

# News from the SASOM national office

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Prof. Daan Kocks, chair of the South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM), and Dr Jan Lapere, SASOM Executive Committee (ExCo) member, continue to be involved in the weekly National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH)/National Department of Health (DoH)/Vaccination Employers Forum as well as official ad hoc requests related to countrywide developments.

The national office is very active in sharing numerous digital communications with SASOM members. Due to the requirements of the newly promulgated (1 July 2021) Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act, the SASOM national office must ensure that it remains vigilant in dealing with and managing members' personal information.

The National DoH issued a circular on 4 June 2021 on policy guidance on vaccination sites; these guidelines apply to both public and private health vaccination sites, but not to workplace sites.

The publication by the Department of Employment and Labour titled 'Consolidated Direction on Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Certain Workplaces', is available at: <https://businesstech.co.za/news/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Labour-1.pdf>

The SASOM Cape Chapter hosted a continuous professional development (CPD)-accredited webinar on 22 June 2021. Dr Rubenshan Perumal presented 'Long COVID – the tsunami after the waves', and Prof. Romy Parker presented 'Rehabilitation for long COVID'.

A new geo-map of available occupational medicine practitioner (OMP) services is planned as a SASOM member benefit, to increase the visibility and communication potential of the SASOM network. During the month of July 2021, SASOM offered all Diploma in Occupational Health/Occupational Medicine (DOH/DOM) students 50% off SASOM student membership fees as a promotion to highlight the benefits of membership.

The new SASOM Guideline 15, titled 'Spirometry in the Workplace',

was finalised and endorsed by the South African Thoracic Society (SATS); it is now available as a SASOM membership benefit. Planning is underway to host a series of four spirometry training webinars for SASOM members during the month of August, and for other interested parties in occupational health at a later date. The webinars are CPD accredited and will be presented by Sr Lindsay Zurba, respiratory nurse practitioner and director and training manager of Education for Health Africa ([www.educationforhealth.africa](http://www.educationforhealth.africa)), who will cover the following topics:

- Introduction, quality assurance and quality control in spirometry
- Preparing for and conducting a spirometry test
- Evaluation of the test result for validity
- Interpretation, reporting and record keeping

Through a SASOM collaboration, Sr Zurba will be offering mentoring and training in spirometry to occupational health practitioners in Zambia.

The paper titled 'Work-related injuries and diseases and COVID-19', with contributions from SASOM and International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) members, has been published in the *International Journal of Labour Research*, and is available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---actrav/documents/article/wcms\\_810045.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/article/wcms_810045.pdf)

SASOM extends condolences and get well wishes to Ms Claudina Nogueira, SASOM ExCo member and longstanding co-author of this page. Her family is one of many that was impacted by the third wave of COVID-19 in South Africa. She and her parents were hospitalised with COVID pneumonia in June. Tragically, her father died in the COVID ICU, her mother is currently undergoing rehabilitation after five weeks in hospital, and Claudina is recovering at home and gradually returning to her work commitments after being hospitalised for 11 days.

## Update on the ICOH2022 Congress – *Sharing solutions in occupational health through and beyond the pandemic*

The official website of the virtual ICOH2022 Congress (6 to 10 February 2022) is active ([www.ich2022.net](http://www.ich2022.net)), registrations are open, and abstracts for Free Paper Sessions can be submitted online. Those who are interested in participating, please take note of key dates in 2021:

- Registration open and early bird offer – 15 June
- Call for abstracts open – 15 June
- Abstract submissions close – 31 August
- Notification of abstract acceptance – 31 October
- Deadline for accepted presenter to confirm participation – 9 November
- Standard registration fees on offer – 10 November