

The treatment

Dr Fox says, "SASOM would like a transparent and constructive discussion between the DoH and all stakeholders about the future structure of occupational health services in the country and this includes the future of the NIOH."

Summary of NIOH's role

- Support and inform the drafting of national policy, model legislation, strategic and operational OHS plans
- Provide specialised services and laboratories
- Facilitate teaching and training
- Facilitate the production of OH specialists
- Facilitate decisions about research priorities and research

REFERENCES

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People on the move in occupational health

Anja Franken

Anja Franken completed her PhD in Occupational Hygiene at the North-West University (NWU) in 2014, and the degree was conferred in May 2015. She is a lecturer in the School of Physiology, Nutrition and Consumer Sciences at the NWU, Potchefstroom Campus, where she lectures post-graduate occupational hygiene students. She supervises MSc and PhD students in their respective research projects, and has successfully supervised 13 MSc students to completion since 2008. Currently, she is participating in the development of modules for the new BHSc degree in Occupational Hygiene which will commence in 2016.

Anja has published several peer-reviewed papers, both nationally and internationally, and has presented her research at conferences in South Africa, the Netherlands and France. She obtained a Thuthuka research grant from the National Research Foundation for 2012-2014, which was extended to 2015-2017.

For her PhD, Anja investigated the permeability of metals, such as platinum and rhodium, through human skin, and the factors potentially influencing

permeability. Her research showed that both platinum and rhodium in salt form are permeable through



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Caucasian skin, with increased permeability of platinum through African skin. The results were published in *Toxicology in Vitro* (2014 (8):1396-1401) and *Toxicology Letters* (2015 (232): 566-572) and were also presented to the International Platinum Group Metals Association's PGM Science Task Force in November 2014. For the mining and refining industry, the research findings have indicated that these metals can permeate through the skin and potentially reach the vascular system. However, more importantly, the metals are retained inside the

skin which leads to continued permeation even after leaving the workplace; therefore, any skin contact with these metal salts should be avoided. In addition, the diverse workforce should be considered as African workers have an increased risk for skin permeation.

Anja's research continues with the comparison of permeability between African and Caucasian skins, as well as supervision of post-graduate students investigating the influence of pH and mechanically damaged skin on permeation of platinum group metals.