



ICOH Joint Conference 2013 – São Paulo, Brazil

The ICOH Scientific Committee (SC) Joint Conference (9th International Conference on Occupational Health for Healthcare Workers, International Conference on Occupational Health and Development, International Conference on Occupational Health Nursing, and the International Conference on Occupational Infectious Agents) took place from 22 to 26 September 2013, in São Paulo, Brazil. South Africa was represented by Louwna Pretorius (Scientific Committee on Occupational Health Nursing [SCOHN] chairperson), Kim Davies (SASOHN president), Claudina Nogueira (ICOH Board member), and Dr Frank Fox (SASOM), with a total of 350 delegates attending the conference.

The conference commenced with pre-conference courses which addressed the protection of healthcare workers (HCWs) from blood borne pathogens, the epidemiology of blood-borne infections, and surveillance systems of exposures to blood and body fluids among HCWs. The main conference commenced with a keynote address by Prof. Kazutaka Kogi titled "Occupational health for all health professionals: goals and difficulties". He stressed the importance of acting locally and thinking globally – this theme was carried forward by many speakers during the conference. The role of the administrator and/or management of the health service also received a lot of attention. The shortage of HCWs and the ratio of HCWs to clients, and subsequent consequences, such as suicide, burnout, depression, and drug and substance abuse, highlighted the plight of modern HCWs. The competencies and skills required of HCWs and the interventions required to ensure

effective service delivery were topics of much debate.

Claudina Nogueira (Anglo-American, SA) organised the workshops on occupational infectious agents. Dr Lucille Blumberg (National Health Laboratory Service, SA) kept the audience spell-bound during the plenary session when she reflected on case studies of occupational infections acquired during global travel and when working in foreign countries (focusing on Africa). Reflecting on new versus current practices, the role and need for vaccinations/ immunizations for HCWs and clients was another theme highlighted during the conference.

Louwna Pretorius (SASOHN and SCOHN) delivered two oral presentations. The first, "The occupational health nursing practitioner (OHNP) as a member of the management team", emphasised management expectations of the role and function of the OHNP. The second paper was titled, "OHSAS 18001 management system standard: requirements for occupational health service delivery". SCOHN was responsible for a special session on "Health services management" and the oral session on perspectives related to "Global occupational health nursing" practice. The SCOHN special session included speakers from Brazil, Finland, Greece, Japan and the USA. Presentations covered aspects on health risk assessment, leadership, quality management in occupational health nursing in Japan, and a model for planning occupational health activities in a unit – a research perspective from Finland. The oral session highlighted complexities pertaining to education, training, competencies and skills for OHNPs, and the curriculum differences that exist between various countries. Currently, the regulation of occupational health nursing is not common practice around the world, as in South Africa, and this may be a contributing factor to the vast differences in standards and practice.

SCOHN, with the support of ICOH funding, managed to support the incoming president from the Federation of Occupational Health Nurses in the European Union (FOHNEU) to attend the conference. Stella Tziafiri (FOHNEU president) delivered some poster and oral presentations and provided the forum for international networking and relationship building with both SCOHN and SASOHN.

Other topics that were highlighted during the conference included the role of both the OHNP (Dr Bonnie Rogers, USA) and the occupational physician (Dr Jorma Rantenen, Finland) in health services. Dr Sergio Iavicoli (Italy) discussed the use of innovative technologies in occupational health: the challenges and opportunities for healthcare professionals.

It was envisaged that all abstracts, scientific papers and presentations would be available on the ICOH website from 15 Oct 2013. Unfortunately, this has been postponed indefinitely.



Members of SCOHN with Prof. Kazutaka Kogi – ICOH President. From left: Norito Nishikido (Japan), Kim Davis (SASOHN President – SA), Kirsti Nuranen – Observer SCOHN (Finland), Maria Ratio (SCOHN Vice Chair – Finland), Prof. Kazutaka Kogi (ICOH President – Japan), Louwna Pretorius (SCOHN Chairperson – SA) and Kazuka Kanishi (SCOHN Treasurer – Japan)

Photo courtesy of Juliana Malu, ICOH Secretariat – PR Events

ICOH/SCOHN NEWS 2013

The first preparatory meeting for the 31st ICOH congress to be held in Seoul, South Korea in 2015, took place with ICOH officers and KOSHA delegates during July/August this year. With the theme of "Global Harmony for Occupational Health: Bridge the World", the Congress will be an important milestone in meeting challenges at a time of rapid change in work life in a globalizing economy. It aims to provide the perfect setting for international exchanges and advances in research and practice in the field of occupational health and safety. ICOH, during the 2006 Centennial Declaration (in Milan) reaffirmed the joint international effort on action-orientated research and practice for health and well-being at work for all workers. This was followed by the Seoul Declaration adopted by the World Summit on Safety and Health at Work in 2008 which called for global partnerships in these fields. The 2015 congress will focus on harmonized action for managing complex work-related risks in an increasing diversifying work environment. The due date for abstract submissions for the Congress is May 2014. The speakers for keynote, plenary and semi-plenary sessions have been identified and will cover a broad spectrum of pertinent occupational health and safety related issues. The early bird registration fee is \$600, the lowest since 2006. More information is available on the website (www.icoh2015.org).

The 30th Asia Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organization Conference and the 26th Korea, China, Japan Joint Conference on Occupational Health will take place simultaneously in order to enable OHS experts to forge stronger relationships. The 9th WHO Collaboration Centre conference will precede the ICOH conference.

The ICOH website was updated to make it more user-friendly and aims to assist ICOH members by providing them with more information on the organization, its activities and benefits (www.icohweb.org/site or www.icoh.co.za). There is a link to the various scientific committees (35) where members can register their interests and affiliations (ICOH members are allowed to join three scientific committees). The ICOH newsletter is published three times a year and is available on the website; it can be accessed at www.icohweb.org/newsletter or by e-mailing the editor at skk@kosha.net. The ICOH membership fee remains the same for developing countries at 66 Swiss Francs (±R 583 for the next three years (2012 – 2015)).

The Vice Chair of SCOHN (Maria Ratio, Finland) will represent SCOHN at the ICOH mid-term meeting that is taking place in Helsinki, Finland in February 2014.

SCOHN EXCO MEETING: SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL, 2013

During the SCOHN ExCo meeting, the current members of SCOHN (Louwna Pretorius, SA – Chairperson; Susan Randolph, USA – Secretary; Maria Ratio, Finland – Vice Chair; and Kazuka Nishidi, Japan – Treasurer, were joined by observers from SA, Japan, Finland and Greece.

The SCOHN ExCo reviewed the progress from the 2013

Business Meeting in Cancún, Mexico, and the following was noted:

- The AAOHN invited SCOHN to hold its mid-term meeting during the 2nd Global Summit on Occupational Health Nursing in Dallas, Texas, during May 2014. SCOHN will conduct a special session during the Summit. The deadline for poster presentations to the AAOHN conference, following the summit, has been extended to 13 Dec 2013.
- SASOHN has accepted an invitation to present papers at the Summit on Monday 5 May 2014 on "Occupational Health Nursing in South Africa" (including challenges for the future), as well as the role of SASOHN, and its benefits for practicing OHNPs.
- The history of the SCOHN project, 40+ years in existence, was compiled by members in Finland. The previous SCOHN reports (1-10) were handed over by Annette Jorgenson during the 2010 conference in Japan to be converted into electronic format, so that they could be made available to both developing and developed countries, as well as to SCOHN members. The process has been completed and investigations are underway to place the reports on the ICOH website with a link to the SCOHN website. Negotiations and investigations will be conducted with the Historical Society Working Group in Italy for the archiving of the hard copies of the reports.
- The results of the research project, "The role of the OHNP in a multidisciplinary team", first presented during ICOH 2009 in Cape Town by Dr Bonnie Rogers, will be communicated as a SCOHN No. 11 research report. An article on the research findings will be published by the end of 2013 in the *Workplace Health and Safety Journal* (formerly the *Journal of the American Association of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners* (AAOHN)).
- The development of a SCOHN website with links to the ICOH virtual office, as per the decision at the Business Meeting is being investigated. A requirement of the meeting was to include modules on competencies for OHNPs. Funding for the project is to be made available from the SCOHN general account. Progress will be monitored and feedback will be provided at the mid-term meeting in May 2014.
- The SCOHN ExCo 2010 decided that the funds (profits from the 2009 SCOHN/SASOHN pre-conference workshop) should remain invested in South Africa for the interim. It was agreed that Louwna Pretorius will request SASOHN to donate the SCOHN/ SASOHN workshop profit to the Yukkiko Fund: a fund established by Prof. Y Yukkiko (Japan) which provides an award to a SCOHN member for the best paper/poster presentation at an international congress. It was agreed by the SCOHN ExCo to finalise this matter prior to the May 2014 mid-term meeting.

*Report by Louwna Pretorius (ANSA),
SCOHN Chairperson 2012 – 2015, SASOHN Exco
Portfolio: ICOH/ SCOHN,
e-mail: Louwna.Pretorius@corobrik.co.za*