



The SCOHN/SASOHN ICOH2009 Pre-Conference Workshop CPUT – 21 March 2009, Cape Town

The International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) was founded in 1906 with the aim of promoting research into occupational diseases worldwide and disseminating findings to the scientific community, physicians, employers and workers. Changes in the world economy, globalisation, introduction of new technologies and the varying nature of employment contracts are factors that constantly affect health and safety at work. Research into new methods and work practices is required to ensure the enhancement and development of occupational health and safety practices throughout the world. ICOH continues to support this research through the 35 scientific committees developed to address specific areas of occupational health.

ICOH members have identified the global challenges and collaborate in the field of research, practice, training and information sharing. The United Nations has recognised ICOH as a non-governmental organisation which collaborates with the WHO, ILO and other related organisations.

In 2003 at the 27th ICOH Conference in Brazil, South Africa won the bid to host the 29th ICOH Conference. After almost six years of hard work that time is upon us and the conference will take place at the International Conference Centre in Cape Town from 22 – 27 March 2009.

ICOH members may affiliate to any of the 35 scientific committees, one of which is the Scientific Committee on Occupational Health Nursing (SCOHN) with which SASOHN has built strong ties. SASOHN members have represented and presented various paper and poster presentations at previous conferences in Nice, Stockholm, Singapore, Iguasso Falls and Milan. Jenny Serfontein joined SCOHN in 1990 and became the first South African to chair SCOHN from 2000. She continues to further the interests of occupational health nursing as an ICOH Board member from 2006 to 2009. The South African liaison continued when Louwna Pretorius joined the SCOHN executive as Vice-chair in 2006. SASOHN as an organisation promoted ICOH membership in South Africa by encouraging the regional chairpersons to become ICOH and SCOHN members thus broadening their interest in occupational health and safety at an international level.

The SCOHN/SASOHN liaison resulted in previous successful workshops hosted by SASOHN during PACOH (1997) and the SASOHN 2002 conference in Port Elizabeth. A third collaboration is planned for 2009 when SASOHN will host the SCOHN/SASOHN ICOH2009 Pre-Conference Workshop. This will be a once in a lifetime opportunity for many occupational health nursing practitioners (OHNPs)

who will be able to meet international peers and hear presentations from international delegates. The workshop will take place on 21 March 2009 at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Bellville Campus. This is an event not to be missed and the SASOHN Executive have been moving heaven and earth to make this a once in a lifetime experience!

SASOHN has pulled out all the stops to secure adequate funding to allow OHNPs to attend the workshop at a fee of R350 all inclusive of refreshments, presentations from international speakers and a cocktail function with entertainment. It provides an opportunity for OHNPs to gain first hand exposure to international occupational health practice from acclaimed speakers from the rest of the world, not forgetting South Africa. The day is planned to have a dynamic opening address by Mrs Helen Zille followed by a minimum of eight international and local speakers addressing the ICOH2009 Conference theme "Occupational Health – a basic right at work, an asset to society" and related aspects.

SASOHN is privileged to have a number of members presenting papers and posters at the ICOH2009 conference – a first for many, but a golden opportunity to benchmark ourselves against the rest of the occupational health and safety fraternity worldwide. SASOHN members will also participate in the SCOHN special session during the ICOH Conference that is to take place during the week of 22 – 27 March 2009 – we congratulate them as they promote South Africa and SASOHN, and wish them the best of luck with their endeavours.

The SCOHN General Meeting will take place during the conference and all SCOHN members are urged to ensure the contact details for members in good standing reach SCOHN in good time. The results from the SCOHN research project will be shared with members at the conference and new projects for the next three years will be discussed and planned. The announcement of nominations and elections of SCOHN office bearers for the next triennial will be made.

SASOHN looks forward to meeting all interested parties, OHNPs and ICOH delegates at the SCOHN/SASOHN workshop. Registration for the workshop can be completed through the SASOHN National Office.

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