

News from the SASOM National Office

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SASOM Annual Congress 2022 – A virtual event in four sessions

The first two sessions of the Annual Congress of the South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM) were held virtually in July and August 2022. Statistics, regarding participants, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Registrations, participants and countries represented at the SASOM Annual Congress 2022

No. registrations	No. participants (attendance rate)	Countries represented by participants and presenters
<i>Session 1 – Updates on chemical exposures and medical surveillance, 29 July 2022</i>		
124	90 (73%)	Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe
<i>Session 2 – Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, 26 August 2022</i>		
106	76 (72%)	Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States, Western Sahara

Session 3 – Updates on ergonomics, musculoskeletal disorders, and psychosocial factors at work was held on 16 September 2022, and the presentations were as follows:

- Dr Tessa Bailey (The OPUS Centre for Psychosocial Risk, Adelaide, Australia) – ‘Guidance for psychosocial interventions in the workplace: Experience from international organisations’
- Dr Odette Volmink (Department of Occupational Medicine, National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH), Johannesburg, South Africa) – ‘Impairment and fitness for work: An educated guess?’
- Al-Mari Botes (Function First Assessment and Rehabilitation Practice, Cape Town, South Africa) – ‘Challenges in the mental health decision-making process at work: Solutions from an occupational therapy perspective’
- Dr Jorge Barroso Dias (President: Portuguese Society of Occupational Medicine (SPMT), Lisbon, Portugal) – ‘Alcohol, tobacco, obesity, and sleep in occupational health services: A perspective from Portugal’

CPD-accredited joint workshop in the Northern Cape

SASOM and its Northern Cape Chapter, the Asbestos Relief Trust, the Kgalagadi Relief Trust, and Cipla, sponsored and/or co-organised a continuing professional development (CPD)-accredited hybrid workshop at the Red Sands Country Lodge near Kuruman, on 24 August 2022. Sixty-five delegates participated – 24 in person

and 41 online. This was the first hybrid event co-organised by the SASOM National Office. The occupational health professionals who attended, mainly from the mining areas around Hotazel, Kathu, Kuruman, and Lime Acres, gained a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, current legal issues in occupational health and the pathology and radiology of pneumoconioses. The SASOM Chair, Prof. Daan Kocks, was invited to attend in person, introduce speakers, and give a presentation. The event was co-chaired by Drs Jim teWater Naude (public health medicine specialist at Diagnostic Medicine, Western Cape) and Louis Ellis (Chair: SASOM Northern Cape Chapter). The presentations were as follows:

- Prof. Daan Kocks – ‘Updated legal obligations of occupational medicine practitioners in South Africa (2022)’
- Dr Deepna Govind Lakhoo (Head of Pathology, NIOH, Gauteng) – ‘Importance of post-mortem examinations to miners and their families’
- Dr Qonita Said-Hartley (Clinical Unit Head of Radiology, Groote Schuur Hospital and University of Cape Town, Western Cape) – ‘When the dust settles: Imaging in pneumoconiosis’

Occupational medicine recognised as a speciality by the Board of Healthcare Funders

Following numerous queries from SASOM members, Prof. Daan Kocks approached the Board of Healthcare Funders (BHF) to request the creation of a category for the medical doctor speciality in occupational medicine, as recognised by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The main reason for the request is that there are around 50 occupational medicine specialists in the country, registered with the HPCSA, who have been unable to deliver healthcare with the assistance of medical schemes, managed care organisations, and other administrative systems. SASOM has more than 250 members who are medical practitioners with postgraduate qualifications in occupational medicine and provide accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare to employees.

The BHF replied that its Practice Code Numbering System (PCNS) created a discipline that caters for healthcare practitioners registered with the HPCSA, under the occupational medicine category. The supplied information and the relevant application form to be completed and submitted by occupational medicine specialists were shared with SASOM members.

SASOM annual general meeting – November 2022

The SASOM annual general meeting (AGM) will be held in a fully virtual format on Friday, 25 November 2022. It is not feasible for the event to be organised in a hybrid format because of the escalating costs related to travel, accommodation, and venue hire in

the post-COVID-19 era. This will be the first time in recent years that no academic event (half-day conference) will be held in association with the AGM and ExCo meeting. SASOM will continue its offering of CPD-accredited webinars for its members until further notice.

NEWS FROM THE GLOBAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH ARENA

Global Tuberculosis Community Advisory Board (TB CAB): 10-year milestone

In 2011, the Global TB CAB was created to act in an advisory capacity to product developers and institutions conducting clinical trials of new TB drugs, regimens, diagnostics, and vaccines, and to provide input on study design, early access, regulatory approval, post marketing, and implementation strategies. To celebrate this milestone, TB CAB has released an evaluation report spanning the first 10 years and an accompanying three-part podcast series, 'Agents of change: How the global TB Community Advisory Board transformed history's oldest pandemic'. This is available from:

<https://www.treatmentactiongroup.org/publication/tb-cab-10-year-anniversary-evaluation-report-2011-2021-and-podcast/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=f05df5f0-329d-4ee6-8fdb-c20ee3354906>

SASOM invited as a partner organisation for the ICOH International Conference on the History of Occupational and Environmental Health in 2023

The 7th International Conference on the History of Occupational and Environmental Health was planned to be held in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in May 2020. The global COVID-19 pandemic forced the indefinite postponement of the conference, organised by the Scientific Committee on the History of Prevention of Occupational and Environmental Diseases of the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH). The conference organisers, led by the Conference Chair, Prof. Rajen Naidoo – Head of Discipline: Occupational and Environmental Health, University of KwaZulu-Natal, have set a new date for the event to be held in person in Durban on 15–17 November 2023, and have invited SASOM to be a conference partner. Claudina Nogueira (SASOM ExCo member and ICOH Vice President for Scientific Committees) will represent SASOM on the Conference Organising Committee; this will be the first time that the conference is held in Africa.

Virtual MEDICHEM Congress 2022

The Congress was held on 1 and 2 September 2022, to coincide with MEDICHEM's 50th anniversary. Associated events included the MEDICHEM General Assembly and the Board meeting. Aligned with the congress theme *Sankofa/Sustainability, the need to reflect on the past to build a successful future*, the programme included the following presentations, as well as a forum on attaining sustainability in the chemical industry:

- Keynote 1: Sustainability/continuity of operations in the chemical sector – Dr Carlos Santos Burgoa Zarnecki (Brazil)
- Keynote 2: Occupational health risk assessment and risk factors related to health and industrial hygiene monitoring data on chemical exposure of industrial workers – Dr Sunisa Chaiklieng (Thailand)
- Controversy and best practice: Navigating crisis communication in the COVID-19 era – Dr Max Lum (USA)

- Genotoxicity: Environmental pollution and prenatal development – Dr Elpida-Niki Nikoloussi (Cyprus)
- OSH capacity building using e-learning and microlearning in underserved areas of the globe – Dr Janvier Gasana (Kuwait)
- Minimum exposure: Lessons from pharma – Dr David Miedinger (Switzerland)
- McIntyre for MEDICHEM – Dr Tee Guidotti (USA)

The ICOH Scientific Committee on Occupational Health in the Chemical Industry introduced its new Chair for the current triennium to congress participants: Dr R Rajesh from India (past ICOH National Secretary for India and past President of the Indian Association of Occupational Health, IAOH). Claudina Nogueira presented a brief overview of the ICOH Scientific Committees, and Dr Martin Hogan (Ireland), ICOH Vice President for National Secretaries, delivered a concluding message.

Occupational Safety and Health Staging Framework for Decent Work

Hot off the press is the joint publication, *Occupational Safety and Health Staging Framework for Decent Work*, authored by Schulte et al., 2022,¹ from the ICOH Working Groups on 'The Future of Decent Work' and 'Demographic Changes and Occupational Health' and their collaborators. The Framework is aligned with Goal 8 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: 'Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all' and is intended to serve as guidance for practitioners, researchers, employers, workers, and authorities.

ICOH Statement on Protecting the Occupational Safety and Health of Migrant Workers

The ICOH Statement on 'Protecting the Occupational Safety and Health of Migrant Workers' was approved by the ICOH Board on 27 May 2022 and submitted under agenda item 15: 'Human resources for health' to the 75th World Health Assembly (WHA), held from 22 to 28 May 2022 at the headquarters of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, Switzerland. ICOH was represented at the WHA by the Secretary-General, Dr Diana Gagliardi (Italy). The ICOH Statement calls for the inclusion of occupational health and safety services in all health and care facilities to promote the protection of health workers' physical and mental health and wellbeing; it can be accessed on the ICOH website: <https://www.icohweb.org/site/multimedia/news/pdf/Occupational%20health%20of%20migrant%20workers.pdf>

ICOH2022 Congress report

The official report on the 'ICOH2022 – The Melbourne-Rome Global Digital Congress, 6 to 10 February 2022' is now available for consultation and free download from the ICOH website. The congress, held for the first time ever as a virtual event, was a resounding success, with more than 1 400 delegates from 98 countries, including 107 grant recipients (ICOH members from developing countries). Twelve keynote and plenary sessions, 23 semi-plenary sessions, 146 oral communications, 56 special sessions, and 581 e-posters enriched the scientific programme. Access the report here: www.icohweb.org/site/multimedia/news/pdf/ICOH%202022%20-%20CONGRESS%20REPORT.pdf

ICOH2024 Congress – 28 April to 3 May 2024

The second planning meeting of the ICOH2024 Congress organisers was held in Marrakesh, Morocco, on 5 and 6 September 2022, and included a site visit to the conference venue. The first announcement for the congress has been published and can be accessed on the ICOH and ICOH2024 Congress websites. Be sure to register your interest on the official congress website (www.icoh2024.ma) for more information and to receive updates as the scientific programme is developed. ICOH invites you to share the first announcement with your networks: www.icohweb.org/site/multimedia/news/pdf/ICOH%202024%20-%20First%20Announcement.pdf

REFERENCE

1. Schulte PA, Iavicoli I, Fontana L, Leka S, Dollard MF, Salmen-Navarro A, et al. Occupational safety and health staging framework for decent Work. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2022; 19:10842. doi:10.3390/ijerph191710842.

