased a practical approach on 'Mindfulness and reflection skills for the OHP', also online.

Angie Butkovic (national public relations officer), with the assistance of Amanda van Jaarsveld (regional secretary), took the lead in all the preparatory meetings via Microsoft Teams (MST), ensuring that all delegates were welcomed from the MST lobby and accommodating the queries from the delegates through the chat section and/or via raised hands. In addition to spinning the online wheel between speakers for the various sponsored digital spot prizes for delegates, Angie designed the evaluation form via Microsoft Forms so that the digital certificates from Medbay could be released upon completion.

Technical sound difficulties were promptly resolved by the Emperors' Conference Centre IT team and a back-up team, arranged by Michelle Bester, which proved to be fortuitous. All the presentations, exhibitor handouts and gallery of photos were available to delegates via a web-based portal, rather than on flash drives – another first. With each meeting, workshop and the Academic Day, SASOHN members are improving their technical skills and mastering virtual presentations in this 'new normal'.

Overall, the Academic Day was an impressive national event!



SASOHN members from the West Rand and Gauteng Central regions at the SASOHN Academic Day 2021

Photograph: A Swanepoel

We wished there were a lot more delegates who could have attended, either online or in person. The annual SASOHN Academic Day was purposively scheduled to coincide with the start of the International Nurses Week celebrations, i.e. 6–12 May 2021. The SASOHN national office bearers surprised those delegates who attended in person to a motivational 'stress survival kit' and a stunning SASOHN-branded cupcake with their high tea during the mid-morning break. Winners of the 'Dress to Impress Hat Competition', and spin-the-wheel spot prizes, were predominantly amongst the online delegates, who either won digital vouchers and/or, in some cases, had the table centre bouquet of flowers couriered to them.

The additional significance of combining these events is more serious. International Nurses Week is a calendar highlight whereby the valuable contribution that these nurse specialists bring to industry is acknowledged. It is also an opportunity to symbolically renew their nursing pledge of service, together with their peers. This has been especially apt this year with regard to the extended impact that COVID-19 has had on all health professionals and the public they serve. Thank you to all the safety, health, environment and quality (SHEQ) role players for lightening the burden of this pandemic.



Denise Minnie, SASOHN president 2021, at the SASOHN Academic Day 2021 *Photograph: A Swanepoel*



Guest speaker, Naledi Mqhayi (clinical psychologist) at the SASOHN Academic Day 2021 *Photograph: D Botha*



The Nurses Lamp, in preparation for the recitation of the Nurses' Pledge by nurses at the hybrid International Nurses Week and SASOHN Academic Day 2021 event *Photograph: A Swanepoel*



Academic Hybrid Day Hosting Committee 2021. Back L-R: A van Jaarsveld, E van Jaarsveld, H Sampson, G Birk, A Butkovic, Y van Zijl, K Mahomed, A Duma; Front L-R: D Botha, A Swanepoel *Photograph: D Botha*